



CBPEP/ GTAC/EU project on Employment-intensive rural land reform in South Africa:  
policies, programmes and capacities

Thematic study

The social and cultural aspects of small-scale agricultural production in South Africa and  
the implications for employment-intensive land reform

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ha	hectare
kg	kilogram
LDARD	Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
LWAU	Letaba Water Users Association
LEDET	Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
NDP	National Development Plan
PLAS	Pro-active Land Acquisition Strategy
SAAGA	South African Avocado Growers' Association
SAMAC	South African Macadamia Growers' Association
Subtrop	Subtropical Fruit Growers' Association

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## Executive summary

There is widespread agreement that Government interventions to support smallholders have often been poorly constructed (Khulisa, 2016; Aliber & Cousins, 2013) and have failed to produce positive impacts (Okunlola et al, 2016). There are many reasons for this assessment, including that government "... strategies to support smallholder farmers are not working as effectively and efficiently as needed to create systems change" (Khulisa, 2016: 26); that government characterizes smallholders as politically, socially and economically homogenous and as having the same potential to "emerge" along a linear path of commercialization (Cousins, 2013; Olofsson, 2019); and that an "elite capture" of government's land reform and agricultural resources (Hall and Kepe, 2017) has resulted in a small number of farmers upgrading to high-tech, capital intensive, commercial production geared at formal markets, which reduces the resources available for maximizing household food producing practices and the supply of informal local markets (Drimie, 2016; ACB, 2017).

It is also widely acknowledged that small scale farmers face a large number of constraints in addition to sufficient suitable land. Small scale farmers in KwaZulu-Natal summarized their situation saying there is "too much competition! Too much competition!" (KZNDARD, 2018:10).

This study aims to identify the key social and cultural aspects of small-scale agricultural production in rural South Africa and the policy implications for a programme of employment-intensive land reform. Small-scale agricultural producers are defined in various ways in policy documents. However, definitions often don't take into account evidence of significant fluidity and functional diversity in the social structures that underpin small scale farming groups, including:

- Households are spatially "stretched" with fluid membership (Spiegel et al, 1996), as members straddle urban and rural spaces (James, 2001) and livelihoods. Households are better characterized today in terms of patterned, regular transfers of resources than in terms of units of co-production, co-residence or co-consumption.
- Marriage and household formation and composition have changed in response to historical migration and structural unemployment, reconfiguring the social norms and patterns of authority and obligation that, along with markets, shape access to land, capital and other resources, including household labour.
- Small scale farmers are highly differentiated with interdependent land and nonland-based livelihoods (Olofsson, 2019; Francis, 2002; Neves, 2017; Neves & Du Toit, 2013). However, the income diversification that supports income transfers across farming and non-farming activities are threatened by rising unemployment, labour casualization, and the high costs of inputs (Cousins, 2013).
- Government social grant transfers mitigate the uncertainty of wages because they provide regular and predictable cash injections, albeit in small amounts, but have also contributed to reshaping gender and generational relations.

As much as impact models need to be developed for different categories of farmers (Khulisa, 2016: 10), it is insufficient to treat farmers as simply responding to economic constraints or incentives since intra-household dynamics impact critically on how small scale farm production is organized and on its viability. In summary, the various socio-cultural dynamics that structure and affect small-scale agricultural producers means that: small scale agricultural producers who are expanding their production tend to be middle to older aged men who uses income from wages or government pensions to sustain farming operations. Older women in receipt of government pensions also invest

in irrigation plots or small crop production in order to generate surplus income. These farmers hire in small numbers of labour on a part-time, seasonal or permanent basis, and supply combinations of formal and informal markets. Younger unemployed adult men who have access to land (often through inheritance) develop innovative practices to generate the capital to invest in sustaining or expanding their farming operations but their main constraints to embarking on farming are land and capital constraints. There appears to be little evidence that young women are engaging in expanded agriculture but they are involved in diversifying vegetable and fruit crops in gardens mainly for household consumption, often using child grants to do so, or as suppliers of (part-time) labour. The social and cultural dynamics described lend themselves to particular conclusions with respect to small scale farming and redistributive land reform.

Firstly, the reorganisation, composition and feminisation of households as a result of declining rates of marriage have resulted in a rising number of female-headed rural households, decreased the authority of the elderly and increased the burdens of domestic care work. The two main implications for small scale farming are a reduction in the availability of household labour for intensive farming and the increased tenure insecurity of women-headed households. Land reform needs to ensure women living in communal areas or in CPAs who are not married or are in conjugal relationships with incomplete marriage processes receive secure land access in their own right for the purposes of residence, garden cultivation and small livestock production. Agricultural support geared at large, asset-poor, women-dominant households should focus on farming with low labour requirements, such as livestock production that does not threaten gendered social norms and small areas for cultivated crops such as gardens mainly for consumption. Livestock would include chickens, goats, sheep and pigs. The Siyazondla programme could be replicated and expanded.

Secondly, in terms of rural-urban household relations, rural areas have been profoundly affected by mass rural-urban migration. It is generally assumed that the migration is at the cost of small farm production based on household labour while the benefits are primarily in the urban wage transfers back to rural areas. This view is based on the idea that the rural sector is dependent on the urban sector in a one-way relationship. However, multiple diversified livelihood strategies at the micro level have eroded the urban-rural dichotomy. In many cases, the rural pole supports household members as they try to gain a foothold in the town and cities while urban members return to the rural home to undertake ceremonies, in times of unemployment or ill-health. The rural pole is thus insurance against the precariousness of urban work and costs of living. The implications for small scale agricultural production is that where rural households have diversified livelihoods, including an agricultural component, they are able to support members in urban areas for longer periods, while maintaining a social protection function against the vagaries of employment. Nevertheless, the agricultural production, as above, cannot be labour intensive, suggesting gardens for household consumption, small arable plots for intensive cultivation and livestock for consumption and sale on informal or local markets.

Thirdly, the cattle economy plays a central role in creating kinship and structuring its hierarchies. Neves et al (2009: 45) describes the use of cattle for ceremonial slaughter, transfer (ilobolo and ihlawulo) or celebratory feasts as “the most potent of public acts in the Southern African countryside”. These acts proclaim those performing them to be people of substance, to have dignity, to be successful and deserving of respect (Neves et al, 2009: 45). As socially constitutive acts, ceremonies act as a social glue that brings together kin spread across urban and rural spaces, neighbours in conflict over resource allocations and members of households and neighbourhoods torn apart by processes of social differentiation (Hornby and Cousins, 2019) but they also reinforce social inequality in that only the wealthier can muster the resources to undertake the full range of actions involved, at the standards expected. The ceremonial cattle economy is thus integral to

African farming systems because it anchors kinship relations, marriage and household formation processes. Land and agricultural reform have not only neglected this vast market, beef production and the (more limited) urban consumer market it services is deemed inaccurately to be the real farming that land reform beneficiaries should be engaging in.

Fourthly, the burden of structural unemployment has fallen mostly onto youth contributing to the dynamics described above, namely oscillatory migration, declining rates of marriage and the collapse of kinship relations. It has also excluded youth from entering agricultural production, except where they have inherited land or livestock, or as casual and part-time wage workers. Given the depth and range of exclusions that youth confront, it is important the agricultural development strategies recognise the small-scale farming is primarily a part-time activity with strong linkages to wage work and other economic activities and that inter-generational cycles need to be supported given that the majority of small-scale farmers are pensioners who invest partly for their own social reproduction but also to provide their children with a productive asset.

Fifthly, social differentiation amongst small-scale farmers is occurring, based on the degree to which households are able to secure the resources to invest and sustain farming enterprises. Where members of households have access to salaried employment, they have been able to invest in land and farming and employ labour. Some households have been able to combine diversified livelihoods, including wages and state pensions, to invest in farm production, and used farming to sustain social reproduction or to accumulate and expand. However, where households have experienced livelihood shocks – the death of a pensioner or wage earner or retrenchment – they have often drawn down hard on agricultural assets in order to survive and sometimes have dropped out of production as a result. Many households straddle rural and urban livelihoods, transferring resources between the two, and the prospects for farming depend on how the relationships are managed and sustained. Where CPA's have owned productive assets and have provided members with dividends in the form of cash, input subsidies and capital (eg. heifers and bulls), fewer households drop out of production, and in some cases, female-headed households have been able to diversify livelihoods heavily dependent on social grants by engaging in agriculture (Hornby, 2015).

Land redistribution policies have, to date, not been developed with an awareness of these dynamics. The early Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) was possibly the most accommodating in that it recognised the need for redistribution to meet multiple needs, including land for residence, subsistence and small-scale farming. The assumption that all land acquired in this way would be for rural settlement, with little municipal capacity to service the human settlements that were created, was the downfall of the programme. The Land Redistribution for Agriculture Programme (LRAD), which replaced SLAG, correctly identified the need for small-scale farmers to be targeted and supported with more land and agricultural support services. However, it failed to activate the amendment to the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, resulting in group schemes that were often unsupported and difficult to manage. The persistent reports of production failure emerging from land reform farms resulted in the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) and State Land Disposal Act. Land was transferred to the state, which provided beneficiaries who wanted to farm commercially, with leases. While the intention had been to maintain control over levels of production on redistributed farms, land was not acquired proactively but continued to be supply-led with estate agents taking a driving seat. Leases were short-term, and massive budgets were allocated to very few beneficiaries who received large farms as single operators. The effect was to lock out small-scale farmers, eliminate the settlement components of land redistribution and encourage political patronage in the allocation processes, without significant gains in production.

Drawing on and adapting Aliber's (2019) programme recommendations, it is proposed that a land redistribution programme is constructed around three types of land need as follows:

**Settlement-oriented smallholders:** 75% of beneficiaries are settled in this programme, of which 50% are women-headed household, and a household income ceiling is applied. Each household receives 0,1 – 1 HA, with access to communal rangelands. The land is secured through a proactive land acquisition process through targeted expropriation (or market when possible) in order to secure appropriate land for settlement (that is, closer to growth and development nodes in towns and cities, thus improving prospects of services). Beneficiary households would hold land either in title or receive a clearly defined allocation within a CPA. The programme receives a 15% expenditure share of budget and allocates approximately 3% of all hectares transferred.

**Small-scale farmers:** 22% of beneficiaries are settled in this programme, of which 50% are women-headed, and land is equally allocated to three age groups: 20-35 years, 36-60 years and 60 years and older. The qualifying criteria is some evidence of farming experience. Each household receives 1 – 50 HA per household of arable land or sufficient land to graze up to 40 large-stock units, including on commonage land. The land would be acquired through pro-active land acquisition through the market and could be transferred to a CPA, with informal subdivisions, where benefits include managing common infrastructure or resources. The risk of immediate resale with individually owned land can be mitigated by limiting provisions in the title deed. The programme receives 32% of budget expenditure share and allocates 26% of all hectares transferred.

**Large-scale farmers:** 3% of beneficiaries are settled in this programme. Each beneficiary would receive 50 - 500 HA per household of arable land or sufficient land to allow for over 40 large-stock units and would require a business plan and relevant farming experience. An own-contribution formula (along the lines of LRAD) would apply together with a clear upper limit to the value of government's contribution, whether this is in the form of land, grants, or both. The process would be applicant-led acquisition through the market, and could be administered (partly) through an agency arrangement with the Land Bank (and other banks) backed up with partial government financing. Large-scale farmers would get freehold title. The programme receives 53% of budget expenditure share and allocates 71% of all hectares transferred.

Agricultural support to date has tended to focus on mechanisation in order to increase productivity but it comes at the cost of employment intensive production. Subsidised labour for targeted, relatively short-term support that has an employment-multiplier (or at least not a reduction) effect could be introduced to enable small-scale farmers to expand production or create a more sustainable basis to the production. While individual farmers could benefit, some of the measures would have broader public impact. The responsible department would be Department of Public Works, who could target unemployed rural youth to provide the labour. Where individual farmers reap the sole benefit of the labour contribution, they could make partial contributions to the wage bill. The following (incomplete) proposals are put up for consideration:

- Conversion of fields to low-till cultivation.
- Expansion of land for cultivated vegetable, fruit or nut production or other high value commodities.
- Installation of micro-water and irrigation systems.
- Building of infrastructure – dams, storage, livestock housing or management infrastructure (eg. dips).
- Repairing infrastructure – roads, dams, boreholes.

- Conversion to renewable energy – solar, biogas.
- Removal of invasive plants compromising rangelands, wetlands or catchments.
- Erosion control measures.



## 1 Introduction

There is widespread agreement that Government interventions to support smallholders have often been poorly constructed (Khulisa, 2016; Aliber & Cousins, 2013) and have failed to produce positive impacts (Okunlola et al, 2016). There are many reasons for this assessment, including that government “... strategies to support smallholder farmers are not working as effectively and efficiently as needed to create systems change” (Khulisa, 2016: 26); that government characterizes smallholders as politically, socially and economically homogenous and as having the same potential to “emerge” along a linear path of commercialization (Cousins, 2013; Olofsson, 2019); and that an “elite capture” of government’s land reform and agricultural resources (Hall and Kepe, 2017) has resulted in a small number of farmers upgrading to high-tech, capital intensive, commercial production geared at formal markets, which reduces the resources available for maximizing household food producing practices and the supply of informal local markets (Drimie, 2016; ACB, 2017).

It is also widely acknowledged that small scale farmers face a large number of constraints. In addition to sufficient suitable land, they face fencing shortages, theft, crop damage by livestock and a lack of herding labour (Shackleton 2019; Shackleton et al, 2019); increasing capital costs (Bryceson, 1996); limited market opportunities due to competition from large-scale agricultural and retail sectors (Andrew and Fox, 2005); soil erosion partly due to overgrazing (ibid), and water scarcity and unpredictable climate variation (Ortmann & Macheche, 2003). Small scale farmers in KwaZulu-Natal summarized their situation saying there is “too much competition! Too much competition!” (KZNDARD, 2018:10).

