Chapter 6

Funding Rural Development in Post–Apartheid South Africa’s Land Reform Programme

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ABSTRACT

The development of Africa is not only a problem to the Africans alone but also to the world at large. This is because some regions of the world also depend on Africa for their livelihoods. In Sub Saharan Africa one of the rural development strategies identified is land reform. Post-colonial African governments have argued that land reform would alleviate the majority of the people in the region from poverty, create employment, and address inequality. This is the position adopted by the post-apartheid government in South Africa beyond 27 April 1994. However, the South African post-apartheid land reform has had some significant complexities in its implementation – especially with regard to funding. Funding was impeded by widespread corruption in government. In addition, there has been immense lack of interest in making funds available for land reform in South Africa from non-governmental entities and donors.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THIS CHAPTER

The context of this chapter is the discipline of Development Studies. Theoretically, the chapter refers to an African perspective. The issue addressed is funding the land redistribution programs in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter begins its discourse from the assertion Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) expressed on Development-
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orientated studies. In his inaugural speech as Full Professor at the University of South Africa, Professor Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni had this to say “When History meets Development Studies, the encounter of the two disciplines invokes an inquiry into the past, a critical reflection on the murky present, and a forecasting into the mysterious future” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Nevertheless, the disclaimer is that unlike Professor Ndlovu-Gatsheni who is an outright historian and a student of development, the author of this chapter is not a historian, and neither comes from the discipline of History but is an outright development academic with solid background in development planning and administration while being a student of history. In addition, the author is a practicing administrator of the land redistribution process in South Africa attached to the Ministry of Rural Development which has a government mandate to facilitate the redistribution of land in South Africa. Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2012) assertion is relevant for this study merely on the fact that it is difficult to study a historical event without borrowing from history. The question of land, and in particular its funding is something historical in the land debate in (South) Africa. Apart from South Africa, this murky program has also happened before in countries such as Zimbabwe post-liberation. What is currently happening with regard to the land question in post-apartheid South Africa already has a historical context in other African countries such as Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, land reform funding failed to materialize, and collapsed the entire land reform program, and that led to the famous “fast tracked” land redistribution or “land grab” which Zimbabwe experienced during Robert Mugabe’s presidency approximately 2000-2003 (Moyo, 2014). These historical accounts elsewhere in Africa influence the current status of the same in South Africa. Therefore, this chapter, like the Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) cited assertion, is constructed from a historical perspective because land in Africa dates back into African’s land dispossession history. In other words, the Development part of this particular study would not be possible without reflections made into the historicity of land in (South) Africa. Doing so manufactures that meeting of the discipline of Development Studies and History, and this meeting necessitates that this study be approached from that historical inquiry Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) mentions. This chapter analyses the issue on funding of land redistribution in South Africa from its history which could be traced as far as the early arrivals of the settler European colonizers in Africa to, even the famous Berlin conference of 1884 in Germany. This chapter also recognizes the fact that difficulties in land reform initiatives were not only for Africa, but elsewhere around the world where this crucial issue is being tackled. Confirming this, Moyo (2014) cites the issue in Australia for example.

Although dispossession of land by the settler Europeans from indigenous Africans had started much earlier, they were instead consolidated in Berlin, Germany in 1884 at that convened meeting of European super power countries including the United States (Craven, 2015). It was in Berlin that these countries met to plot the way forward
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