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# Small-Hold Alternatives for Land Redistribution Projects in the Western Cape, South Africa: A Case Study

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**Small-Hold Alternatives for Land Redistribution  
Projects in the Western Cape, South Africa**  
*A Case Study*

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May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

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## **Abstract**

After the official end of apartheid in South Africa, land reform was one of the most highly prioritized items on the new ANC government's agenda, both as a matter of economic restructuring and redressing past injustices. Although numerous land reform programs and initiatives have been implemented since 1994, they have largely failed to reach any of the redistribution goals set forth for them. There is a high rate of failure among land redistribution projects, which are often managed by up to one hundred people. This complicated group management situation is necessitated by the combination of the small grant size available to individual applicants and the high price of agricultural land and implements. In addition, the grants are often contingent upon the participants' adherence to a large-scale, chemically- and mechanically-intensive farm business model with which they have little, if any, experience. In light of the problems with the current land reform programs in South Africa, I assess the viability of small-hold farming as an alternative to the current focus on large-scale commercial farms using a political ecology framework. As very few small-hold redistribution projects exist, my project focuses on examining one such project in depth. I examine the economic and environmental sustainability of the farm, in addition to the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries. The assessment of these factors gives an indication of whether land redistribution programs in South Africa could improve their success rates by offering the option of small-hold projects to land grant applicants. It also provides a narrative of the many obstacles encountered in the beneficiaries' struggle to make a farm of their own—a narrative that reveals many shortcomings in the government's land redistribution policies and support infrastructure.

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I am also very grateful to my advising committee, Bill Moseley, Roopali Phadke, and Holly Barcus, for taking valuable time out of packed schedules to work with me. Thanks especially to Bill for all the feedback on my work. This project would not be what it is if you had not first introduced me to geography; then, to African geography; then, to political ecology; then, to South African land reform; and finally, to most of my project informants. Thanks, in general, for your 'born-again geographer' enthusiasm—it rubs off.

Most of all, thanks to mom, dad, and family, for everything.

## **Chapter I** ***Introduction***

After the official end of apartheid in 1994, the new African National Congress (ANC) leadership was left with the enormous task of transforming the South African society from one of entrenched structural discrimination to one of racial integration and equity—a ‘Rainbow Nation’. Among the most highly prioritized items on the ANC’s agenda for a new South Africa has been land reform. Despite the fact that it comprised only 13% of the population by 1994, the white minority controlled roughly 85% of South Africa’s land as a result of centuries of legally-backed black dispossession (Thompson, 2001). Taking into account these disproportionate land ownership statistics, South Africa’s land reform process has been deemed both politically and economically necessary: politically necessary in order to redress the injustices committed against non-whites, and economically necessary in order to redistribute South Africa’s wealth and alleviate widespread poverty (Zimmerman, 2000).

Unfortunately, over a decade after the end of apartheid it is a widely-held and well-substantiated view that neither the political nor the economic objectives of land reform are being met (Zimmerman, 2000; Mather, 2002; Moseley, 2007). In its optimistic nascent years, the ANC promised to redistribute 30% of the entire nation’s land to “historically disadvantaged individuals” (non-whites) by 1999 as part of the broader national Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). When it became clear in 1999 that the land reform initiatives had fallen pitifully short of this goal, the target for 30% redistribution was pushed back to 2014 (Cousins, 2006). In 2001, the figure for redistribution of white farms to non-

whites stood at less than one percent of the country's total land; as of 2006, all the land reform programs together (including restitution) had only redistributed four percent of the land (Mather, 2003; Cousins, 2006).

Of the tiny fraction of farms that have been redistributed, an even smaller proportion succeeds in providing viable livelihoods for their beneficiaries. The post-apartheid government's focus on economic growth for poverty alleviation has translated into neoliberal reform strategies and a market-led redistribution program that is increasingly focused on large-scale commercial agriculture—a system with which most beneficiaries have little, if any, experience (Zimmerman, 2000). Additionally, the limited availability of grant funding often forces beneficiaries to pool their grants with dozens of other households to purchase a single farm (Moseley, 2007). Considering these complicated group management schemes, the lack of supportive infrastructure and participant experience, and the predictably unmanageable debts of high-input, chemically- and mechanically-intensive modern farms, it is a wonder any redistribution projects have succeeded at all.

In light of the current problems associated with the large-scale commercial redistribution model, the main objective of this research is exploratory in nature—to investigate the viability of a small-hold farming model in hopes of finding an alternative mould for South Africa's land redistribution program. As small-hold redistribution projects are rare, this research has, at least partially out of necessity, taken the form of a case study of one such project, a farm called Bokdrif\*, in the Western Cape Province. This exploratory case study has sought to answer three

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\* Names have been changed to protect the identity of the farmers and some interviewees.

main research questions using a political ecology lens. First of all, can small-hold farms offer a more appropriately contextualized, economically sustainable business model than large-scale commercial farming? Next, do small-hold farms present a more environmentally sustainable business model than the current program? Finally, how does the level of beneficiary satisfaction with the small-hold project compare with those of the conventional models?

In the process of researching these questions, it became clear that my project was fulfilling a second, descriptive objective that I had not thought to include in my original research plan: it provides a powerful, concrete narrative of the very real difficulties encountered by ‘historically disadvantaged individuals’—a term that has attained connotations that are all too abstract—in their efforts to take back land that was wrested away from their ancestors. Writing this project from the point of view of an ‘objective’ academic observer became impossible, as did my attempt to rid my analysis of the emotional investments of all those parties involved in attempting to make Bokdrif a successful farm. Heasley (2005), reflecting on her experience as an African geographer, states “not only does detachment produce its own biases, in the worst cases it reproduces incorrect interpretations of relationships between people and their environment. These interpretations can have extraordinarily negative consequences for African people” (para. 6). Instead of restricting myself by adhering to the role of detached researcher, then, I have endeavored to give as full and honest an account of this project as I possibly can by including myself as a narrator and re-ifying my presence as the researcher. This is done in the hopes that it will add the insight of



a different perspective into the body of academic literature on land reform—a perspective on the ‘sweat, blood and tears’ that have been invested by so many people into land reform projects in South Africa.