This study aims to identify the key social and cultural aspects of small-scale agricultural production in rural South Africa and the policy implications for a programme of employment-intensive land reform. It forms part of a bigger study investigating how the promotion of a land reform programme centred on small-scale agriculture could generate a large number of employment, self-employment and livelihood enhancing opportunities. This includes the key characteristics and preconditions of successful small-scale farm producers. Employment for the purposes of the study is defined very broadly as:

- Livelihood enhancing activities – including gardening and stock farming for own use
- Family labour – specifically for agricultural purposes but excluding recipients of wages
- Hired wage labour – including permanent, casual, part-time, piece jobs

A small-scale agricultural producer is defined in various ways in policy documents. The draft National Policy on Comprehensive Producer Development Support (CPDS, 2018) uses income thresholds as a key differentiating criterion. Its five categories are:

- Household Producers (vulnerable), who produce primarily for household consumption and have limited resources and skills for market-led production, including child-headed households and registered indigents.
- Household Producers (subsistence), who produce for household consumption and sell surplus with an annual turnover of less than R50,000 per annum.
- Smallholder producers, who produce at “primary, secondary and tertiary levels” for household consumption and markets, and farm “consciously” in order to derive an income. Annual turnover is between R50,000 and R5 million, and they are expected to contribute 35% towards the support they receive.

- Medium-Scale Commercial producers, who operate as a business entity to produce agricultural, forestry and fishery products for a profit. They have an annual turnover of R5 million-R20 million and are expected to contribute 50% towards the support they receive.
- Large-Scale Commercial producers are similar to medium scale commercial producers operate as a business entity to produce agricultural, forestry and fishery products for a profit but have an annual turnover of over R20 million and do not qualify for government grant funding.

In aiming to create “standardized producer registers” derived from farm earnings and farmer “intentions”, the CPDS hits up against evidence of significant fluidity and functional diversity in the social structures that underpin small scale farming groups, including:

- Households are spatially “stretched” with fluid membership (Spiegel et al, 1996), as members straddle urban and rural spaces (James, 2001) and livelihoods. Households are better characterized today in terms of patterned, regular transfers of resources than in terms of units of co-production, co-residence or co-consumption.
- Marriage and household formation and composition have changed in response to historical migration and structural unemployment, reconfiguring the social norms and patterns of authority and obligation that, along with markets, shape access to land, capital and other resources, including household labour.
- Small scale farmers are highly differentiated with interdependent land and nonland-based livelihoods (Olofsson, 2019; Francis, 2002; Neves, 2017; Neves & Du Toit, 2013). However, the income diversification that supports income transfers across farming and non-farming activities are threatened by rising unemployment, labour casualization, and the high costs of inputs (Cousins, 2013).
- Government social grant transfers mitigate the uncertainty of wages because they provide regular and predictable cash injections, albeit in small amounts, but have also contributed to reshaping gender and generational relations.

As much as impact models need to be developed for different categories of farmers (Khulisa, 2016: 10), it is insufficient to treat farmers as simply responding to economic constraints or incentives since intra-household dynamics impact critically on how small scale farm production is organized and on its viability. As Hull (2014: 452) argues, economic practices that characterize small scale farmers are “at their root ... the outcome of changes to family structures that have emerged in the context of a political economy of unemployment”.

Khulisa (2016) draw loosely on a typology of small scale farmers developed by Cousins and Chikazunga (2013), namely subsistence producers, market orientated smallholders in loose value chains, market oriented smallholders in tight value chains and small scale commercial farmers. For the purposes of this paper, small scale agricultural producers are farmers who:

- Primarily use household labour but may also hire small numbers of permanent wage workers or casual seasonal workers who are paid mainly in cash or but sometimes also in kind or in combinations thereof.
- Farm for multiple purposes, including meeting household needs (subsistence and ceremony), generating income (to meet the household’s needs and purchase farm inputs) and, in some cases, to invest profits in expanded production.

- Depending on the commodity, these farmers move between informal and formal value chains, including “gift” or “debt”<sup>1</sup> economies.
- They are relatively undercapitalized, which is reflected in low levels of mechanization and which results in relatively labour intensive rather than labour-shedding industrial-type processes of production.

The next section provides an overview of the social organization of small scale farming and the key drivers of change. This is followed by the role of social identities in land tenure systems (with an emphasis on those available within land reform), the extent to which land reform policy has taken social and cultural aspects of small-scale farming into account since 1994, the implications for land reform policy and for programme design and support.

## 2 The social and cultural aspects of the agricultural production systems operated by black South Africans

The key underlying drivers of change have been migration and rising unemployment, particularly affecting young men and women in the period of deindustrialization over the past two decades. These have driven the reorganization of the household with concomitant changes in marriage, gender and generational relations and the ability to mobilise labour, along with emerging differentiation as a result of the diversification of livelihoods.

### 2.1 *Household organization and composition, including the influence of different marriage or cohabitation arrangements on these issues*

African marriages in South Africa are mostly virilocal and patrilineal: they involve women moving to the home of her husband’s household, and membership to the lineage occurs through descent of men from a common founding ancestor. Marriage (and other relationships with men) remains the primary way in which women become members of their adult households (Budlender et al, 2011). Where marriage occurs, even in a truncated form, it involves a major change in the life of women, including transfer of residence from her natal to her husband’s home, along with a shift in her relationships from being a member of her natal home as kin to membership of her husband’s home as an affine. Changes in marriage have thus involved major re-organisation of the household, its composition and the authority of the elders over younger members.

Three significant changes have taken place in how marriage occurs.

- Firstly, there is an increase in the number of couples who do not cohabit. Non-cohabitation has occurred in the context of migration, where men, often heads of households, historically migrated from former Bantustans to industrial areas in order secure wage employment. Hosegood et al (2009) point out that couples in ‘conjugal relationships’ can mean that both partners are members of the same household even though they reside in different places.
- Secondly, marriage rates have declined drastically since the 1960s. The proportion of African adults who were married in South Africa fell from 57% in 1960 to only 30% in 2011 (Budlender et al, 2011). The reduction in the number of married adults in reproductive ages is the result of non-marriage rather than widowhood or divorce (Hosegood *et al*, 2009; Budlender et al, 2011), although there are locational variations.
- Thirdly, there is an increase in partially completed marriages. African marriages involve a number of extended transactions and inter-family engagements. Historically, the main ones

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<sup>1</sup> Gift economies involve sharing produce with extended kin and neighbours, while debt economies involve selling produce to local consumers who delay paying for it until they receive social grants, remittances or wages.

were lobolo (bridewealth) negotiations and cattle transfers, umembeso (the transfer of gifts from a man's family to his future wife's family) and umabo (the transfer of gifts from the wife's family to her husband's family), which occurs on the day of dancing (ukugida). But the high costs of completing marriages means that many couples now adopt a truncated marriage process that involves the transfer of three to five cattle (including a 'fine' for pregnancy, which allows the child to be recognized by the paternal lineage), the relocation of the women into the man's household as 'makoti' (young wife), and official registration of the marriage. Cousin's (2017) suggests that this stage of marriage, 'uganile' or 'uganiwe', may be displacing older forms of marriage.

These changes to marriage generate a diverse set of household arrangements, in addition to the decline in co-residence:

- Couples who are not married may be living in the same household and yet are not reported as both being members of the household, particularly in younger age groups, because social norms around kinship and family formation may operate as a "barrier to the social acceptance of non-marital partners as part of their partners' household" (Hosegood et al, 2009: 294);
- Older couples who have been in the same relationship for longer lengths of time and to have raised children as couples more likely to in a recognizable social arrangement and thus be reported as married regardless of legal status (ibid).

Spiegel et al (1996) argue that the functional definitions of household as co-residence, productive co-operation and eating together (commensality) are no longer helpful in identifying the key socio-economic connections between members of the same household. Productive co-operation ceased to be useful when the land base of domestic units was destroyed through the absorption of households into capitalism, while labour migrancy undermined co-residence and commensality as useful concepts. Consequently, they argue that:

*... The household has come to be defined as a group within which income and expenditure flows are concentrated, even if the members of that group are resident in widely dispersed parts of the sub-continent. This, then, is what we have called the 'stretched' household ... (ibid: 12)*

This focus on resource transfers between individuals committed to maintaining the same group who may not be co-resident is useful for understanding the urban-rural transfers that sustain small scale production in rural components of the household. The South African census, however, includes a person as a household member if they were present on the night of the enumeration, whereas other definitions define a household as a "group living on the same property who eat from the same pot of food" (Agincourt Health and Demographic Surveillance System, cited in Atkinson, 2014). These definitions of 'household' are frequently used to collect and analyse demographic and social information, and are thus central to government planning and resource allocations. They are clearly at odds with how households are actually organised, which renders questionable the conclusions drawn from them.

Hazel (2010) describes a wide variety of household forms. Rural households vary in terms of size (4 to 29 members), number of generations (50% consisting of three generations or more living together) and membership (mothers, daughters-in-law and grandchildren of the head, the household head's brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and widows of deceased siblings along with live-in domestic helper and adopted orphans, in various combinations). She also found frequent polygamy (50%), which took a more than one form, including men heading more than one

household in different locations and polygamous households operating as a unit where wives have a separate house within the homestead.

In terms of the material basis, rural households are no longer simply structured around a male household head earning a salary, a model that was consolidated during the colonial period. Instead, a common structure today consists of three or four generations, headed by a grandparent (or sometimes a great-grandparent) whose primary income source is a government old age pension, with unemployed and unmarried resident adult children or grandchildren (Hull, 2014). Neves and Du Toit (2013: 106) suggest that post-apartheid households are effectively formed around state cash transfers, particularly the old age pension. The pension is the largest, most regular transfer of cash into rural households and is thus “the material lynchpin for many rural households, particularly the three-generation or skipped-generation” household. They also confirm that since women have higher life expectancy than men, recipients of pensions are often elderly women, around whom the rural household forms. Furthermore, the government old age pension “is associated with decreased numbers of prime working-age women and increased proportions of young children within households” (ibid, 107), because it provides the material resources to support migration out of rural areas and make it possible for older women to look after their grandchildren. Hull (pers com) points out that some rural households are composed of great grandparents who are dependent on government pensions, while the missing generation is the grandparent generation (40-60 years) who continue to benefit from migrant-based employment, while their unemployed adult children along with their children cluster around the great parent and her or his pension.

In summary, the composition of households indicates a number of forms of organisation today. These include:

- Households with multiple generations, sometimes as many as four, some with no adult men, often under the head of a pensioned grandparent and with resident unemployed adult children (Hull, 2014);
- “Skip-generation” households where an adult middle generation is missing (Posel, 2001);
- Compound households, under the head of a (often female) grandparent, with either married siblings with their own houses within the homestead or polygamous marriages with wives with their own houses within the homestead (Hazel, 2010);
- “Stretched” households that transfer and share income across geographical spaces, including polygamous marriages, and urban women migrant workers whose children remain in the natal home.

## *2.2 Relationships between household members residing in rural areas and members residing in urban areas*

Central to South Africa’s economic development was the creation and institutionalization of a class of cheap, migratory wage labour through land expropriation and political disenfranchisement. This significantly altered social structures as large numbers of African men left rural households to earn cash income imposed by the imperatives to meet tax obligations and supplement declining agricultural resources. It is thus “generally accepted that historically the high proportion of women-headed or divided households in Southern Africa .... is the heritage of the migrant labour system” (O’Laughlin, 1998: 4). These developments reinforced “dual urban-rural homesteads and circular migration as organization mechanisms of economic and social adaptation” (Amoateng and Ritcher, 2007:3).

After 1990, the apartheid emphasis on the rural home as the ‘real’ home began to change, with a rapid increase in urbanization and permanent ruptures occurring in some urban-rural household

relations (Smit, 1998). A key feature is that unaccompanied, circular, male migratory labour under apartheid has been supplanted by females in informal, oscillatory labour migration in the post-apartheid era, returning to the rural home for extended periods during periods of unemployment, for important events, in ill-health and at retirement (Neves et al, 2009: 33; Fakier and Cock, 2009). Not only do people move between residence in a rural home and residence in an urban place of work, they also move between rural households to cluster around receipts of irregular remittances or regular state transfers.

Rural households reliant on remittances have been affected by the shortage of wage work in the urban labour market. The diversification of livelihoods has spread the risk by dispersing household members across space, leaving a core adult-child group in the rural base (Francis, 2000). Gauteng and the Western Cape are the main recipients of migrants who come mainly from Limpopo Province and KwaZulu-Natal. The dispersed family network occurs not only in households straddling former homelands and (peri-) urban residential spaces but also among farm dweller households on commercial farms (AFRA, 2019). For instance, a daughter could be living with an elderly relative on another farm to provide care work; an older son could reside in or near a town and return over weekends, Christmas or important events; other members could reside in the homestead intermittently dependent of the availability of seasonal agricultural work; while children could be living with relatives in towns located near schools during the week and returning home at weekends.

Linkages between rural and urban poles of households do, however, appear to be weakening: 48% of households in a Durban low-income area maintained strong rural links, 32% had weak rural links and 19% no longer had rural links (Smit, 1998). Smit develops a typology to distinguish migrant households according to the links between rural and urban residences:

- *Owner-only households* are multiple-home units where the head “owns” another home but does not contribute money towards its upkeep. These households are among the most economically vulnerable households in low-income urban settlements and maintain the rural homestead as a safety net should the household be unable to survive in the urban environment.
- *Owner/contributor households* are multiple-home units where the household head “owns” and contributes financially towards the upkeep of another home. The urban based members of these households keep in regular contact with the rural homesteads and provide an urban home for adult children coming to town in search of employment while their parents may retire to the rural homestead when their employment ends. Urban based household heads who contribute to the upkeep of a second home usually do so because their children are living there. Half of all multiple-home households visit the rural home at least once a month. Although these households identify themselves as urban, they believe the rural link is important both as a safety net and as a means to a more fulfilling life.

A third possible category is “*Rural contributor households*”: rural – urban food transfers in 66% of households make it possible for urban households in Namibia to survive, and urban-rural money transfers make it possible for rural households to purchase inputs to increase agricultural productivity and to purchase food (Frayne, 2005). The money transfer for rural food purchase makes it possible to generate the food surpluses that get exported to urban areas. Pensioners in rural South Africa also provide financial support to their adult children who are trying to get a footing in the city (Hull, pers com).