After an overview of the methods used to achieve the above two objectives, this paper proceeds with a literature review which examines academic conversations on land redistribution and small-hold farming models around the world, along with South Africa-specific land redistribution issues. This literature review is accompanied by a summary of the historical contexts needed for understanding land redistribution in the post-apartheid era. Next is a descriptive account of the Bokdrif farmers’ experience in the redistribution program, then a results section that analyzes the economic and environmental sustainability of the project, along with the participants’ satisfaction with it, in comparison with conventional projects. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for policy makers and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter II** *Methodology*

My interest in conducting this study on South African land reform stemmed from an independent research project I conducted as part of my study abroad program at the University of Cape Town from January to June, 2007. The program was titled “Globalization and the Natural Environment,” and included a seminar taught by my academic advisor at Macalester, William Moseley, who has researched and published articles on South African land reform (see Moseley, 2006a; 2006b; 2007). I benefited greatly from his experience and contacts in this field, as he introduced me both to Bokdrif as a project and the people who would become my key informants for this paper.

To frame my primary research and field work, I examined three loosely defined bodies of literature. These included literature on land reform around the world, specifically in reference to market-led agrarian reform (MLAR), scholarly work that examines small-hold farming models in general (especially those which drew comparisons with large-scale commercial farming models), and finally, work that highlights South Africa-specific land reform issues. I chose these three topics because the combination of them allows an examination of two major themes of my research—land reform and small-hold agriculture—across multiple scales, which I believe crucial to a full understanding of my particular case study. It will hopefully prove to make my research conversant with as broad a body of academic literature as possible for the scope of my project.

### ***Bokdrif and the Case Study Model***

As previously mentioned, small-hold redistribution projects are somewhat uncommon in South Africa's Western Cape Province (and in all of South Africa) primarily because of the government's focus on large-scale models. To my knowledge, only one such project existed within the geographical extent of my possible research area as of the commencement of my investigation, making a 'deviant case study' model the most effective and practical option for this research (Patton, 1990). A deviant case study illuminates the causal processes that have resulted in an atypical 'case' of a larger sample; in this instance, Bokdrif is an atypical example of the larger sampling of land reform projects in the Western Cape.

The case study as a research model, deviant or otherwise, has often been belittled in academia and "stereotyped as a weak sibling among social science research methods," labeled as overly subjective, imprecise, and lacking in rigor (Yin, 2003, pg. xiii). Despite this reputation, case studies can provide useful and even ideal research models when confronting a "technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points" (Yin, 2003, pg. 13). The focus here, as opposed to other social science investigation methods, is on examining an entire process (land redistribution) as experienced by one entity (the beneficiaries), rather than a snapshot of one step of a process for a large number of actors. As my research aims to contribute to the formation of a

more effective land redistribution process for historically disadvantaged individuals, the deviant case study model is clearly appropriate.

Schramm (1971) highlights further that case studies characteristically “illuminate a decision or set of decisions; *why* they were taken, *how* they were implemented, and with what *result*” (pg. 12, emphasis added). The answers to *how* these decisions have been implemented can be found in the in-depth examination of Bokdrif itself—the focus of my field work concerning its structure and operations, and the experience of the beneficiaries and the Project Management Team (PMT). The *results* of these decisions—their successes and failures—are what will be used to measure the viability of small-hold models against the conventional models. Examining the case of Bokdrif through a political ecology lens, the answers to *why* certain decisions were made can often be ultimately connected to broader government policy imperatives that work their way down to influence ‘ground level’ actions of those involved in Bokdrif’s formation. This framework for case study investigations has been helpful in structuring my project.

### ***Field Work***

The investigation of *how* beneficiaries’ decisions have been implemented necessitated field work both on and off the farm. As part of my on-farm research, my field work methods consisted primarily of semi-structured interviews, informal conversations on the ‘oral histories’ of the project, and overt participant observations. After learning of this unique small-hold hold project in the Western

Cape, I contacted two of the farmers at Bokdrif, Georg\* and his wife Helen\*, and an agricultural extension agent in the municipality, Paul\*, who had worked very closely with the project. I chose to make Georg and Helen my principal informants for two main reasons, the first being that Georg served as the president of the Bokdrif Trust, making him the primary point of contact between the government and the farmers. This position had also made him the most accustomed to working with ‘outsiders’ like myself. The second reason was simply that of the farmers, Georg and Helen spoke the best English, and communication was much slower and less clear when I approached the other farmers.

This reliance on Georg for most of my primary research represents a bias in my data. Georg is in a position of power, and I was not able to uncover any of the other farmers’ opinions on his leadership, or their feedback on the reliability of the information he was giving me. I was also unable to contact the beneficiaries who were not residing at Bokdrif, which again, represents a broader bias in my impressions of Bokdrif as a project. With the time and resource constraints faced, however, I would make the decision to rely on Georg as a primary informant again. As the president of the trust, he was, out of necessity, the best-acquainted with the logistics of their operation specifically, and of land redistribution generally. This makes his observations most conversant with the broader objectives of my paper—to contribute to an improved land reform policy. Further

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\* Names of the project, beneficiaries, and some interviewees (where indicated\*) have been changed.

investigations of this nature, however, would benefit from the inclusion of the other farmers' perspectives.

After outlining my research objectives to Georg, Helen, and Paul, I asked permission to make pre-arranged observational visits to the farm, conduct interviews, and make Bokdrif the focus of my case study. As outlined in my proposal to Macalester College's Social Science Institutional Review Board (SSIRB), I made very clear that participation was voluntary, and have made efforts to protect the anonymity of those who did not wish to have their names associated with this research. After receiving their consent under these conditions, I made periodic visits (a total of eight) to Bokdrif and the nearby agricultural extension office during the period of January to June 2007, and again during the month of January 2008.

The on-farm interviewing processes varied depending on the topic of conversation. When I was interested in finding information to address my first two research questions, which investigate the economic and environmental sustainability of the farm (discussed further below), I conducted semi-structured interviews. These allowed me to glean factual, descriptive information about cultivation schemes, farm management, soil, or irrigation, for example, while permitting enough flexibility for the farmers to provide any additional related information on these topics. During other visits, when I was addressing my third research question investigating the level of participant satisfaction or exploring the project's history, I conducted unstructured or informal interviews to allow the

farmers to lead the conversation through their experiences with, and opinions on, the project.

In addition to on-farm interviews, much of my time spent at Bokdrif would be classified as what Kearns (2005) calls ‘uncontrolled participant observation’. The ‘uncontrolled’ aspect of my observations refers to the openness to all types of information. I was not searching for one type of data in particular, but instead observing all that I could and later deciding which parts of my observations were relevant to my objectives and research questions. My work was ‘participant observation’ because as I observed, I was almost always taking part in the daily activities of the farm along with the farmers. These included afternoons picking beans in the field, helping prepare and participating in family meals, and taking breaks in the shade during the hottest parts of the days over home-made ginger beer. These observations and the informal conversations they inspired provided the “complementary and contextualizing evidence” that contributed most to my understanding of Bokdrif and the beneficiaries’ lives and struggles there (Yin 1983, pg. 13).

It is important to note that the presence of an ‘outsider’ often changes the behavior of the ‘insiders’ being observed, yet as Kearns highlights, the continued “conscious participation in the social processes being observed increases the potential for more ‘natural’ interactions and responses to occur” (Kearns, 2005, pg. 196). It was my hope that the farmer’s confidence in and acceptance of me would increase with each additional visit, which was why I visited the farm on multiple occasions. Though there is no tangible way for me to measure whether

this was an effective strategy, the later interviews proved much more useful than did the initial ones, giving credence to Kearns' assertion.

In order to put this primary information about Bokdrif and the beneficiaries in broader political and economic contexts, I conducted field work outside of Bokdrif as well. This research consisted almost completely of semi-structured interviews with members of Bokdrif's project management team (PMT), a planning and guiding committee that is required for all land reform projects. As many of the members of the PMT were entities rather than individuals (for example, the Provincial Department of Agriculture), it was often difficult to determine which representatives from which organizations should be interviewed. Generally, I aspired to speak with anyone who had been involved with Bokdrif and had made contributions to or had information about the project. Selection for my off-farm interviews was generally opportunistic, as I followed the leads given to me by my interviewees who had experience and contacts in the field.

Another aspect of this off-farm portion of my field work was examining as many relevant documents from the interviewees as possible. Members of the PMT were especially helpful in providing various documents that were very useful in analyzing the economic and environmental aspects of Bokdrif. These included budgets, business management plans, official government documents, grant proposals, soil test results, water consumption data, and maps. One major setback in analyzing these documents was that the vast majority of them were in Afrikaans. As my time for the project was limited, I was often forced to choose



which parts of documents would be most useful to my study and have only small portions of them translated by interviewees or friends. Though this process restricted the usefulness of these documents, they were still invaluable to my analysis.

### ***Data Analysis***

After completing fieldwork, I organized the *results* of the decisions made by those involved with Bokdrif into three categories that correspond to my three research questions: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and participant satisfaction. These divisions have been made primarily for analytical purposes, but the categories are not isolated from each other. On the contrary, successes in any one of the categories directly affect the other aspects of the project. Even while I have separated them for the sake of organization, it will remain important to reiterate the interconnectedness of these aspects and their contribution to the overall success of Bokdrif.

Assessment of the farm's economic sustainability is divided into four categories. The first is the financial viability of the cultivation scheme, which includes examination of market availability, proximity, and stability. Next, I look at incomes, which are coming from many sources for the farmers at Bokdrif, while expenditures are the focus of the following category. Finally, I examine the livelihood security of the farmers, which constitutes a reflection on the combination of all preceding categories. Within each category, I make comparisons between these aspects of Bokdrif and those of conventional South

African farms. Like the broader category under which these are organized, these sub-categories are not exclusionary, but do help put the field work in a more understandable format.

Environmental sustainability is the next platform of my analysis of Bokdrif, and is also divided into four categories: soil health, water consumption, energy consumption, and chemical use practices. This is not an exhaustive list of potential factors that contribute to agriculture's environmental degradation, but highlights what I consider to be the major issues facing farmers in the Western Cape, which will be highlighted further in following sections. Again, within each category, I compare Bokdrif's practices with those of more conventional farms.

Finally, participant satisfaction is the focus of the third category. This category is clearly less 'objective' than the others, yet it seems clear that the sentiments harboured by farmers towards both their farm and their fellow farmers play a crucial role in the overall success of redistribution project. Many of the project failures to date are a result of the frustrations of and conflicts between farmers, managers, and shareholders, who no doubt find it difficult to fully dedicate themselves to a project in which they find little satisfaction. Though this is a central aspect of the project, it has been the most difficult category to represent accurately. My method for analyzing is simply to include as much of the opinions of the farmers as I possibly can, while offering a few of my own interpretations of their expressions.

### *A political ecology approach*

My research is analyzed on the theoretical basis of political ecology, which provides many useful lenses for examining the complex, interacting processes that form the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to successful land reform in South Africa. Political ecology has been described as the political economy of human-environment interactions, a “confluence between ecologically rooted social science and the principles of political economy” (Peet and Watts 1996). It sets itself apart from western paradigms of environmental discourses by tending to focus geographically on the global south (although this trend is changing—see, for example, McCarthy and Hague, 2004; St. Martin, 2001; Walker, 2003) and conceptually on livelihoods, especially those of marginal populations. A political ecology framework utilizes explanatory ‘chains of causation’ in attempt to find root causes for livelihood issues and environmental problems, examining how policies and economic conditions at multiple scales work their way down to the ground to influence the land and the people who work the most closely with it (see Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Peet and Watts, 1996; Robbins, 2004).

Political ecology’s focus on marginalization is appropriate for examining the processes at work at Bokdrif and in South African agriculture in general—socially marginalized “historically disadvantaged individuals” have been set apart by the color of their skin and forced onto environmentally marginal lands, compromising the viability of their livelihoods and furthering their economic marginalization. Even within these seemingly homogeneous populations,

additional marginalization occurs on the basis of gender, age, or social status. Marginalized farmers seek help from the post-apartheid state, whose responsibility to protect its most vulnerable populations and resources is perverted by aspirations of developing a globally competitive market economy. This “dual role of the state” is a phenomena highlighted by Bryant and Bailey (1997, pg. 62). These authors offer additional insight on the intra-state conflict seen in many “functionally defined states”—those whose bureaucracies and departments are organized on the basis of resource management and development, making national environmental conservation goals difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Bryant and Bailey’s (1997) theory on the role of the state will be helpful in analyzing the South African government’s contradictory policies for land reform, as seen from the point of view of the actors involved in my case study.