Rural households with an urban pole or urban households with a rural pole are less vulnerable than either urban or rural households without a rural or urban pole (Neves and Du Toit, 2013). Rural households without an urban pole are often dependent on single income sources, particularly grants, while those with an urban pole are more likely to accrue the assets and labour required for farming. Urban households without a rural pole have few resources to fall back on when confronted by a sudden reversal of fortune, like retrenchment. "These households were generally poorly located in circuits of mutual support and exchange, and noteworthy for the extent to which their members were socially atomized and extremely vulnerable, even by the impoverished standards of the former homelands." (ibid: 110)

However, enormous disparities between urban and rural areas persist: Smit (1998) found that households in urban Umlazi (Durban) consisted mainly of adults (64,9%), most of whom were men (55,6%) with 1.1 dependents and a per capita GGP of R2,100, while in the rural area of Ndwedwe (north of Durban) households consisted mainly of women (62%) and children (54,6%) with a 6.1 dependents for every income and a per capita GGP of R500. Similarly, Makgetla (2007) argues that "social grants do not provide an adequate income for millions of poor households. In 2004, 44% of households that depended primarily on social grants had difficulty in meeting their food needs at least sometimes." The constraint on remittances relates to conditions of employment: short-term urban contract workers earn significantly less than their full-time counterparts for the same tasks although neither group can cover their basic needs from incomes alone (Fakier and Cock, 2009).

Remittances have changed over time. Where (mainly) men employed in urban areas used to regularly remit part of their wages to rural homesteads, they are now partially employed and tend instead to make lumpy investments into the rural homestead to supplement their wives' receipts of social grants.

*Today men say to their wives 'you get your own income from child grants. Use that for food. So they've stopped remitting on a regular basis. But this doesn't mean they don't bring money home. They do, in the form of big investments: building a new house, investing in or expanding livestock (goats or cattle); household purchases, like TVs, generators, furniture. (Alcock pers com)*

The different urban and rural sites also offer advantages unrelated to resource transfers between poles of the same household. Urban sites, for instance, offer access to employment, better amenities and social services (schools, healthcare, electricity, potable water, transport). Rural areas, by contrast, offer retreat from urban labour markets, places of retirement and recuperation, safety nets for livelihood shocks (death, retrenchment, illness) and incur lower costs of living as a result of relatively non-commodified land, housing, water and fuel costs, which also makes them economical spaces in which to raise children, and care for the elderly and sick (Du Toit and Neves 2013: 101).

Slater (2001), however, cautions against exaggerating the differences between urban and rural livelihood strategies. Pensions are central to both rural and urban livelihoods, while the distinction between urban livelihoods based on income from combinations of wages and informal activities, as opposed to rural livelihoods being characterised as involving a more diverse range of resources and activities, has a local specificity that doesn't necessarily hold true in urban settlements in the former homeland areas.

### 2.3 *Relationships between household members and members of wider kinship networks, including those residing in urban areas*

Families are shaped by marriage, which in pre-colonial Africa was a central institution in forging alliances between lineages and which created the power basis for patriarchal lineage heads (Kalule-Sabiti et al, 2007). However, urban de-industrialisation and unemployment are reshaping and possibly eroding kinship relations across rural-urban spaces, including their patrilineal organisation.

O’Laughlin (1998) observes that the idea that social processes can be ‘mapped’ onto biological processes is based on the idea that kinship is at the core of domestic groups, and that there are a standard range of activities clustered around kinship. The empirical evidence, however, shows that “the orderly march through a developmental cycle is rather a highly contingent process, shaped by relations of class and politics and never achieved by many domestic groups.” (ibid 6). Instead, the changes in the structure of employment underlie the erosion of kinship and neighbourhood as a social resource, and in particular circumstances, the interdependence of kinship and community together with social transfers (O’Laughlin, 1998).

Long periods of male labour migration have reinforced lineal links “between mother and daughter and between mother and son, rather than with a (potential) son-in-law and, through him, with his kin” (Peters, 1983:113). These are the critical relations that underpin the female-headed household. An important consequence of the re-organisation is that female-headed households are more likely to rely on informal and fluctuating sources of urban income; widows and unmarried women have least access to both wealth and land in the rural areas, and female migrants in urban areas have poorer social links to the rural home (Frayne 2005; Smit 2001).

Smit (2001) argues that ‘culture’ plays an important role in ensuring that the oscillatory migrant labour system does not completely uproot men from their traditional family life. The relationship between culture, cattle and kin is present not only in marriage and ritual. Fay (2013) found in Hobeni that the majority of households cultivating with oxen have remained more or less constant between 1998 and 2009 (88% and 85%), and genealogically-organised ploughing companies are the most dominant form of oxen pooling for ploughing teams. Cultivators, he argues, prefer the long-term security of kinship based ploughing companies to the sporadic availability of tractor hire. The kinship bonds deployed in these production relations are based on the long-term trends of declining household sizes related to migrant men marrying younger, which made household reliance on own traction and labour less possible, and generated greater inter-household cooperation. The need for cooperative production also shaped decisions about post-marital residence as people sought out kin and familiar neighbours (Fay, 2005).

However, “notions of legitimate entitlement and even household membership are not self-evident ... but are the result of culturally inscribed negotiation and contestation” (Neves and Du Toit, 2013: 109), and the benefits of social reciprocity are uneven and mediated by gender, age, wealth, status and power (Spiegel et al, 1996). Kinship relations are thus not self-evident, given or static relations but are dynamically embedded in other social processes.

The importance of more dynamic conceptions of social relations, like kinship, is that they provide better explanations of particular socio-economic outcomes, such as, why some households are more able to diversify livelihoods, including engaging in informal economic activity, in response to social reproduction constraints. Slater (2001), for instance, argues that livelihood activities are part of a repertoire of activities which comprise labour, capital, decision-making and social entitlements and which incorporate different household members in different ways and degrees. Similarly, Neves and



Du Toit (2013) show that a household's ability to engage in informal economic activity depends on its ability to leverage existing assets and surplus (albeit fluid) labour capacity.

The networks and horizontal exchanges established between people of broadly similar socioeconomic status make it possible for marginalised people to leverage the social and financial resources they need for survival (Neves et al, 2009). Examples of such cases abound in the literature: a young man who had failed as a commercial farmer set up a spaza shop at his aunt's house near town, using kin networks, their labour, assets and pension distribution to eke out a living; while another older man failed to set himself up as a sharecropper in the communal areas because his outsider status and lack of support from the chief made it impossible for him to enforce contracts.

Kinship is not the only social relation that members of impoverished households rely on. Church, savings, youth and sports groups along with neighbours are all institutions through which practices and ideologies of mutuality are constituted (Neves et al, 2009). Where kin are absent, people define kinship ("as if" relationships) widely for the purposes of giving and receiving. Sharp and Spiegel (1985) nevertheless point out that although people recognise the "as if" nature of relationships with neighbours, the absence of kin is lamented. "An answer to the question of why people in [some] areas ... still find kinship significant as an idiom of relationship, and as a basis for and obtaining social and material support, must lie in their own past experience rather than in some quality inherent in kinship itself" (Sharp and Spiegel, 1985:154) since the social and material base of even close relationships has been eroded.

Relationships of reciprocity and clientage, which include kinship and neighbourhood, are important in some contexts where residents construct networks of neighbourliness and express the relationships in terms of kinships (Sharp and Spiegel, 1985). However, these tend to be short-term exchanges.

*Loss of access to reliable sources of cash income condemns most households to dropping out of the networks of reciprocity at precisely the point when those networks are needed most urgently. Neighbours to whom we spoke conceded M.S.'s claim that he had exhausted the possibility of begging or borrowing from them; but they also explained that they were appalled and ashamed by the sight of his household literally starving to death in front of them while they could do no more to help. (ibid, 1985:145).*

Similarly, the practices of "ukunana" (food loaning) is dependent on loans being repaid according to socially accepted norms involving time passed since the loan was made, and repayments being similar in kind and quantity (Hull, 2016). An inability to conform to the expectations of reciprocity means that those households too poor to repay food loans cannot participate in the exchanges. In this way, those in desperate need of the practice are excluded from them.

Kinship relations are nevertheless constantly re-invoked and reproduced in ceremonial practices, particularly those involved in home-making, such as marriage and burials. These are considered in the section on ceremony.

#### 2.4 Gendered relationships between different household members, in relation to divisions of labour, decision-making, the distribution of benefits, and investment in agriculture

Feminist thinkers have long pointed out that farming households are not internally homogenous institutions and that the male 'household head' does not necessarily have the same interests as other members of the household. Such distributions are the outcome of intra-household contests and

power relations rather than altruism, and the transfers can create net beneficiaries and make others more marginal and vulnerable. Those who do not have material resources, or the ability to offer labour power, struggle to participate in these exchanges or do so on disadvantageous terms. In effect, this calls into question the “ideological basis of concepts such as household strategy” (O’Laughlin, 1999:9), which reflects a romanticized view of solidarity between members of poor families, in which cohesion and coherence rather than conflict are assumed to be definitive of intra-household relationships. Such assumptions ignore both everyday acts of resistance (for example, income-retention, passive non-compliance, labour withdrawal) as well as the contingent nature of patriarchal authority within households. A key fracture is gender, given that the labour burden of social reproduction falls disproportionately on women.

Guy (1987) argues that in pre-capitalist Southern Africa the transfer of cattle from the husband’s father’s homestead to the wife’s father’s homestead was the prerequisite both for marriage and for founding a homestead, and was therefore the condition for production. The transfer of cattle were not “bride-price” but were conditional on a wife fulfilling her productive and reproductive obligations in her husband’s homestead. Failure to fulfil these obligations as a result of adultery, infertility, or withholding labour in the domestic and agricultural spheres could result in the number of cattle being reduced, or the cattle returned and the marriage dissolved. In other words, “the transfer of cattle between homesteads was in fact the transfer of cattle against the productive and the reproductive capacity of women”, or a transfer of the labour power of both the wife and of her children. (ibid, 21) The relative autonomy of mother-child units (Whitehead, 1990) meant that women’s and men’s access to land was more symmetrical than it is today, and women had a dual productive role working their land independently of other members of the household as well as contributing family labour.

However, as agrarian economies commercialised and rural class differentiation intensified, women’s independent farming came under increasing pressure, while men were able to solidify their command over land, labour, and capital resources (Razavi, 2009). In South Africa, however, the systematic separation of families over several generations as young men were recruited from rural areas for work on mines left young women and the middle-aged and elderly to farm. Rural women were responsible for basic food provisioning and for the care of the young and the old, dividing their available labour time between social reproductive and productive activities. More recently, the rapid increase in women’s migration out of rural areas from 1998 to 2009 has also impacted on household labour available for farm production. Women’s absence accounts for the overall increase of absent adults from 20% to 28% during this period (Fay 2013).

It is not only men who deploy and control women’s agricultural labour. Cousins (2013) and Neves and Du Toit (2013: 103) document cases of older women farmers who hire in agricultural labour, sometimes in response to neighbours’ requests for material assistance. While the remuneration is low and the job ad hoc, the response is an effective way of enabling women farmers to develop relationships of mutuality and petty patronage that cement their positions as a minor benefactors. “This is a noteworthy consideration in a patriarchal context in which an elderly, mobility-impaired, female (de facto) household head might otherwise be more easily marginalized.” (Neves and Du Toit, 2013: 103).

#### *2.4.1 Gender and investment in agriculture*

While there is some evidence of a shift in the allocation of land to women with children in the context of declining marriage rates (Cousins, 2017), this has not resulted in an automatic increase in investment into agriculture, which remains sporadic and conditional (Shackleton, 2019). The reasons for this is that formal sector employment, which can provide the capital, skills and productive assets

that are often prerequisites for farming, are often mainly available to men to draw on as a result of their having been employed in the formal sector (Neves and Du Toit, 2013). The income source widely controlled by women, namely state child support grants, is not always invested in agriculture. Indeed, Fay (2013) finds an inverse correlation between households that cultivate fields and the number of child support grants, with no cultivation likely to be associated with a higher number of child grants in the household, and a lower number of child grants present in households that are still cultivating.

The gendered division in how different household members can use cash income affects investments in farming. Cash income secured by members of households is often not pooled because of a conceptual boundary between money and subsistence (Whitehead, 1981: 100, cited in Hull 2014), where an individual's cash earnings are privately owned but subsistence is collective right. The effects of the non-pooling of cash income are a burden that falls mainly on older female pension recipients because of their responsibility for food provisioning and their dependence on cash income for food purchases (Hull, 2014), which reduces the available capital for investment in agriculture.

To the extent that they do invest in agriculture, women-headed households are more likely to allocate resources to gardens for consumption, that can be protected from livestock damage and that have low input requirements in terms of cash and labour (Shackleton, 2019). Livestock preferences are chickens and goats, which are traditionally owned by women and children, are smaller and are therefore easier to manage and use for immediate consumption (Alcock, pers com). The gendered nature of cattle ownership may, however, be changing as a result of women's access to social grants together with rising male unemployment resulting in women purchasing cattle stock in their own right (Hornby, 2015).

#### *2.4.2 Gender and the distribution of benefits*

The reduction in male dominated migrant wage labour has resulted in two important trends - an increased reliance on income generated by insecure and temporary employment, often secured by women in the informal sector; and an increasing number of households dependent on social grants, particularly the old age pension. This has had important implications for power relations within households.

The increased accessibility of purchased food, greater demands on women's labour, shifts in the distribution of regular but lower amounts of household income from men to women have resulted in profound shifts in how household's marshal, allocate and distribute farming resources. Where women are engaged in production in communal areas (particularly irrigation schemes) or land reform contexts, production is geared primarily towards consumption and income generation. While some women farmers engage in gradual accumulation, using income from multiple sources to expand farming activities, this is a small minority, and cash income from farming is mostly used to top-up the state old age pension.

A case study of the Bester's land reform project in KwaZulu-Natal shows that Communal Property Associations (CPA) have an important role to play in distributing benefits that enable women-headed households to engage in cattle farming. Where CPAs maintain commercial beef herds and distribute dividends to members in the form of cattle, cash and farming inputs, women-headed households have been able to invest in cattle, and sustain and grow their herds, providing an important layer of diversification and resilience to grant-dependent livelihoods. An important additional component at Besters is that women do not have to manage their cattle on their own because the CPAs employ men skilled in cattle farming to manage the household and collective herds (Hornby, 2015).