Robbins’ (2004) degradation and marginalization thesis is also applicable to the land reform program, and provides a framework for examining cases where “otherwise environmentally innocuous local production systems undergo transition to overexploitation of natural resources on which they depend as a response to state development intervention and increasing integration in regional and global markets” (pg. 131). While local production systems in South Africa cannot, in many cases, be classified as environmentally innocuous, any ambition to operate “innocuously” is thwarted by the state’s unwavering emphasis on large-scale commercial agriculture. This thesis will be an additional analytical tool for understanding broader trends that affect the decisions made by all involved with Bokdrif.

### *My positionality*

As with all social science research involving human subjects, especially those of marginal groups, it has been important to be conscious of my role as the researcher. My ‘position’ in relation to those I was interviewing was not easily ignored—I was a young, white, educated, English-speaking, American female ‘academic’ interacting with a generally impoverished, rural, Afrikaans-speaking, non-white, less educated community. My status as an outsider was thus immediately visible, even if the farmers’ comfort with my presence increased over time.

It is also worth noting that being a white American carried different connotations than would being a white South African. In my observation, non-whites in South Africa in general are less trusting of white South Africans (than other white populations) because they associate white South Africans more closely with their negative experiences during apartheid. Additionally, as apartheid ended so recently, many white South Africans seem to have the same internalized notions of race and difference that were originally fostered by the apartheid government. As a white American, I was distanced from that relationship in a sense, and I think, seen as more of a confidant by the farmers.

Despite the evident differences, there was still room for common ground. One aspect that I believe to have been a crucial influence on the information the farmers shared with me—and how it was framed—is my own background in farming. I was born and raised on my family’s small farm in Wisconsin, and the

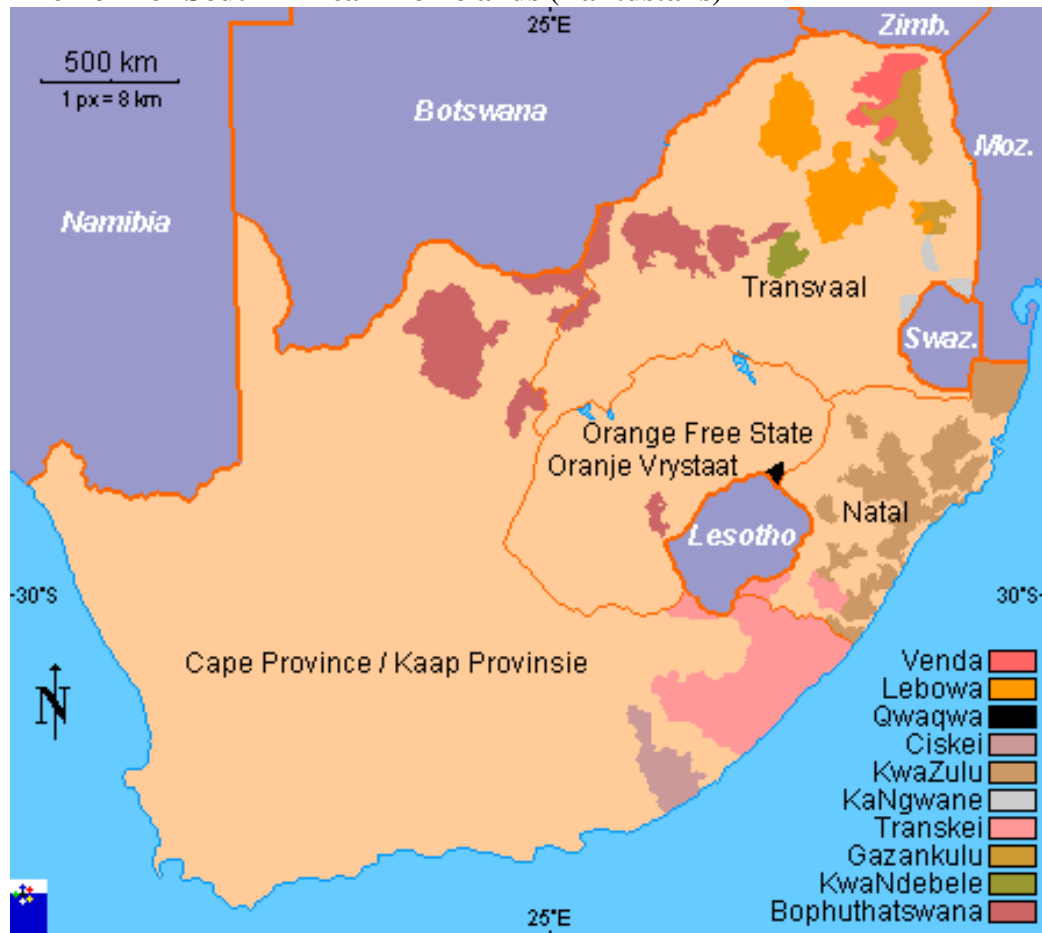
ease of conversation with the farmers increased markedly after I shared personal stories and pictures of home with them. The farmers were often as curious about my farm as I was about theirs, and it provided a very useful conversation starter and point of comparison. They had interacted with a fair number of academics and seemed to have their own idea of the type of information they thought academics were looking for. It seemed clear to me that they presented information about their farm to me differently once my status changed from 'academic' to 'academic/fellow farmer', if only in a less guarded, more candid manner. The effect of my status as both insider and outsider will be addressed further in later sections.

### **Chapter III** *History of Land Issues in South Africa*

To provide some background and context for discussion on the academic literature, it will be helpful to briefly overview some events and policies in South African history that are relevant to current land reform issues. South Africa has an extraordinarily complex history, and it would be impossible to do it justice in this short space, but I have tried here to choose the key points.

The Natives Land Act of 1913 illegalized ownership of land by non-whites in all but a few small areas of South Africa, dispossessing ‘natives’ to crowded, environmentally marginal ‘Homelands’, or ‘Bantustans’. Under this legislation, 87% of the land area in South Africa was reserved for whites only, who comprised only around 15% of the population at the time. The other 13% of the nation’s land represented the fragments that were undesirable to the white population for their poor soils, geographic isolation, and general dearth of natural resources and infrastructure (Mather, 2003). The ten Homelands were divided on the basis of ethnicity, and separate areas were demarcated for people of Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Basotho, Sesotho, Swazi, Tswana, Bapedi, Venda, and Tsonga origins. Though these areas were not geographically contiguous, non-whites were not allowed free passage through the white areas that separated them, furthering their isolation [see Figure 1]. Over time, the exhausted soils of the Bantustans became increasingly unable to support any form of agricultural livelihoods (Thompson, 2001).

**Figure 1**  
**The Former South African Homelands (Bantustans)**



Source: Martins, Antonio. 2006/ Flags of the World website. Accessed 14 April 2008 at [http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/za\(old.html](http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/za(old.html) <sup>1</sup>

Over the span of the apartheid regime, much of the population in the Homelands was all but forced to undergo a transformation from rural peasants to urban proletarians to suit the labour needs of the National Party's economic growth strategies for South Africa (Ross, 1999). Many families derived the largest share of their income from remittances earned by male heads-of-households who

<sup>1</sup> Maps and boundary data are copyrighted by <A HREF="www.fotw.net/flags/g\_ix.html">FOTW - Flags Of The World web site</a>. For more copyright information, please see <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/g-copy.html>



moved away to seek employment in urban areas or mining complexes, as South Africa's wealth of mineral resources in particular created a demand for cheap, spatially-concentrated labour. The migrant labourers were often concentrated in single-sex dormitories provided by mining companies, and were only allowed to return home to their families for a very small portion of the year. Eventually, significant sex-worker populations grew around these areas. Many scholars cite apartheid's engrained pattern of migrant labour as one of the main reasons South Africa provided such ideal conditions for the spread of HIV/AIDS, and resultantly has one of the world's highest incidences of HIV/AIDS (Thompson, 2001).

In the Homelands was a huge class of poor rural children, elderly, and women, who were left to support their families and cultivate alone what little land they had. For those who persevered, there was little hope for anything more than a bare subsistence-level existence (Ross, 1999). Millions of non-whites were thus forcibly displaced, both physically and ideologically, from their homes, their communities, and, despite the fact that the Homelands were rural areas, from their livelihoods as farmers.

Outside of the Bantustans, virtually the only non-whites involved in agriculture constituted a destitute farm worker population—employed by white commercial farming operations—whose rights were scarcely better than those of slave labourers (Hall, Kleinbooi and Mvambo, 2001; Scully, 1992). The farm worker population has been studied extensively in the Western Cape in particular because it is one of the provinces with the best-established commercial farming sectors, which require large amounts of cheap labor. In the Western Cape, the

majority of farm workers have historically been Afrikaans-speaking coloreds<sup>2</sup>, most commonly employed by vineyards or orchards. There were few laws protecting the rights of these farm workers, and they were thus subject to evictions from their on-farm dwellings, poor education systems, harsh labor conditions, low wages, and payment in the form of alcohol. This practice of wine-as-wages, referred to as the ‘tot’ or ‘dop’ system, created a legacy of alcoholism in the colored farm worker population which still exists today (Scully, 1992). As a result, the colored population in the Western Cape has a chronically high rate of children born with fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol-related birth defects—the highest in South Africa. Many children who grow up with the related learning disabilities are written off by under-resourced rural education systems and do not attain the same levels of education as their white counterparts, further embedding the social and economic marginalization of the colored farm-worker population (GARC, 2006).

The continuous displacement of non-whites during the apartheid years had vacated prime agricultural land across the country for white commercial farmers. During this period, many agricultural products could only (legally) be marketed domestically because of international embargoes against the apartheid regime. As the National Party held the simultaneous goals of instituting a cheap food policy and supporting white farmers, the regime provided generous subsidies to shield many fledging white commercial farms from the competition of cheap imports

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<sup>2</sup> In South Africa, ‘colored’ is a term used to describe those with ‘mixed race’ origins, and, unlike the American use of the term, is not considered derogatory. The colored population was considered by the apartheid government to be a step above the black African population, a classification now seen as a technique to divide non-whites to prevent a unified anti-apartheid movement (Thompson, 2001).

(Mather and Greenberg, 2003). In addition, white farms benefited immensely from the cheap labour provided by the oppressed, disempowered farm workers, as discussed above (Scully, 1992).

This subsidized white commercial agriculture was concentrated in the Western Cape, a province whose varied terrain and climatic systems allowed the establishment of a diverse production regime. Deciduous fruit (including apples, pears, peaches, citrus, cherries and grapes), vegetables, wine grapes and wheat were all successfully cultivated there. Dairying and livestock production (beef, sheep, poultry, swine and ostrich) also contributed significantly to agricultural output (Statistics South Africa, 2004). As the apartheid era drew to a close, a lucrative, heavily-subsidized, white-dominated agricultural sector was well established.

### ***The post-apartheid era***

By the early 1990s, whites comprised only 13% of the population, yet still held ownership of the same 87% of land allotted for them with the 1913 Land Act (DLA 1997). As previously mentioned, land redistribution was therefore both politically necessary and crucial to promoting greater economic equality across racial lines, especially considering that the vast majority of South Africa's poor live in rural areas (Davis, Horn, and Govender-Van Wyk, 2004). The government's goals to alleviate poverty and improve social services were embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), which was introduced shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994. Though it differed

from other national development initiatives like structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in its official focus on social service delivery, it identified macroeconomic growth as the catalyst for social service improvements, and thus contained many neo-liberal economic policies that closely resembled those of SAPs. These commonalities included trade liberalization, reduction in government spending and debt, and lowered taxes. With its two faces, the RDP attempted to represent the development ideologies of both the new, more socialist ANC government, and influential international development institutions like the World Bank (Carmody, 2002).

The land reform aspect of the RDP was the government's official Land Reform Programme put out by the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) in 1995, followed by the White Paper on Land Reform in 1997. In these documents, the DLA outlined three facets to the national land reform initiative. The first was a land *tenure* reform program targeted at addressing issues of land use and ownership rights, both in the former Bantustans and for labourers on white commercial farms. Next, its land *restitution* aspect restored land or cash payment to any displaced after the 1913 Lands Act, providing they had some proof of ownership of a specific plot prior to displacement. Finally, the land *redistribution* program provided grants for the purchase of land and agricultural implements to 'historically disadvantaged' households who applied (DLA 1997). The stated goal of this national policy was to "provide the disadvantaged and the poor with access to land for residential and productive purposes in order to improve their income

and quality of life,” which it would achieve in transferring “30% of agricultural land to black South Africans within 5 years [of 1994]” (DLA, 1997, pgs. 9, 38).