In conclusion, the 'scramble for cash' (Bryceson, 1999) has forced all household members to seek paid work. This is generating new social divisions of labour with new fissures along gendered and generational lines, as more women migrate into a job-shedding economy, and spatially stretched households reconfigure the internal divisions between social reproduction (including domestic labour) and accumulation (including resource transfers for investment in agriculture). These upheavals in gender relations have taken deeply personal and disturbing forms, finding outlets in "in conflictual, often violent, marital relationships" (Fakier and Cock, 2009: 361).

2.5 *Generational relationships between different household members, in relation to labour, decision-making, the distribution of benefits, and investment in agriculture*

In June 2019, South Africa's youth unemployment rate was reported as 56,4%, the highest it has ever been, and only slightly lower (1%) than Kosovo, which has the highest youth unemployment in the world (Trading Economics). While the precise extent of unemployment in South Africa may be open to debate, it is clear that it is severe, growing, and endemic largely as a result of technical changes in, and the closure of marginal mines on the reef. The loss of work was initially partly offset by wage rises in the post-apartheid period, but this sharpened rural differentiation, while shifting the burden of escalating unemployment onto the young, mainly black adults (O'Laughlin, 1998).

Outward migration erodes farming communities. Hull (2014) suggests that some of the unwillingness of young adults to undertake unpaid agricultural labour in the household emerges from historical transformations of labour that forged new notions of masculinity and citizenship that persist today. South Africa's history of colonial rule and industrialisation relied on a:

*... rural household headed by a salary-earning male who supported his family through a system of migrant labor to cities and mines. The meanings associated with both citizenship and masculinity became deeply entwined with one's status as economic provider through formal employment (ibid, 2014: 455).*

Unpaid work is inconsistent with this internalised notion of masculinity, which rests on the individualisation of productive capacity, and that makes young people deem unpaid family labour not worthwhile. Thus, despite structural unemployment and the surplus of productive labour available in rural homes, a key factor is the difficulty older kin have in mobilizing family labour for agricultural production (Hull, 2014).

Sustained out-migration of young adults in the early 2000s in search of better prospects has profoundly affected rural households leaving many without a middle generation. Household heads describe rural locations as "emptied outs" after 2000 (Bank, 2015). "By 2006, figures showed that young men and women from traditionalist communities like Shixini were leaving in droves without waiting for promises of jobs before departing." (Bank, 2015: 1073) State social grants, with mostly the elderly as recipients, have become the basis of survival for many rural households with farming providing mainly a supplementary livelihood for some. This has weakened the link between old age and extreme poverty and reversed the direction of historical dependency (O'Laughlin, 1998). The consequence is that the poorest people are now prime-age adults without a regular wage or remittance income, living in households in which nobody is receiving a pension. They may lack marketable skills, have too many dependants to be able to work, or be too poor to look for work, because of the costs of searching for work (Francis, 2002).

But the contrary trend has also been observed: that in an era of widespread deindustrialization, mobility as a livelihood strategy is in decline. Hull (2014) suggests that many young adults are aware of the scale of urban unemployment and are not prepared to take the risk of migrating. Instead, they

are left feeling trapped indefinitely in a rural setting devoid of work. Hornby and Cousins (2019) show that ceremonies play a role in reproducing the social relations that help to sustain the bonds between rural and urban kin and that young rural adults leverage to access urban residence and jobs. However, only households with diversified income sources, including wages, have the resources and livestock to undertake regular ceremonies, with the effect that young kin in poorer households are less likely to access the conduits to urban incomes.

Hull (pers com, 2019) suggests that the political economy of unemployment has reconfigured a new gender-generational organization of productive and care labour, on the back of which limited but gradual accumulation by elderly women on irrigated fields in the Makhathini Flats is taking place. The surplus of local young adult labour that cannot find better wage-earning prospects elsewhere and does not associate work with unremunerated household labour is available to be hired on a casual and piece-meal basis for weeding and harvesting of fields. Younger women, in truncated marriages with the (grand) sons of the older women heads of households in which they reside, undertake domestic work, caring for their own and other children in the household, which releases the older women to tend to their cash crops. The possibility of accumulation in small irrigated fields is thus conditional upon labour exploitation for production and social reproduction along the two axes of generation and gender, and on declining rates of marriage, which make young women's socially precarious positions in their spouse's homes contingent upon their ongoing participation in domestic work.

As a result of rural labour constraints, small-scale producers in KwaZulu-Natal have urged Government to consider subsidising minimum wages or providing a stipend to assist with labour costs. Current government funding does not assist with labour costs but with the purchase of equipment which can reduce the need for labour, but this support is uneven and erratic, and does not contribute significantly to unemployment reduction (KZNDARD, 2018: 43).

#### *2.5.1 Generation and decision-making*

The rapid outmigration of youth from rural areas after 2000 has not necessarily been accompanied by a growing commitment to urban permanence, but in some case to building the rural homestead (Bank, 2015). However, social transfers rather than kinship relations between young and elderly are now the significant resource for survival of both the rural and urban poles of the household, and the rural home is now less a place of investment than it was during apartheid than it is a form of insurance against unemployment and misfortunes (Scully and Britwum, 2019; Hull, 2014). Consistent with this, Fay (2013) observes that rural households with child grants tend to grow a wider range of crops in their gardens and yet they are less likely to have stored maize. This is the consequence of households abandoning field cultivation and using child grants to purchase maize and samp and to plant more land in gardens to vegetables and tree crops.

Oloffson (2019) finds that in fruit and nut orchards in the Vhembe District in Limpopo adult children associate farming with failure, hardship and lack of profitability. This makes them reluctant to pursue it as livelihood while new opportunities for education and professional careers make farming undesirable by comparison. In order to get their children interested in farming, the older generation has adopted particular strategies, such as ceding the harvest to the child in return for his taking responsibility for it. None of these elderly farmers considered selling their farms, and in only few cases did the subsequent generations view farming as a potential career. Instead, they viewed the orchard as an asset that required few inputs and labour but provided an additional income source.

Generation and the distribution of investments and benefits in agriculture

Younger farmers in the absence of welfare grants and a highly constrained labour market with very few employment opportunities have, however, “demonstrated a higher degree of agricultural entrepreneurialism” (Oloffson, 2019: 15) in nut and fruit tree production. Since tree crops are long term investments and cannot sustain their immediate needs of social reproduction, young farmers in Vhembe have diversified into cash crops, largely sold in informal markets. They are thus achieving “a small degree of accumulation .... in the absence of non-agrarian capital” (ibid). The capital is reinvested in tree crops, bridging the long period until the trees begin to produce. “In addition to generating agrarian livelihoods, these strategies have implications for local food production as these high-value crops are stimulating the production of food cash crops, which are sold into local markets.” (ibid)

Oloffson’s case study affects a very small number of households and individuals whereas most young people today most “lack the material basis to form a new household, and [so] they stay at home where they can secure a portion of a relative’s pension” (Slater, 2001: 88-9). Francis (2010: 542) describes the livelihoods of this post-apartheid younger generation as much more precarious than those of their parents. “Reliance on casual work, frequent movement in search of work, difficulties in forming and sustaining households and vulnerability to violence were common themes in life-histories from this generation.” This suggests that the benefits available for distribution are in short supply, tend to fund the elderly and very young dependent children, and have the effect of leaving young adults to fend for themselves in hostile environments.

These changes have stripped away the kin-based relationships between young and older adults that previously provided younger adults (particularly men) with stepping stones into agriculture, such as using wages to purchase goats or cattle that were left in the rural home. Nevertheless, they have had differential consequences for youth investments in agriculture, in that young adults with wages or salaries are more likely to have the resources to invest in agriculture, particularly if they have access to land.

Ngubane (2018), in an interview with a young farmer on the outskirts of Johannesburg who uses his salary to fund his farming activities, identifies three core and interrelated issues that constrain youth investments into farming:

- The first is access to technical production information (eg. appropriate irrigation systems for vegetable production). This is a service usually provided by Government extension officers but the South African service provides poor, untimely information, which can be costly to the farmer attempting to establish him or herself.
- Secondly, access to finance through state financing institutions (like Land Bank) require off-take agreements with retailers, who won’t lock themselves into contracts with untested farmers, as young farmers are likely to be.
- Thirdly, access to markets: large fresh produce markets (Johannesburg and Pretoria) offer low prices that make it difficult to secure returns for reinvestment, while other smaller markets are embedded in local social networks that require negotiation and organizing.

The farmer in Ngubane’s case, like the salaried small scale capitalists in Oloffson’s study, was diversifying into agriculture and was able to invest his wage income into covering input and labour costs in the initial years of establishing the farm. However, young adults who do not have wages or accesses to financial resources are unable to overcome the structural and institutional constraints to initiating farming.

For rural households engaged in farming primarily for the purposes of social reproduction (ie, subsistence, ceremonial functions, and sales of surplus), the precise reasons for why field cultivation has declined or been abandoned is difficult to determine, and appears to some extent to be place specific. For instance, in Gatyana, cattle numbers have declined as has field fertility, and crop damage from increasing numbers of bushpigs and rapid out-migration are contributing factors (Andrew 1992, cited in Fay, 2013). In southern Hobeni, on the other hand, additional factors that have contributed to field cultivation declines include changes in settlement patterns that resulted in unfenced fields along with increases in school enrollment, which reduces the available labour for herding or guarding fields. Fay (ibid) states that most people attribute field cultivation declines to a lack of fencing. All of the reasons above indicate a combination of factors, with crop predation, absence of fencing or labour to prevent crop damage being key to reduced investments in field cultivation.

While pension grant income is sometimes used as a source of agricultural investment (Oloffson, 2019), Neves et al (2009) demonstrate that grant income is more often used to support unpaid socially reproductive care work, which frees up working-age adults to engage in employment. Social grants thus make possible “cycles of reciprocity” that ameliorate vulnerability and are not simply a means to boost consumption or facilitate fiscal investment. The investments in inter-generational relations thus do not necessarily translate into agricultural investments.

In summary, Hull (2014) argues that in the context of deepening unemployment class formation occurs along generational lines in complex process of differentiation, in which class, gender, and generational roles and expectations have contradictory effects.

#### *2.6 The influence of the ‘ceremonial economy’ on agricultural production and marketing*

From a political economy perspective, ceremonies create and reproduce the culture and the social order of farming communities by allocating some of the products of labour to a replacement fund for ongoing ceremonial use. In small scale farming households, the ceremonial fund can be a drain on the reproduction of labour and capital since it is a demand on the total funds necessary for securing the conditions for future production (Bernstein, 2010). However, so powerful are the social obligations inscribed in the body of cattle and goats that a rural NGO worker declared: “You can’t slaughter a cow and cut it up and sell it as pieces of meat. It can’t be done. But if it’s processed – say into sausages or burgers and packaged – then it shows you’re producing cattle as a business. The meat is for selling. It’s not dlozi (ancestral) meat anymore.” (Mbatha, pers com) While the ceremonial uses of cattle may be viewed as economically irrational from the perspective of commercial production, they are also part of a web of social entanglement (Ainslie, 2013) that underpin household formation processes.

Ceremonies play an important role in cementing kinship and neighbourly relations through the redistribution of cattle stock, meat and food while reproducing struggles over kinship that intersect in complex ways with broader relations of socio-political inequality. Hornby (2015) shows that approximately 2.7% of the total cattle owned by households on six farms redistributed through land reform in Besters, KwaZulu-Natal, were used in ceremonial slaughter in 2010 by a third (30 or 35.7%) of the 84 households interviewed. Of the households that used cattle for ceremonial purposes during the year, 53.3% slaughtered one animal, 36.6% slaughtered two cattle and the remaining 10% slaughtered either three or four cattle. The total value of these slaughtered cattle was approximately R244,000 (at mean stock sale values of R4,900 per animal at the time), with a range in cost to the households that held ceremonies of R4,900 to R19,800. Household cattle herds also represent a dense network of social debts and credits. A man whose now deceased father accepted lobolo for

his sister owes support to that sister and her children should her marriage end. Although ilobolo is often viewed in the literature as a pre-marriage transfer of ten cattle, in practice, the number of cattle (or cash) transferred during lobolo is highly negotiable, and the transfer takes place in small amounts over a life-time and beyond, remaining a debt to be extracted from a women's conjugal partner and his lineage by her natal family<sup>2</sup>.

The cattle used in ceremonies can constitute a significant reduction in herd size, and the smaller the herd to begin with the greater is the withdrawal from the breeding stock, not everyone has the four or five cattle and the goats to carry out mourning, celebration and marriage feasts or the cash involved for the purchases of food, goods and services entailed in these ceremonies<sup>3</sup>. The integration of ceremonials or rituals into commodity circuits makes visible both the growing inequalities and who is able to meet the social imperatives of maintaining relationships between the living and the dead, which are key to the establishment and maintenance of kin relations. Those with the cattle and cash required for the full ceremonial feasts are not just rich and capable of largesse: their actions are also morally good in that they reflect good standing with one's ancestors and with one's living kin. Many widows go to great lengths to complete burial rituals and their marriage to their deceased husbands using the cattle stock inherited from their husbands and loans from mashonisa (informal credit lenders) or stockvels, in order to maintain their relationships with their husband's kin. The socio-moral importance of ceremony together with the costs of performing them means it is not entirely surprising that there is an overlap between wealth, ceremonial performance, position amongst kin and social status on the one hand, and the election into positions of local power, such as Communal Property Association committees, on the other (ibid).

The logic of the ceremonial animal market is different from that of an animal raised as beef for a market geared at urban meat consumption. The criteria used to select dlozi animals are integral to the specific ritual and its purpose, including negotiation between families and kin, whereas beef is about class-based consumer preferences. Formal markets, which are geared primarily towards feedlots, abattoirs and butchers, use selection criteria geared at beef consumers, such as age and meat-to-bone ratios whereas the dlozi and lobolo animal selection criteria include sex, size and colour. These market criteria in turn shape production practices and objectives in that beef farmers aim to achieve fast weight gain by rotating grazing and providing supplementary feed, while dlozi animal producers aim to produce the maximum number of animals in low-input systems. These very different production objectives put small scale farmers at a price disadvantage in formal markets that focus on cattle-for-beef transactions.