The functional arm of the redistribution facet was the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) program, which provided a maximum of R16,000 (roughly US \$2,286) per ‘historically disadvantaged’ household that applied, with the exact award amount being determined by the household’s demonstrated need. As even this maximum potential grant amount fell far short of the funds needed to purchase adequate land for cultivation, much less an entire farm and the required infrastructure and implements, beneficiaries were often forced to pool their grants with as many as 100 other grant recipients to buy a farm. SLAG was largely ineffective, managing to transfer only 480,000 of the 25.5 million hectares needed to reach the goal of 30% redistribution by 1999 (Davis, Horn, and Govender-Van Wyk, 2004).

Despite the fact that this ambitious goal was never reached, it inspired fears in the country’s bastions of white commercial farming that South Africa would follow in Zimbabwe’s disastrous footsteps—employing violent force to ensure redistributive ‘success’. Because of these fears, many asserted that the use of any government mandated removals, however diplomatic and dissimilar from those of Zimbabwe’s Zanu PF government, would lead to the collapse of the entire agricultural production system. Additionally, many white farmers had little faith in the ability of black farmers to effectively run a commercial farming operation (a sentiment which unfortunately persists today) (Goebel, 2005).

In 1996, the ANC government introduced the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, the official plan for South Africa's economic restructuring. This neo-liberal, 'Washington consensus' model strategy called for market liberalization and deregulation to revitalize stale, inefficient domestic production. In the agricultural sector, this translated into a phase-out of almost all agricultural subsidies, underscoring that the new South Africa would have less sympathy for the "economic deadweight" the white commercial farming industry had become (Carmody, 2002; Mather and Greenberg, 2003). While some sectors of production benefited from the newly acquired access to international markets, such as the wine industry, others quickly felt the sting of international competition impinging on formerly protected domestic markets (the wheat industry was particularly susceptible to international competition) (Moseley, 2007).

In 1999, the second democratic elections saw Thabo Mbeki as the new president of South Africa. There was a re-organization of power, and Mbeki replaced many Mandela-appointed ministers, including the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, with more 'business-friendly' candidates. Shortly after this shift, the SLAG program was succeeded by the Land Reform for Agricultural Development program (LRAD), which increased the potential grant size with a sliding scale model. Applicants could receive anywhere between R20,000 and R100,000 (between US \$2,857 and \$14,286), depending on the applicant's own contribution of either cash or 'sweat equity'. LRAD also allowed any adult individual to apply for a grant, which made possible multiple grants per household. This more neoliberal program was aimed specifically at creating a

class of black commercial farmers modeled after the white commercial farming sector (Mather, 2002; Moseley, 2007). Unfortunately, neither SLAG nor LRAD has helped South Africa come close to achieving 30% redistribution by 1999, as only 4% of the nation's land had been distributed by 2006 (Cousins, 2006).

## **Chapter IV** *Literature Review*

Now that I have laid the base of descriptive information about South African land reform, I will move onto broader analytical discussions concerning land reform in this literature review. The research conducted for this project is related to a number of different threads of debate surrounding agrarian reform around the world. One of the most prominent of these debates has centered on whether reforms should be market-led or state-led. Proponents of market-led agrarian reform (MLAR) cite that the state does not have the capacity to effectively or efficiently redistribute land. Because state appropriation of land often provides sellers with a price that is less than market value, they argue, any state intervention leads current land owners to “subvert the policy, evade coverage by subdividing their farms or retain the best parts of the land” (Borras, 2003, pg. 368).

In addition, state-led reform is often supply-led, and pro-market reformists thus tout it as inherently inefficient. This, they say, is because most often the state is only able to redistribute environmentally marginal land, because “productive farms are expropriated and subdivided into smaller, less productive farm units,” and because “peasant households ‘unfit’ to become beneficiaries... are given lands to farm” (Borras, 2003, pg. 368). The threat of state expropriation creates an uncertainty that discourages much-needed investment from a variety of sources while encouraging corruption in government officials and the land titling system in general (Banerjee, 1999). Furthermore, state-led programs create a need for a “behemoth”-sized bureaucracy that places huge strain on national budgets, even



more than the strain of the state having to fund the purchase of the redistributed land itself (Binswanger and Deininger, 1997).

In contrast to state-led redistribution systems, MLAR proponents argue, MLAR provides a far more effective strategy for redistributing land, and in addition, encourages land-use systems that are far more economically efficient. In the ideal MLAR program, argue Buainain et al. (1996), “only individuals with human capital, previous savings, and adequate knowledge of how to make use of the opportunities would make the decision to participate in the Programme ... [MLAR will select] local people, who have closer relations with landowners, better access to networks of social relations and information on local markets of land” (pp. 29-30).

Proponents of state-led reform (such as Zimmerman, 2000; Mather, 2002; Hall, 2004; Moseley, 2007) would argue that it is at exactly these points that MLAR fails. Because the goal of many national land redistribution programs is to redistribute wealth, those who are meant to benefit from redistribution would not have access to savings or start-up capital. As the potential beneficiaries of land redistribution are most often part of a historically marginalized population, it is also very unlikely that they would have access to the ‘human capital’ and the ‘networks of social relations and information on local markets of land’ of which Buainain et al. (1996) speak.

Addressing these issues in the South African context, Zimmerman (2000) highlights the many problems inherent in SLAG. He argues that the program’s target population—the poor—have less a chance than anyone at succeeding in a

land redistribution project. He reasons that the poor are much less likely to be able to afford the high up-front costs of land redistribution and initial contributions necessary to receive a reasonably-sized grant. They also have less mobility to move the long distances to the new redistribution sites where public infrastructure is often poorer than that in the urban fringes, if it exists at all. They often have less time to put into the project if they do move because they need to dedicate more of their time to acquiring additional income. Almost invariably, grant applicants lack adequate training in agricultural techniques or business management, are more vulnerable to risks involved in agriculture, and have very limited access to credit, educational programs and training, or agricultural extension services. Even in the rare cases that a poor, non-white household has access to the information needed to apply for grants, is able to write a coherent grant and business plan, and move to the new redistribution site, it is highly unlikely that the household has any familiarity with methods for successfully managing a farm.

Far from addressing these problems, Mather (2002) argues that the newer LRAD program was even more inappropriately focused on commercial agriculture and creating a class of black commercial farmers, representing a complete misunderstanding of the problems it was attempting to address in replacing SLAG. Again, this had the effect of excluding the very population the redistribution programs have targeted: poor non-white South Africans.

In a similar vein, Ruth Hall (2004) speaks to the political ecology theme of dualism in her analysis of the shortcomings of South Africa's national land

redistribution policies. She locates the ineffectiveness of LRAD in its failure to target the ‘agrarian dualism’ that is the source of the plight of the rural poor in South Africa. The dualism exists between the modern, capital-intensive white farming economy and the traditional, labor-intensive black farming economy in the homelands. During the apartheid years, ‘racial capitalism’ created this dualism, exploiting the rural black economy to effectively subsidize the white economy with cheap labor. Since the end of apartheid, Hall argues, national land reform policies have failed to effect any real change in the country side because “the advent of non-racial democracy has seen a new configuration of class interests and the emergence of a powerful alliance that is committed to deracialising ownership but retaining the structure of the commercial farming sector rather than restructuring the agrarian regime” (pg. 213). Instead of restructuring the dualistic system, then, policies have focused only on attempting to bring more non-whites over to the ‘modern’ side of the existing system. She illustrates further the contradiction between ‘big policy and the shrinking state’, pointing out that while the land redistribution targets are incredibly ambitious, the state itself is increasingly unable to meet its own policy goals as development spending is restricted by neoliberal, SAP-like economic policies. Here, it is broader macroeconomic trends that “favor limited state involvement in the economy” that present a major obstacle to social restructuring.

Moseley (2007) further highlights that LRAD’s focus on large-scale commercial agriculture has been detrimental to the success of the projects, especially for the vulnerable farm worker population in the Western Cape. He

discusses eight specific barriers to successful land redistribution in that province in particular. Neoliberal economic reforms, he argues, make the unprotected agricultural sector vulnerable, and the associated willing seller / willing buyer model leads to grant recipients receiving economically marginal farms. The small grant size (even with the sliding scale model of LRAD) necessitates an unmanageable number of farm operators, many of whom have unrealistic expectations for financial gains; these hopes have often been inspired by the white farms made successful by apartheid era protectionism. He argues further that grant recipients' agricultural skills are often mismatched for the farms they buy or are too specialized in one area (eg., vine pruning) to be useful in whole-farm management. Aside from inappropriate farming skills, many grant recipients have no business management skills at all. Even with all this potential for failure, protection and legal oversight is woefully insufficient in cases where problems do arise. Finally, an insurmountable number of bureaucratic layers in the redistribution project impede the grant recipients' access to funds. He suggests that allowing LRAD beneficiaries to practice small-hold or subsistence agricultural practices would improve the success rates of some of the projects and contribute to agrarian justice in the countryside.

The small-hold option that Moseley suggests is another controversial subject in South African land redistribution. The economic and environmental efficiency of small-hold model farms versus large-scale commercial farms is a contested debate among policy makers and scholars in the field (for example, Low, Akwenye, and Kamwi, 1999; Sender and Johnston, 2004; Lahiff and

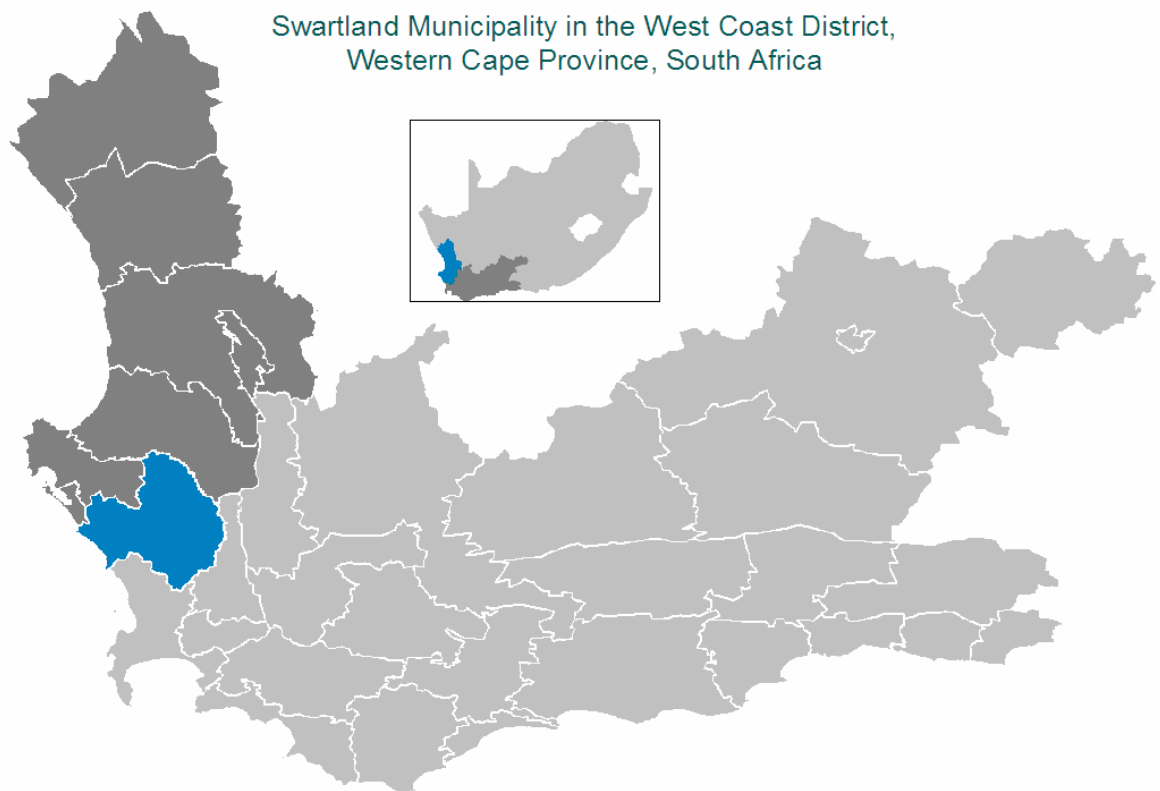
Cousins, 2005; Skarstein, 2005). Moor and Nieuwoudt (1998) use examples of land tenure in Zimbabwe to inform South African land redistribution policy. They find, from their research, that secure tenure rights at the level of the individual family have a significant positive effect on both investment and agricultural productivity levels. They also state that often, small-scale farms owned by individual families are more environmentally innocuous than both large-scale commercial farms and farms that are communally owned by large groups. They compare situations in Zimbabwe to those in South Africa, arguing that secure tenure rights are crucial to land redistribution and that redistribution projects should not be communally owned by too many people—what they call the ‘indigenous’ model—because they are unproductive and environmentally degrading. While this conception of what communally-owned ‘indigenous’ models entail seems misinformed, their research is valuable to South African land reform because it provides some explanatory power as to why so many land redistribution projects that are owned by too many people fail.