A constraint in the dlozi market is the regularity and certainty of linkages between the increasing numbers of urban based families wishing to purchase dlozi or lobolo animals and those who have suitable stock to sell, a gap that the Department of Agriculture has begun to fill in collaboration with KZN NGOs, Mdukatshani and Heifer Project with respect to goat production. However, the distinction between formal and informal markets should not be drawn too tightly: small scale cattle

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<sup>2</sup> The combined value of lobolo transfers and outstanding lobolo debts on the land reform farms in Hornby's case study (2015) was in the region of between 550 and 1400 cattle (based on lobolo ranging between six and 15 cattle, the outer ranges found in the case study), with a total estimated value of between R2,7 and R7 million spread across 84 households or R32,000 to R83,000 per household. Bridewealth or lobolo as a component of the ceremonial fund is thus a fund of considerable value.

<sup>3</sup> The commodification of marriage and burial has stimulated the emergence of small but vibrant retail and service sector that include the hiring of transport, tents, tables and chairs, marriage clothes, the provision of music, photography and videography, choirs and dancing groups, along with purchases of coffins, gifts, food, and drink.



farmers in the Besters District target a range of markets depending on the reason for the sale. Cattle offered in formal auctions by small farmers, for instance, peak in December and January corresponding with the need for cash for Christmas and educational costs (ibid) while many formal livestock auctions have vigorous markets for speculators in “trade” animals.

The production of ceremonial cattle and goats is thus an integral component of African farming systems, which constitutes a significant, albeit under-acknowledged, market. In 2002, South Africa’s total cattle stock (dairy and beef in commercial and communal areas) was estimated to be 13,9 million animals (DAFF). In 2018, there were approximately 36,2 million Africans aged 60 years and older (StatsSA, 2018). If we assume that most of them will die in the next 20 years, and that the burial processes of each will entail the slaughter of one animal (a conservative estimate), then the ceremonial market will be nearly three times the 2002 total cattle stock of the country and worth approximately R145 billion over this period (calculated at R4000 per head). This estimate excludes weddings, coming of age events and other celebrations.

### *2.7 The degree to which emerging class differences are shaping social and cultural relations and identities in relation to agricultural production*

Class differentiation in agricultural production is often obscured by narratives that elevate personal qualities such as ‘entrepreneurial’, ‘reliable’, ‘hard-working’ over the social and structural differences that distinguish people’s access to resources, and influence their ability to invest. Capitalist development in South Africa historically has involved the creation of both agricultural petty commodity producers and a working class (Levin and Neocosmos 1987). However, small agricultural production is not inevitable but rather develops if the conditions exist for its development. Cousins (2013) suggests that petty commodity production through “accumulation from below” has potential as a progressive path of capitalist development. This path involves the use of household labour to produce surplus in a production regime that is distinctive because it combines the class positions of capital and labour within the household as the productive entity (Bernstein, 2010: 103). These class positions are frequently distributed along the lines of gender, age and lineage, as indicated by divisions of property, labour, income and consumption (Bernstein, 2010: 103; O’Laughlin, 1996; Bozzoli, 1983). Thus, for instance, older men may occupy the place of capital while his wife/wives and children occupy the place of labour.

For households to sustain petty commodity production, they must reproduce themselves as both capital and labour as well as the social relations that underpin this form of agriculture. This means that the various technologies and means of farm production (machinery, seed, breeding stock etc) must be regularly replaced. The labour used in farming must also be reproduced through regularly replenishing both the daily requirements (food, shelter, clothes etc) of the members of the family as the providers of the labour as well as the requirements of future and past generations of labour (children and the elderly). Finally, reproducing the social relations requires that some of the production surplus is allocated to the activities, rituals, rites and celebrations that make possible household formation and kinship relations. Bernstein (2010) refers to these essential production conditions as funds (replacement, consumption, ceremonial and rent funds) which must be replenished from production in order for farming to continue.

The combination of class positions and the imperative to reproduce the household as both capital and labour is the source of differentiation between petty commodity producers, and results in three possible trajectories. Where small scale farmers are able to reproduce the conditions for production *and* generate a surplus that they invest in expanding the productive base, they may begin to employ wage labour and thus become capitalist producers. In other cases, they will continue to reproduce

themselves as capital and labour at the same scales as before, neither expanding nor falling out of production, and thus remain small scale. In a third possibility, should farmers fail to reproduce themselves as capital (at either the same scale or in an expanded sense), then they will also begin to fail to reproduce themselves as labour, which will force members of the household to seek wage work outside of the producing entity.

Production, in Southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies, was located in the homestead with wives and children ordered into discrete households under the charge of the male homestead-head, as father and husband. The division of labour was gendered and age based: men undertook work with livestock with boys responsible for herding, while daughters and wives undertook domestic and cultivation work. Production was primarily geared at producing the means of subsistence that the homestead depended upon. "Labour expended within aggregations of homesteads structured on these principles provided the productive base of Southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies." (Guy, 1987). While the forces of production in these societies were unable to produce the agricultural surpluses to create the conditions for substantial social differentiation, the environment made it possible to accumulate large herds of cattle beyond subsistence, which served as the basis for a capital-labour transfer: cattle in return for the labour power of wives and their children. Guy argues that this social organisation of labour was fundamentally a class division, in which a dominant class (married men) appropriated the surplus labour of a subordinate class (wives and children). "It was a relation of exploitation based on male rights to the means of production in the form of cattle and land, in which surplus was accumulated in labour power, and realised in the accumulation by fathers and husbands of cattle, wives, and daughters." (ibid, 25)

The development of South Africa's capitalist agricultural economy followed on the rapid industrialisation that mining set in motion after the discovery of gold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which prompted the sudden emergence of a market for agricultural commodities. Settler landowners responded to the new opportunities by shifting from rental income and share cropping arrangements to becoming agricultural commodity producers. The colonial state acted in the interests of these landlords against African peasant farmers, who were competitors, by ensuring that they consolidated their ownership of farming estates, had ready supplies of cheap and exploitable labour and access to agricultural commodity markets through subsidised rail transport. The establishment of capitalist agriculture thus followed an "accumulation from above" path (Morris, 1976) in which the colonial state created the conditions through force for settler landlords to transform themselves into capitalist farmers rather than through technological innovation arising from competition between small scale producers.

The development of industrial capital was itself the product of a political economy of cheap wage labour, produced in part by the maintenance of a subsistence farming sector in the communal areas (Wolpe, 1972). The subsistence farming sector operated in tandem with the organisation of an "industrial army" of reserve labour that the apartheid state controlled and distributed across farms and industry (Legassick and Wolpe, 1976). Together, these systems prompted the reorganisation of households as younger men migrated to urban areas in order to find wage work on mines. Securing incomes enabled them to establish independent households at a younger age, reversing the generational dependency of young on old, and shifting the stresses of social reproduction through subsistence onto older kin. However, the apartheid labour regime was inherently unstable: escalating forced removals and evictions from white-owned farms reduced the amount of land available in the reserves for farming, low wages in the mining sector decreased the amounts of remittance migrant wage workers had available for investment in farming, and younger households under the *de facto* control of women were too labour depleted to undertake agricultural production.

This led to escalating levels of rural and urban poverty, a rapidly growing, permanent urban proletariat and conflict over wages.

Throughout this period, however, limited numbers of wage earners, particularly officials working for “homeland” governments, were able to leverage political positions to secure preferential access to communal land and to use household labour and wage income to engage in, and sometimes expand agricultural petty commodity production (Levin and Neocosmos, 1987). Those with better wages invested in mechanisation, off-setting the shortage of young adult labour lost to urban migration, and creating the basis for social differentiation. Similarly, small pockets of labour tenancy survived on commercial farms where low land prices and marginal returns to capital created conditions in which heads of households could access land for production in return for the unpaid labour of their children. Although labour tenancy enabled limited accumulation in cattle, it was conditional on the highly constrained bargaining power of the patriarchal household head to juggle his relationship with the commercial farmer (who had the backing of the apartheid state) with his declining authority to compel his children to provide unpaid farm labour while extracting cash income from their periodical migration for wage work.

Processes of differentiation have continued to occur post-apartheid amongst both commercial and communal farmers. Aliber et al (2013: 15), for instance, report that in 2010 there were 150 000 “commercially-oriented” smallholders, earning on average R35,000 per annum and 2,6 million “subsistence-orientated” households, earning on average R1,000 per annum. The commercial smallholders grew by 29% between 2002 and 2010, contributed R5,3 billion to rural incomes, and employed in the region of 10% of agricultural workers nationally (ibid).

In a study on tree crop farmers, Oloffson (2019) highlights regional differences along with social factors that differentiate agricultural producers. Drawing on StatsSA data, she notes that Limpopo Province has the highest number of households involved in agriculture in the country (41%), of which the vast majority (91,5%) farm for subsistence purposes while only a fraction (4,4%) undertake farming to earn an income, and this income is usually in addition to other income sources. She clusters the tree crop farmers into four groups, with sources of labour, capital and access to land as key criteria. The clusters that emerge are welfare-dependent small scale producers, agricultural petty commodity producers, salaried small scale capitalists and agricultural small scale capitalists.

Petty commodity producers (PCPs) made up 70% of the total sample. Welfare-dependent PCPs tend to be older men who receive state pensions while agricultural PCPs are relatively well educated and unemployed young male adults. Both groups rely mainly on their own labour with occasional hired labour, and in both cases the income derived is sufficient only to maintain production and for social reproduction. However, the agricultural PCPs, who have no external source of capital, rely on innovative farming practices, such as intercropped vegetable cultivation, to fund the tree production rather than social grants. They are thus accumulators who are constrained by capitalisation but are “inching up” through diversification into agriculture.

The salaried and agricultural capitalists both hire labour, although not in large numbers. The salaried capitalists fund production and labour costs from professional wages while they wait for the tree crop to begin to produce, using waged work to “step out” into agriculture. The final group, agricultural capitalists, is distinguished by its much greater access to land (with a median of 40 hectares compared with 5-7 hectares for other groups), higher levels of mechanisation and greater scale of production. The age group and levels of education range widely with no significant demographic emerging. Income from external sources makes up a small fraction of this latter

cluster's total income. Although farm production and expansion is funded from farming profits, the establishment of the farm operations in this group were all funded from capital from small businesses or salaried work obtained prior to farming, with one farmer inheriting an established orchard. Access to capital is thus an entry constraint.

Given this overall characterisation of class formation, the agricultural PCPs are important. They represent 29% of the sample, are on average much younger (early to midcareer category), and most have completed secondary school and some tertiary. While agriculture currently plays a critical role in their social reproduction, their innovations mean that their agricultural income is higher than that of welfare dependent PCPs, and they generate small surpluses that are reinvested into the longer term tree crops. Critically, many of the farmers in this cluster entered farming when they inherited relatively established farms. While they have long-term plans and aspirations of becoming commercially oriented and profitable, there is little potential currently for expanded reproduction.

Interrogating schemes to modernise maize production in the drier, more hostile agro-ecological conditions of the Eastern Cape, Mtero (2012) argues that capital accumulation through processes of centralisation and concentration has severely constrained the possibility of accumulation from below amongst small agricultural producers. Mtero (ibid) confirms other findings (Fay, 2013; Shackleton et al, 2019) that, as a result of capital and input constraints there has been shift away from field cultivation to extensive garden cultivation (82% of households) often in combination with production of small numbers of livestock. In other words, land use has changed from cultivation to 'grazing, gathering and growing'. However, some 'accumulation from below' is taking place, based on investments in productive assets (tractors, water tanks, livestock). Not all of these are in agriculture, but some accumulators combine agricultural production with other activities, such as agricultural services and petty retail, resulting in complementary improvements in both livelihoods and agricultural production.

Cash transfers from state social grants are key to these livelihood strategies, with over 55% of households in receipt of child support grants and pensions, while only a quarter of households include a person who earns an income from a formal job, which corresponds with low levels of remittance and confirms low participation in labour markets at a time of structural unemployment. Nearly half of all households sold livestock (mainly sheep and goats) while fewer households had diversified into cattle production (with a mean herd size of 8.8 in a range of one to 50) for a range of purposes, including as stores of wealth. The strategies used by accumulators include investing retirement pay outs or income from wages or small businesses (often from the taxi industry) into productive assets. In a few cases, the surpluses generated on the back of own labour result in production expansion and the employment of wage labour, but some petty commodity producers succumbed to overcrowded markets and capital constraints and fell out of production. Mtero concludes that the rural households in his case study "are involved in multiple and complex livelihood strategies, combining agricultural and non-agricultural activities for social reproduction and (limited) capital accumulation" (ibid: 9).

Dubb (2016) and Cousins (2013) in small sugar and irrigated vegetable production respectively, also find evidence of accumulation in agriculture albeit highly constrained and limited. Cousins shows that access to low-tech irrigation canals, old age pensions, casual labour, bakkie traders and informal retailers (hawkers) created the conditions for some small vegetable producers in the Tugela irrigation scheme in KwaZulu-Natal to hire in additional plots of land and expand their production. Many of the farmers were elderly women who engaged in agriculture in order to generate small amounts of cash income and household consumption. The cash income was used to purchase the inputs necessary to re-establish and, in a few cases, to expand annual crop production as well as to

ease the social reproduction pressures on the pension-dependent households. Dubb similarly found that many small sugar cane growers inland of KwaZulu-Natal's north-east coast were women heads of house in receipt of state old age pensions. While some failed to juggle the recurring costs of production and the consumption needs of their households from their meagre cane earnings, others used old age pensions and child grants to re-establish small plots of cane, thus creeping back into production. Revealingly, however, Dubb also found the numbers of small cane producers had increased when industry subsidies had reduced costs of production, and that with the removal of the subsidies, the significant accumulators were mainly men who were able to diversify from cane production into cane haulage by investing in trucks.

In summary, small scale agricultural producers who are expanding their production tend to be middle to older aged men who uses income from wages or government pensions to sustain farming operations. Younger unemployed adult men who have access to land (often through inheritance) develop innovative practices to generate the capital to invest in sustaining or expanding their farming operations. Older women in receipt of government pensions also invest in irrigation plots or small crop production in order to generate surplus income. These farmers hire in small numbers of labour on a part-time, seasonal or permanent basis, and supply combinations of formal and informal markets. There appears to be little evidence that young women are engaging in agriculture beyond diversifying vegetable and fruit crops in gardens mainly for household consumption, or as suppliers of part-time labour.

### **3 The role of social relations and identities in land tenure systems and options (including within land reform)**

South Africa's countryside is characterized by complex but distinct tenure contexts, including, state-owned "communal" areas in which traditional authorities and leaders play important roles in land administration; privately owned commercial farms occupied by owners, managers, farm dwellers, labour tenants and farm workers; land reform communal property institutions (CPAs and trusts) owned and sometimes occupied by groups of households or individuals but also sometimes leased out to third parties; state owned commercial farms leased to land reform beneficiaries for the purposes of undertaking commercial farming. This section considers case studies of three contexts: unmarried women rights to land in communal areas, differentiation and conflict in communal property associations and oscillatory migration of farm dwellers on commercial farms.

#### *3.1 Communal areas*

Historically, a primary stricture on agriculture was that only men were able to possess land and they, as fathers or husbands, gave women access to it, to work. Furthermore, the agricultural produce derived from this labour was distributed by the non-labouring male homestead-head, mainly within the homestead, with the bulk used by the household which produced it (Guy, 1987). Kaser (2002) argues that men's ownership and control of land for housing and agriculture were outcomes of historical processes in which male labour and identity dominated, and which were triggered by the need for organised actions and cooperation between men in a village. Similarly, Tsikata (2003) refers to a study commissioned by the Government of Tanzania that concludes that the customary laws that seek to protect clan land from alienation to outsiders form the basis for discrimination in inheritance against women as daughters, wives, divorcees and widows. In this way, agnatic ties in the generational transfer of property are supported by tribal and patrilineal organisations (Kaser, 2002).

Today, land in South Africa's communal areas, which are home to about 16,5 million people, continues to be governed by localised rules and practices that find legitimacy under customary law and which can be clearly articulated by the residents in these areas. Cousins (2017) describes these as socially-embedded systems, a reference to the socio-spatial layers at which different administrative authority lies. A key issue of dispute is that chiefs own land whereas Cousins finds that chiefs grant citizenship rights to members of the group, and as part of the bundle of rights associated with membership is access to land for residence, cropping, grazing and natural resource harvesting. The actual authority to allocate, however, lies in the first place with the immediate neighbourhood household heads ("ibandla"), who can refuse an allocation. Furthermore, even though residential and cropping land is held under the authority of a household head, there is a common understanding that it is an allocation to the whole household to support their livelihoods.

Historically, 'married couples' and their children tended to live within their extended family homesteads before they established their own homestead resulting in large homesteads, with multiple households within them. Each household would be allocated its own plots within the homestead to build their home and fields to grow their food. New households would be formed when a man with his wife applied to the chief for land to establish his own homestead. Married women therefore, had access to land through their husbands, making marriage a key mediating institution in land access. (Budlender et al, 2011). Unmarried men and women were expected to stay in their natal family homesteads until they married and were entitled to land.

Although these household organisations are still evident across South Africa's rural landscape, the declines in marriage have, as described above, resulted in new practices of household-formation, particularly households formed by unmarried women with children. These social changes have begun to put pressure on customary law practices. In a study on the living customary laws of land in Umsinga, KZN, Cousins (2017) found that single women with children can now be allocated land in their father's or brother's homesteads. This is the result of the chief headman announcing that the 'law' had to change to accommodate unmarried women with children as more and more women are having children while living in their father's homesteads. The changes mean that women with children can now 'hold' land in their own right and establish their own households. In effect, the patrilineal organisation of families is clashing with the need for new forms of household to access land to sustain livelihoods in a context of declining employment and marriage.

Similar changes have been observed in other studies. Kalabamu (2009) shows that the exclusion of women from property inheritance is changing with parents either splitting their estates between daughters and sons or favouring daughters. Although the changes are heavily contested within households, they've been prompted by the increasing numbers of female-headed households on the one hand, and the contributions made by unmarried daughters in developing and the home and caring for their parents on the other (Kalabamu, 2009). Kingwill (2016) similarly presents evidence that women are increasingly taking control of inherited property, or at least sharing the responsibility with male kin in her Eastern Cape case study area, Fingo Village. Because women are judged as a more reliable "insurance" against the sale of titled family property than men, an increasing number of females are appointed as custodians. Kingwill concludes that these trends complicate the notion of patrilineal succession and confirm a growing recognition that women can be de facto successors to family property.

Cousins (ibid) nevertheless acknowledges that it is not known how widespread these bottom-up changes are and that state support for processes of securing land rights for women are needed.

### 3.2 Communal Property Associations (CPAs)

CPAs are a new post-apartheid form of land-holding organisation created in law<sup>4</sup> specifically to enable groups of people to hold land and other property communally that they have received through land reform. Together with land trusts, the 1 490 CPAs that exist own most of the 8000 hectares of land transferred through redistribution and restitution to date. They have been widely criticised (most recently in Presidential Panel Report (2019) and the High Level Panel Report (2017) as ineffective, conflict-ridden and generally dysfunctional. The HLP (2017: 252) summarised these issues as being:

- The entities often consist of large groups of people living in different places, with varied resources, assets, skills, and interests in the land they once owned; inevitably producing complex and conflictual group dynamics centring on land use and tenure issues, particularly regarding individual rights and benefits.
- They are under-resourced and have very limited and ineffective support and oversight from government, and there is a serious lack of communication between the entities and officials.
- There is a lack of specification of rights in their founding documents. The substantive rights of members are not clearly spelled out and defined. The process of establishing landholding entities tends to be poorly designed and facilitated. Many of them have founding documents that do not reflect the understandings of their members or are poorly aligned to local land tenure practices.

Intriguingly, the HLP (ibid, 252) states that if land holding entities are dysfunctional, the land cannot be productively used. A case study (see Hornby, 2015) of six farms redistributed to former labour tenants in the KwaZulu-Natal beef and maize producing area, Besters, suggests that production dynamics can be a primary cause of dysfunctionality in the entity, thus reversing the causality. On some of the Bester's farms, the land reform beneficiaries run commercial beef herds that are collectively owed together with multiple-function livestock herds that individual member households own. The forms of organisation, production and property holding resonate with, but are distinct from those in communal areas. Thus, for instance, livestock are key elements in social reproduction (such as ceremonies) but interact with wage income and commodity production to generate complex processes of social differentiation. In particular, expanding agricultural production can clash with household social reproduction and, in some cases, leads to irresolvable conflicts in the CPA. In an effort to resolve the conflict, members often opt to disband the commercial beef operations.

The project involved 13 CPAs, with 178 household members, taking ownership in 2006 of nearly 21% of the commercially owned farmland in the district. State funding for land, cattle and agricultural implements amounted to R25 million, and within a year, the beneficiaries were selling weaned oxen at local auction sales and informal markets. The CPA herds subsidised the household herds by providing inputs (veterinary, feed, fencing), breeding stock (heifers and the use of the CPA bulls) and cash dividends. However, farming is only one of a number of livelihood strategies that households pursue: 54% derived income from employment, 38% from social grants and only 21% from selling cattle. The distribution of this income was highly unequal with the households with the greatest number of income sources also being the wealthiest in assets and owning most of the cattle stock. The majority of female headed households were in the poorer asset groups.

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<sup>4</sup> The Communal Property Associations Act, 1996 is the enabling legislation. The Act was amended in 2017 by the Communal Property Associations Amendment Bill, which is still awaiting the President's signature, and which is on hold following the Presidential Panel Report and the High Level Panel Report recommendations on how to improve the tenure security of unregistered land rights holders.

The unequal wealth structure reflected both livelihood diversification and the differential capacity to engage in farm production.

Those households that had wage and pension incomes and had inherited cattle stock had household herds that were growing, often rapidly. Other households experienced sharp production declines as a result of high rates of herd off-take through sales and the ceremonial use of cattle, often at times of “shock” such as the death of a pensioner or retrenchment of a wage earner. Where off-takes exceeded rates of replacement in raising calves, purchases, bridewealth and other cattle transfers, the farmers face the prospect of dropping out of farming altogether. However, where CPAs disbursed cattle (heifers) and cash to household members and subsidised household farming to a significant degree, households were able to re-invest in cattle production and reverse the decline in herd sizes, or maintain their cattle herds at more or less constant numbers. Where households received no cattle or subsidies from the CPA, the drop-out rates were striking. In these situations, the farmers most likely to expand cattle production were those with larger herds (accumulated prior to land reform) and were thus able to appropriate a larger share of the common grazing land.

However, CPAs as separate farm enterprises struggle to balance three competing demands on their profits:

- Using income from cattle sales to meet the operational requirements of commercial beef farming (wages, nutritional supplements, veterinary inputs, breeding, maintaining infrastructure and purchase of farm implements;
- Investing in expanding production to remain competitive (improving labour productivity, investing up or down the value chain or securing niche markets;
- Providing member households with benefits in the form of cash dividends, heifers, subsidised inputs to household farming or burial insurance.

Tensions between these competing pressures on CPA herds are at the centre of the many conflicts which have emerged on the farms. When CPAs are unable to provide members with substantial and increasing benefits, members question how farms are managed, and suspicions that farm income is being appropriated by CPA leaders sometimes emerge. Where conflicts have resulted in CPAs disbanding the CPA cattle enterprise, poorer households tend to fall out of farm production, placing further pressure on their survival. On farms where CPAs no longer engage in beef cattle production, the gap between better off farmers and the farming poor is more pronounced than on those with profitable CPA cattle enterprises, where the gap is gradually becoming narrower.

The Besters case illustrates that CPAs are not simply land-holding institutions but are often property holding institutions involved in agricultural production. The “failure” of CPAs is the result of the shifting relations between wage labour, agricultural commodity production, and state welfare grants in how rural households reproduce themselves. For some households on land reform farms, income sources are mutually supportive and enable increased levels of income and even accumulation, but for others, declining cattle herds both reflect and contribute to the diminished capacity of households to secure their reproduction. The profitability of CPA cattle enterprises and the distribution of surplus income are at the centre of a range of tensions and conflicts on land reform farms. Abandoning CPAs as a form of land and property holding will not resolve these tensions. Alternatively, proper support would include assisting CPAs to make decisions that enable the small-scale producers that are their members survive the social reproduction pressures on their farm production. This support, which should be extended to all collective enterprise arrangements, including joint ventures and share equities, would include:



- State supported administration of land and other property rights, including household versus CPA allocation and use of land, infrastructure, equipment and income
- Strategic enterprise decision-making to assist members to balance trade-offs between reproducing the enterprise and supporting members through payment of dividends
- Permitting accumulators (or other members) to exit CPAs or to expand outside of CPAs (through state facilitated leases to additional land) without losing their investments

Production pressures are not the only problems facing CPAs. The HLP (2017) lists a number of recommendations for CPAs set up to own land transferred through restitution that do not necessarily have the same pressures as CPAs in redistributive land reform where the purpose of the land reform is, amongst other things, agricultural production.

### 3.3 *Farm dwellers*

Farm dwellers, who live on commercial farms that they do not own, are not necessarily farm workers, but incorporate a range of historically-shaped social categories with different tenure and development needs. These are:

- Waged farm workers who, together with their families, have long histories of living on the farm, including as labour tenants, and may cultivate gardens and fields, and own livestock.
- Waged farm workers who have recently come to live on the farm with their families and have no homes elsewhere. They may have gardens but are less likely to own livestock.
- Migrant farm workers who have homes elsewhere (sometimes in other countries) and live on the farm only for the purposes of work. They are unlikely to have gardens or livestock.
- Families with nobody working on the farm but who have lived many generations on the farm, including as labour tenants, and have no homes elsewhere. They may own livestock and cultivate fields in addition to gardens. (Hornby et al, 2018:10)

Only 10% of the people who live on commercial farms as farm dwellers derive their primary income from working on the farm on which they live, but over 80% continue to rely partly small-scale agriculture as a component of their livelihood, specifically, garden (mainly) and field cultivation and livestock production (mainly chicken and goats) (ibid). Historically, the development of the agrarian economy depended on cheap labour sourced partly from labour reserves and partly from share-cropping and labour tenancy arrangements. From the late 1980s, the agricultural sector began to mechanise in order to increase the productivity of labour and to reduce political threats of land claims. The reorganisation of labour resulted in massive declines of permanent wage work and a shift to seasonal and casualised feminised labour, increasingly recruited through labour brokers. At the same time the shrinking mining sector, and the decline of the manufacturing sector means that there is now an oversupply of rural labour without the industry to absorb it. NGOs have highlighted the massive evictions from farms that have resulted. The evictions have contributed to a shifting population on farms, which is exacerbated by the oscillatory migration that young farm dwellers undertake in order to secure work. Without the resources to invest in homes in more spatially inclusive locations, these young adults migrate back and forth from city to farm, an agricultural precariat with reduced prospects for a secure future.

An AFRA (2019) report proposes that for the purposes of settling farm dwellers, a distinction should be drawn between those with agriculturally-tied livelihoods (either as wage workers or as small-scale farmers) and those with non-agriculturally-tied livelihoods (who live on farms because they do not have the resources to relocate). Settlement options would be accordingly disaggregated, with agriculturally-tied wage workers having the option to settle in rural development nodes, close to

places of employment, where services (housing, water, electrification, cell phone networks, pension pay points) and infrastructure (roads, hospitals, schools) are prioritised. These settlements could include sufficient land for large gardens and commonage. Agriculturally-tied small-scale farmers could be prioritised for land redistribution, with proactive land acquisition identifying land close to input and output markets. Farm dwellers with non-agriculturally-tied livelihoods would be disaggregated into those who, for cultural reasons, wish to live out their lives on the farm and those who would prefer to live closer to job opportunities and government services. The former would be given life-long usufruct rights while the latter would be prioritised for housing settlements in towns with growing economies.

#### 4 Social and cultural aspects of small-scale agricultural production and land reform policies since 1994

South Africa's rural areas are today characterised by de-industrialisation and uneven livelihood diversification. Wage work is difficult to find and to secure, and agricultural commodity production is constrained by the pincer squeeze of rising input prices and low producer prices in an increasingly centralised and concentrated agro-value chain. In this situation, rural households struggle to reproduce themselves either through agricultural production or through wage labour. "For all these reasons, households vary considerably in terms of both their composition and their stability over time." (Francis, 2002: 535) The survival of rural household members now depends on two primary strategies, namely, clustering and diversification (Francis, 2000).

Clustering involves settlement around a regular income, often a government old age pension grant, and is associated with complex households. The households consist of siblings, family members looking after sibling's children, pensioners caring for (great) grandchildren, or living with unemployed adult children and their children; the consequences of broken marriages or the inability to form households. Challenges involve the compromised authority of elderly members to secure the co-operation of younger generations, including negotiating how to support fostered children whose parents send little or no money for their upkeep, and mobilizing the productive labour of unemployed adults who rely on shared household consumption for their survival.

Diversification involves securing incomes from multiple sources, each of which on its own contributes insufficient amounts for survival let alone surplus for productive reinvestment. These include dependence on government social grants, particularly the old age pension and child grants; survivalist enterprises using own or unremunerated household labour in over-crowded spaces where competition is tough, including small scale farming geared towards consumption or combinations of consumption and sale; part-time, seasonal or contract work; and other illegal ways of securing a living. Successful diversification involves flexibility, access to information and investment in social networks. While these attributes are not substitutes for labour, skills, capital and access to the state, they do make it possible to survive (Francis, 2002: 545).

Hull (2014) argues further that the profound shifts in the wider economy from labour shortage to labour surplus have brought about new changes in household organization, marriage and family expectations.

*The .... political economy of unemployment, rather than simply rendering available more family labor in agriculture as a straightforward economic analysis might predict, has disrupted established social norms associated with the "conjugal contract" by creating a context in which marriage is unaffordable... [and young men lack] the responsibilities toward their household that they would otherwise have had as married men. (Hull, 2014: 456-7)*

In other words, labour scarcity co-exists with high unemployment where historically shaped social relations make it difficult to mobilise unremunerated household labour.

The organisation of the household, its capacity to marshal resources and co-ordinate the actions of its members, and either to secure the labour of younger generations and women or to purchase the surplus labour power of other households, are all key to the class dynamics of unequal resource access in conditions of inequality. Central to this is effective decision-making associated with generational authority (Neves et al, 2009; Hull, 2014). The breakdown of authority as a result of the changing composition of households has generated contradictory and complex negotiations in the rural household, anchored on the separation of production and subsistence: on the one hand, younger kin are entitled to subsistence from members with access to a state pension, on the other, elderly kin struggle to claim the labour or income of young adults. As a result, “the cheap labor of young people who make up a reserve pool of casual waged-labor is appropriated by better established, older residents with access to resources such as land and credit who can afford to buy labor.” (Hull, 2014: 456-7) This gives rise to social differentiation and class formation over time.

While household survival strategies in response to employment contraction can be a catalyst for rural farm productivity, rural households engage with farming in range of ways, including to support food security, generate income to mitigate risk and to manage social claims from others (Neves and Du Toit, 2013). The data on what is happening around small scale agricultural production is, however, contradictory in South Africa. The evidence of declining field cultivation, a shift to smaller household gardens and increasing livestock production albeit concentrated in smaller numbers of households (Fay, 2013, Shackleton et al, 2019; Zantsi et al, 2019) co-exists with evidence of small scale agricultural commercialization and expansion (Zantsi et al, 2019; Oloffson, 2019, Dubb, 2016; Aliber and Cousins, 2013). This appears to confirm that social differentiation through agricultural is occurring, with some small scale producers accumulating and employing labour while others are dropping out of production.

The specific social and cultural dynamics described above lend themselves to particular conclusions with respect to small scale farming and redistributive land reform.

Firstly, the reorganisation, composition and feminisation of households as a result of declining rates of marriage have resulted in a rising number of female-headed rural households, decreased the authority of the elderly and increased the burdens of domestic care work. The two main implications for small scale farming are a reduction in the availability of household labour for intensive farming and the increased tenure insecurity of women-headed households. Land reform needs to ensure women living in communal areas or in CPAs who are not married or are in conjugal relationships with incomplete marriage processes receive secure land access in their own right for the purposes of residence, garden cultivation and small livestock production. Agricultural support geared at large, asset-poor, women-dominant households should focus on farming with low labour requirements, such as livestock production that does not threaten gendered social norms and small areas for cultivated crops such as gardens mainly for consumption. Livestock would include chickens, goats, sheep and pigs. The Siyazondla programme could be replicated and expanded.

Secondly, in terms of rural-urban household relations, rural areas have been profoundly affected by mass rural-urban migration. It is generally assumed that the migration is at the cost of small farm production based on household labour while the benefits are primarily in the urban wage transfers back to rural areas. This view is based on the idea that the rural sector is dependent on the urban sector in a one-way relationship. However, multiple livelihood strategies at the micro level have

eroded the urban-rural dichotomy, and 'urban' and 'rural' have become increasingly intertwined as livelihoods have diversified. In many cases, the rural pole supports household members as they try to gain a foothold in the town and cities. Furthermore, the urban members return to the rural home to undertake ceremonies, in times of unemployment or ill-health. The rural pole is thus insurance against the precariousness of urban work and costs of living. The implications for small scale agricultural production is that where rural households have diversified livelihoods, including an agricultural component, they are able to support members in urban areas for longer periods, while maintaining a social protection function against the vagaries of employment. Nevertheless, the agricultural production, as above, cannot be labour intensive, suggesting gardens for household consumption and livestock for consumption and sales on informal or local markets.

While the urban-rural linkages focussed on here have revolved around the household, supermarket expansion into rural South Africa has proceeded through a "complex network of alliances between state and private capital on the one hand, and large and small retail outlets on the other, creating a web of both overlapping and competing interests." (Hull, 2016: 375) In order to compete with global retailers, local retailers have created preferential credit schemes based on their personal knowledge of their customer base together with the regularity of social grant receipts, which make it possible for 'loans' of food and groceries to be paid back. The local retailers' knowledge of their customer base thus gives them a competitive advantage over global supermarkets. This insight into how local "debt" economies operate could be extended to supporting local markets for agricultural produce. Land reform and agrarian support to date has tended to focus, with mixed success on formal markets whereas local markets are structured differently and need to be understood in their own terms.

Thirdly, the cattle economy plays a central role in creating kinship and structuring its hierarchies. Neves et al (2009: 45) describes the use of cattle for ceremonial slaughter, transfer (ilobolo and ihlawulo) or celebratory feasts as "the most potent of public acts in the Southern African countryside". These acts proclaim those performing them to be people of substance, to have dignity, to be successful and deserving of respect (Neves et al, 2009: 45). White (2015: 13) makes a similar observation. Marriage payments do not simply "authorise a relationship by transferring wealth from one set of kin to another; they also refer to a complex set of institutional forms, thus presenting images of what a household is." The system of marriage gifts as a whole "construe a home complexly as a space of recognition, while tying forms of recognition to modes of distribution" (White, 2015:1014). As socially constitutive acts, ceremonies, which are frequently undertaken in the rural homestead, also act as a social glue that brings together kin spread across urban and rural spaces, neighbours in conflict over resource allocations and members of households and neighbourhoods torn apart by processes of social differentiation (Hornby and Cousins, 2019). However, ceremonies also reinforce social inequality in that only the wealthier can muster the resources to undertake the full range of actions involved, at the standards expected. The ceremonial cattle economy is thus integral to African farming systems because it anchors kinship relations, marriage and household formation processes. Land and agricultural reform have not only neglected this vast market, beef production and the (more limited) urban consumer market it services is deemed to be the real farming that land reform beneficiaries should be engaging in.

Fourthly, the burden of structural unemployment has fallen mostly onto youth contributing to the dynamics described above, namely oscillatory migration, declining rates of marriage and the collapse of kinship relations. It has also excluded youth from entering agricultural production, except where they have inherited land or livestock, or as casual and part-time wage workers. Given the depth and range of exclusions that youth confront, it is important the agricultural development strategies recognise the small-scale farming is primarily a part-time activity with strong linkages to wage work

and other economic activities; that generational cycles need to be supported given that the majority of small-scale farmers are pensioners who invest partly for their own social reproduction but also to provide their children with a productive asset; and that some agricultural crops - like tree crops— are capital intensive and slow to mature, which poses particular challenges for young cash-constrained farmers to gain entry to and sustain themselves with, and thus require that specific attention is paid to intergenerational knowledge transfer, tenure security, and opportunities for both on- and off-farm livelihood diversification (Oloffson, 2019). Public works programmes that help small scale farmers to expand or to become more sustainable (such as, infrastructure development, opening new land for cultivation, community veterinary services, conversion to climate-adapting technologies) could all prioritise rural youth employment.

Fifthly, social differentiation amongst small-scale farmers is occurring, based on the degree to which households are able to secure the resources to invest and sustain farming enterprises. Where members of households have access to salaried employment, they have been able to invest in land and farming and employ labour. Some households have been able to combine diversified livelihoods, including wages and state pensions, to invest in farm production, and used farming to sustain social reproduction or to accumulate and expand. However, where households have experienced livelihood shocks – the death of a pensioner or wage earner or retrenchment – they have often drawn down hard on agricultural assets in order to survive and sometimes have dropped out of production as a result. Many households straddle rural and urban livelihoods, transferring resources between the two, and the prospects for farming depend on how the relationships are managed and sustained.

Land redistribution policies have, to date, not been developed with an awareness of these dynamics. The early Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) was possibly the most accommodating in that it recognised the need for redistribution to meet multiple needs, including land for residence, subsistence and small-scale farming. The assumption that all land acquired in this way would be for rural settlement, with little municipal capacity to service the human settlements that were created, was the downfall of the programme. The Land Redistribution for Agriculture Programme (LRAD), which replaced SLAG, correctly identified the need for small-scale farmers to be targeted and supported with more land and agricultural support services. However, it failed to activate the amendment to the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, resulting in group schemes that were often unsupported and difficult to manage. It also replaced the settlement programme, which meant that households who needed land for settlement and diversified livelihoods had no choice to be apply through LRAD even though they may not have intended to prioritise farming as a livelihood. The persistent reports of production failure emerging from land reform farms resulted in the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) and State Land Disposal Act. Land was transferred to the state, which provided beneficiaries who wanted to farm commercially, with leases. While the intention had been to maintain control over levels of production on redistributed farms, land was not acquired proactively but continued to be supply-led with estate agents taking a driving seat. Leases were short-term, and massive budgets were allocated to very few beneficiaries who received large farms as single operators. The effect was to lock out small-scale farmers, eliminate the settlement components of land redistribution and encourage political patronage in the allocation processes, without significant gains in production.

## 5 Implications for land reform policy, specifically redistribution

A number of land redistribution and agricultural support policies (eg. State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (SLLDP) 2013, National Development Plan (NDP) and the CPDS) recognise differences between small farmers. The state land lease and disposal act has four categories using “farm scale” and land

access or constraints as key criterion and is focussed on enabling farmers to “graduate” from category to category. Scale is not defined. The categories are: households with such limited access to land that they are not able to undertake subsistence farming; small-scale farmers producing for subsistence and sale on local markets, medium-scale farmers who are producing commercially but are constrained by land and other resources, and large-scale farmers farming commercially but whose potential to grow is constrained by land, location and other resources. The SLLDP also targets women, youth and veterans. However, the requirements for access – business plans, rental payments, short leases without the option to purchase for the first two categories – and the absence of income ceilings privilege better resourced applicants.

The CPDS categorises farmers into five groups using farming income thresholds as a key criterion. The categories are: vulnerable households producing for subsistence, subsistence household producers who market small surpluses not exceeding R50,000 pa, smallholders producing for subsistence and for profit but not exceeding R5 million pa, medium scale commercial producers who produce only for profit with turnovers between R5-R20 million pa, and large scale commercial farmers with annual turnovers exceeding R20 million. Different levels of support, conditions and budget allocation are pegged to these categories. The problems with this approach are many: production income thresholds are a shifting target and often not in the control of farmers; participation in *formal* value chains discriminates against vibrant local markets; many small-scale farmers cannot access or manage the conditions of finance capital.

An additional assumption is that the State disaggregates smallholders in actual implementation. The increasing budgetary allocations (in a declining overall budget) to smaller numbers of beneficiaries accessing ever larger farms, mostly recently through PLAS and SLLDP, indicates otherwise. The reasons are difficult to fathom but probably include that officials buy into the commercial farmer discourse that to survive market pressures requires ever larger farms, that only full-time, commercial farmers are “real” farmers and that the implementation mechanisms for targeting land and agricultural services for different categories of beneficiaries either don’t exist or have lost political favour. The effect is to exclude poorer and part-time farmers and those at risk of dropping out, to prioritise women and youth only at the level of discourse without practical instruments for such targeting, and to create an environment for elite capture and political patronage. Limited state resources are thus spent on a small number of relatively better off individuals, who are mostly older men.

The Presidential Advisory Panel Report (2019) reasserts the importance of targeting the poor (social grant beneficiaries and those who are food insecure), land constrained households (landless cattle owners, farm dwellers including labour tenants, commonage farmers, smallholders etc), and identifies women as a primary neglected category, but retains the notion that the purpose is to “graduate” beneficiaries from “social protection to self-reliance” (ibid, 18). Thus:

*Land Reform products should consider that there is a need to balance the need for large scale farming to maintain output however there is still a need for low input farming which will increase employment opportunities and be a platform to leapfrog small holders into commercial farmers. (ibid, 54)*

The social dynamics described above, however, show that diversified income sources are most likely associated with small scale farmers expanding, while “self-reliance” (the absence of pensions in particular) are associated with small-scale farmers dropping out of agricultural production often into extreme poverty.

The Presidential report also recognises the limited public resources available for land acquisition and farmer support services and recommends that budgets are rationed across different priority needs. While urban land reform can be financed from a number of sources, more than 50% of the total budget allocated to rural and agrarian reform should be ring-fenced for land reform for agricultural purposes. The allocations across beneficiary targets draw on the categories set out in the SLLDP (as described above). The first three categories (households with no access to farmland, subsistence and informal market farmers and medium-scale farmers) each receive 30% of the budget with large-scale farmers receiving the remaining 10%. The actual allocations are not justified beyond an emphasis on a pro-poor distribution, which could mean the figures are illustrative rather than recommendations. The report rather confusingly later (ibid, 94) refers to the first category as being farm dwellers, labour tenants and subsistence farmers without reconciling the differences implied with respect to the SLLDP.

The report then recommends that a number of these issues are referred to subsequent proposed processes, such as a new Green Paper and a workshop on an agrarian vision, but it isn't clear why these processes would be any better at resolving the underlying differences that generated the indecision in the first place. Perhaps more usefully, the report argues that the starting point for redistribution is a serious engagement with the nature of demand – who wants what land, where, for what purposes, and proposes an area-based, proactive targeted land acquisition programme, which includes public and privately owned land that is well-located for its intended purposes and beneficiary target groups.

What emerges from this is that clarity on how to identify beneficiaries, distinguish different farmer categories and assess demand all remain unclear, probably because they're linked with contested views on what the agrarian goals of transformation are. The implications for programme implementation based on different types of land redistribution beneficiaries and agricultural support interventions are also glossed over despite the recognition that a critical failing of land reform to date has been State capacity together with chopping, changing and abandoning policies and programmes. The result is that the budget allocations for different target groups do not have a clear justification. Aliber (2019) argues that redistribution should aim to create a range of livelihood opportunities in sufficient quantities to make an impact on however the need or demand is understood. For political reasons, rather than livelihoods, the racial transformation of the commercial agricultural sector is also important.

To achieve this, land redistribution should aim to accommodate a range of land needs. Small-scale farmers are more labour-intensive than large-scale commercial farmers while accommodating commercially-oriented small-scale farmers in the communal areas will decongest these areas, particularly the rangelands. Since unemployment and household food insecurity are widespread, targeting small-scale farmers makes sense. Aliber (ibid) suggests three categories:

**Settlement-oriented smallholders:** 0,1 – 1 HA per household, with application of a household income ceiling (as was the case with the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant). The land is secured through a proactive land acquisition process through targeted expropriation (or market when possible) in order to secure appropriate land for settlement (that is, closer to towns and cities with the possibility of services). This is not a process that should be led by land sellers. Beneficiary households would hold land either in title or receive a clearly defined allocation within a CPA. For the purpose of budgeting, Aliber assumes that 0,5 HA/HH would cost R100 000/HA.

**Small-scale farmers:** 1 – 50 HA per household of arable land or sufficient land to graze up to 40 large-stock units, including on commonage land. Beneficiaries would need to have some experience in agriculture to access the programme. The land would be acquired through pro-active land acquisition through the market. The land could be transferred to a CPA, with informal subdivisions, where benefits include managing common infrastructure or resources although the capacity of CPAs to manage members exiting may be a constraint. , or individual titles requiring the subdivision of farmland. The risk of immediate resale with individually owned land can be mitigated by limiting provisions in the title deed. For the purpose of budgeting, Aliber assumes that 20 HA/HH would cost R25 000/HA.

**Large-scale farmers:** 50 - 500 HA household of arable land or sufficient land to allow for over 40 large-stock units. Beneficiaries would require a business plan and relevant experience. Something like the own-contribution formula from LRAD should be re-introduced, together with a clear upper limit to the value of government's contribution, whether this is in the form of land, grants, or both. The process would be applicant-led acquisition through the market, and could be administered (partly) an agency arrangement with the Land Bank (and other banks) backed up with partial government financing. Large-scale farmers would get freehold title. For the purposes of budgeting, Aliber assumes 300HA/HH at R15 000/HA.

The following table combines and adapts two of Aliber's tables, one on illustrative budget allocations between beneficiary types (ibid, 6) and the second on costs and benefits over a 20 year period (ibid, 17). Aliber's tables are illustrative of how a livelihood-oriented redistributive programme could be operationalised in terms of targets. They are not meant to be prescriptive but usefully allow debate on what the land and budget allocations to different programmes could aim to achieve in terms of numbers of beneficiaries who are supported in their agricultural livelihoods.

The adaptation includes possible targets for women-headed households and generational dynamics. The rationale is based on the analysis above, namely that:

- Declining rates of marriage are resulting in increasing numbers of women-headed and women-dominant households, whose primary needs for land are residential settlements with access to state services (schools, clinics, housing, water, energy, social grant pay-points), close to those towns and cities that are growing in order to increase the prospects of employment, and consumption top-ups in the form of gardens and small livestock, with sales of surplus into local markets. The addition of commonage would enable those women-headed households who are able to sustain cattle and goat herds to do so, but the figures are unlikely to be high.
- Structural unemployment and the diminished support from rural kin for young adults to migrate to cities has resulted in younger, better educated, often more innovative members of households looking for opportunities to earn incomes. Their social and structural exclusion from land-based livelihoods appears to be related to cash and asset constraints: where they have inherited land and orchards, they are engaging in agriculture that provides for immediate social reproduction needs while providing the capital to invest in the longer term tree crops.

The precise figures and allocations would emerge from localised land acquisition and demand assessment processes. Aliber (ibid) proposes that Government use "concentrated land acquisition approaches". This is an area-based approach involving two steps: Firstly, benchmark valuations are conducted in an area to establish what government is willing to pay per hectare for different kinds of land, while allowing minimal scope for negotiations regarding individual farms. Secondly, government initiates discussions with commercial farmers to let them know that the area is being



targeted for land reform, and that the benchmark values would be offered on a 'take it or leave it' basis. This was an approach used by the Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs in Elliot District from 2002 to about 2006. In this period, about 20% of commercial farm land was acquired for redistribution, and land prices remained flat whereas they were rising rapidly in the rest of the Eastern Cape.

**Table 1: Illustrative hectare, beneficiary and budget allocation for redistribution**

Type		Number share	No of beneficiary households over 20 years	Hectares share	Hectares transferred over 20 years	Expenditure share	Expenditure (R billion) over 20 years
<b>Smallholders</b>	Settlement orientated: 50% women-headed	75%	794 000	3%	397 000	15%	39.7
	Small-scale farmers: 50% women-headed; Equal allocations to age groups 20-35year; 36-60 years; older than 60 years	22%	233 000	26%	3 494 000	32%	87.4
<b>Large-scale farmers</b>	Gender and age neutral: must already be farming	3%	32 000	71%	9 529 000	53%	142.9
			<b>1 059 000</b>		<b>13 420 000</b>		<b>270.0</b>

Since the settlement-oriented programme would draw partial budgets from the Departments of Human Settlements and Social Development, the main budget to be covered from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development would be approximately R12,5 billion per annum. This is considerably more than the just over R4 billion allocated in the 2011/12 budget year, the highest allocation yet for redistribution, and which will decline to R2,9 billion in 2019/20 and R2,6 billion in 2020/2021 (PMG, 10 July, 2019). As Aliber observes, these proposals do “not constitute a dramatic agrarian reform”, nor do they entail the transformation of the prevailing agro-food system (2019: 17). What they do achieve, however, is a significant increase in the commercially-oriented farmers from the current 25 000 or so large-scale white commercial farmers to an additional 265 000 small and larger scale commercially-oriented black farmers, and thus creates “a more balanced agrarian structure, as well as a more racially integrated commercial farming sector” (ibid, 17). The proposal to target nearly a million households for settlement-oriented redistribution would also make a significant contribution to easing the poverty load on the estimated 4,4 million rural households, of whom 50% are food insecure.

Land redistribution that intends to increase employment in agriculture would benefit from programmes and budget allocations intended to support employment in agriculture. Agricultural support to date has tended to focus on mechanisation in order to increase productivity but it comes at the cost of employment intensive production. The support for additional labour would need to be targeted, relatively short-term support that has an employment-multiplier (or at least not a reduction) effect. Programmes designed to enable small-scale farmers to expand production or create a more sustainable basis to the production. While individual farmers could benefit, some of the measures would have broader public impact. The responsible department would be Department of Public Works, who could target unemployed rural youth to provide the labour. Where individual farmers reap the sole benefit of the labour contribution, they could make partial contributions to the wage bill. The following (incomplete) proposals are put up for consideration:

- Conversion of fields to low-till cultivation.
- Expansion of land for cultivated vegetable, fruit or nut production or other high value commodities.
- Installation of micro-water and irrigation systems.
- Building of infrastructure – dams, storage, livestock housing or management infrastructure (eg. dips).
- Repairing infrastructure – roads, dams, boreholes.
- Conversion to renewable energy – solar, biogas.
- Removal of invasive plants compromising rangelands, wetlands or catchments.
- Erosion control measures.

Other measures to target youth employment are:

- Community veterinary services (see Mdukatshani <http://www.mdukatshani.com/>), where youth support small scale farmers through advice on vaccinations and inoculations, provision of small quantities of veterinary medicines and mineral and feed supplements in smaller quantities than are available in retail shops.
- Administration and management of input co-operatives based on savings groups: the co-op purchases seed, fertiliser, chemicals in bulk and re-packages into smaller quantities for distribution (see the South African Development Farmers Association (<http://sa-fda.org.za/>) and SaveAct (<https://saveact.org.za/>).
- Managing information platforms on market prices, weather and climate changes, extension advice (this is exploratory work in progress, currently being investigated by Solidarided (<https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/>) and SaveAct <https://saveact.org.za/>)

The table below provides more detailed proposals on how these proposals could align with the social-cultural dynamics that underlie small-scale farm production and are (at least partly) responsible for the rapid changes in these production systems as has been described above.

**Table 2: Programme components for small-scale farmers based on socio-cultural trends**

	<b>Characteristics of small scale farmers</b>			
<b>Socio-economic trends</b>	<b>Employ household labour; Produce for own consumption/gifts; Low levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Own + hired casual labour; Surplus sold informally; Low levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Own + hired labour; Mainly for sale in both formal and informal value chains; Higher levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Hired casual and permanent labour; For sale in both formal and informal value chains; Big investments in mechanisation</b>
<b>Declining marriage rates</b>	Pensioned women who head households  Expand Siyazondla – ie. group inputs into gardens, small fields Water infrastructure (tanks?) Provide veterinary and nutrition support for small livestock (chickens, goats, sheep) (Subsidized) micro-finance to employ young adults in small expansion / infrastructure projects	Pensioned women who head households  Secure (lease? Allocations within CPA-owned land) to small irrigated fields Micro-finance for small-scale mechanization and small livestock investments (Subsidized) micro-finance to employ young adults in small expansion / infrastructure/CPA administration projects	Older women-headed households  Ownership/CPA allocation of additional, adjacent redistributed land, Finance for mechanization, infrastructure, climate adaptation (Subsidized) micro-finance to employ young adults in expansion / infrastructure/ CPA administration projects	Women and men with urban wages to invest in agriculture  Long-term semi-subsidized leases of capitalized farms Finance for mechanization, capital investments and climate adaptation (Subsidized) finance to employ young adults in expansions / infrastructure development
<b>Gender (overlaps with declining marriage)</b>	Women of all age groups  Expand Siyazondla; Small livestock veterinary and nutrition support	Women of all age groups  Micro-finance for small livestock investments Secure access to land for small livestock Small livestock veterinary and nutrition support	Women of all age groups  Land and livestock access through productive CPAs Livestock veterinary and nutrition support	
<b>Rural – urban linkages</b>	Young women with children  Serviced plots (0,5-1HA) in (semi-) residential settlements located in	Facilitating/enabling urban wage employee investments in ceremonial livestock production Facilitating urban markets for ceremonial livestock	Facilitating/enabling urban wage employee investments in ceremonial livestock production Facilitating urban markets for ceremonial livestock	Access to finance using wages as surety

	<b>Characteristics of small scale farmers</b>			
<b>Socio-economic trends</b>	<b>Employ household labour; Produce for own consumption/gifts; Low levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Own + hired casual labour; Surplus sold informally; Low levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Own + hired labour; Mainly for sale in both formal and informal value chains; Higher levels of mechanisation</b>	<b>Hired casual and permanent labour; For sale in both formal and informal value chains; Big investments in mechanisation</b>
	growing local economic nodes with access to commonage			
<b>Generation</b>	Young adult men and women in rural locations  Training to provide targeted technical support services (animal and plant health) Tenure reform: secure land allocations for single mothers in communal areas	Young adult men and women in urban and rural locations  Young women with children prioritised for allocated serviced plots (0,5-1HA) in (semi-) residential settlements located in growing local economic nodes with access to commonage Training to provide targeted technical support services (animal and plant health)	Young educated urban men and women  Training in technological platforms to access informal urban markets Training to provide targeted technical support services (animal and plant health) Subsidised micro-finance to purchase livestock Urban serviced land for small high tec agriculture (acquaponics; tunnels; semi-intensive live broiler production)	Young educated urban men and women  Training in technological platforms to access informal urban markets Urban serviced land for small high tec agriculture (acquaponics; tunnels; live broilers) Urban serviced land for processing and markets
<b>Class</b>	Households dropping out of production  Access to small irrigated plots and/or commonage in communal areas close to growing local economies Land redistribution to small, supported CPAs as productive entities that subsidize inputs and access to markets	Households hanging in to production  Small irrigated plots and/or commonage in CPAs or communal areas close to informal markets; Land redistribution to small, supported CPAs as productive entities that subsidize inputs and access to markets	Households subsidizing production through diversified livelihoods Small irrigated plots and/or commonage in CPAs or communal areas close to informal markets; Land redistribution to small, supported CPAs as productive entities that subsidize inputs and access to markets Subsidised micro-finance to purchase livestock	PCPs (constrained by CPA or communal ownership) with capacity to expand Long-term semi-subsidized leases of capitalized farms Finance for mechanization and other capital investments (Subsidized) finance to employ young adults in expansions / infrastructure development



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