The combination of this literature suggests that market-led reforms are failing to address the poverty alleviation goals of land redistribution. Redistribution projects that hundreds of people attempt to co-manage stand very little chance of succeeding, and large-scale commercial agriculture has not been an appropriate focus in many cases. Clearly, an alternative model for land redistribution is necessary—and this is where the analysis of Bokdrif’s history and current successes and failures is relevant.

## Chapter V *Project History*

In this section, I describe the personal history of two of the farmers involved in Bokdrif, Georg and Helen, and their experience with the land redistribution process. This is helpful in showing the ways in which these beneficiaries are typical of and different from the ‘average’ land redistribution grant recipients in the Western Cape Province (see Figure 2). The comparisons drawn here will be helpful in interpreting the results of their efforts, and analyzing their successes and failures in the broader national context of land redistribution.

**Figure 2**  
**Swartland Municipality**



Source: Swartland Municipality <http://www.swartland.org.za/>

**Figure 3**  
**South Africa**



Source: Times Atlas, 1998

Like many ‘Cape Coloureds’, Georg grew up as part of a family of farm workers on a vineyard in the Western Cape. His family worked and lived on the vineyard, and were given small plots of land to grow their own vegetables. From a young age, he was taught how to cultivate many different vegetables and grew to enjoy gardening work. In primary school he completed levels up to standard four (roughly equivalent to fourth grade in American education systems) while living at home on the vineyard, but there was little education infrastructure for children of farm workers to take advantage of in the rural areas. For many farm workers’ children, continuing education past this point necessitated moving off the farm and into a nearby town. This was a difficult and often prohibitively expensive

arrangement for many families, and as previously mentioned, has unfortunately meant that the farm worker population maintained a generally low level of educational achievement. Georg was unique in that he was able to secure lodging and employment working for a doctor in Malmesbury (see Figure 3). He stayed at the doctor's home and worked at his office during the day while attending night classes to finish standard eight.

From then on, he worked odd jobs in the Cape area and eventually married Helen, another native of the Malmesbury area. Together they had three children whom they raised in Malmesbury. While the children were young, Helen worked in Malmesbury as a seamstress, and Georg commuted to work at an auto repair center in Cape Town everyday by train, which was a 60km one-way journey. During this period, Georg struggled with the alcoholism that troubled so many other coloured families, bringing his marriage to the brink of divorce. When he came home one day and found his wife and children gone, he decided to become a farmer again, despite the significantly lower income levels, thinking it would have a rehabilitative effect on him. After reconciling with his family, they moved to the Atlantis area and joined the Atlantis Small Farmers Association (ASFA), which had been recommended to Georg by a friend from his childhood on the vineyard.

ASFA is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing many types of relevant job training to aspiring small farmers in the region, the majority of who are coloured former farm workers like Georg and Helen. ASFA offers classes in a variety of topics, including financial bookkeeping, farm management, animal husbandry, and crop-specific cultivation techniques. In addition to training, the



organization provides families with accommodation and plots of land which they are allowed to lease on a yearly basis and are used to put their training into practice. After Georg and Helen spent a few years there, they and few of their ASFA neighbors became interested in establishing a more permanent foothold on the plots they farmed there. Many of the farmers approached ASFA management seeking extended leases and more secure tenure rights, but were repeatedly denied. ASFA's structure was not set up to provide the kind of tenure arrangement Georg was interested in, so he and Helen began to investigate their options for owning their own land.

In 2001, they approached Paul<sup>\*</sup>, an agricultural extension agent at the Swartland Municipal Department of Agriculture Office in Malmesbury and asked for help and advice. Paul pointed out that they were eligible for LRAD grants. However, he had had experience with over a dozen LRAD projects in the past, and recommended Georg and Helen proceed cautiously in light of the fact that every LRAD project in the district thus far had failed. He attributed this phenomenon to the conflicts inspired by the large number of applicants who attempted to co-manage the projects. In his experience, he witnessed differences in managerial style mount into tensions that affected personal relationships between the beneficiaries, often leading to irreconcilable conflicts. Once professional relationships had been complicated by personal issues, Paul recounted, it became even more difficult for members of the project management teams (PMTs) to help mediate and provide technical support. Based on his

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<sup>\*</sup> Names of the project, beneficiaries, and some interviewees (where indicated\*) have been changed.

experience with these large-scale projects, he conjectured that LRAD farms would fare better if they were divided up into units that were small enough to be managed by individual families. Though Paul holds that it was his idea originally, Georg also claimed ownership of the single-family plot plan. Georg says his acquaintances who were members to other LRAD projects in the area had warned him about the difficulties in attempting to manage a communally-owned project.

Regardless of where the idea originally came from, both Paul and Georg realized the importance of finding other dedicated people to be part of the project, so Georg decided to approach the other farmers who had been similarly trained at the ASFA. From their acquaintances there, Georg recruited seven other families who were willing to apply with them, for a total of 35 eligible grant applicants in all.

After finding other beneficiaries, the next step was to put together the project management team (PMT) necessary to all LRAD projects. Their PMT consisted of the Provincial Department of Land Affairs, the Provincial Department of Agriculture, the Swartland (Malmesbury) Municipality, the non-profit organization Goedgedacht Agricultural Resource Centre (GARC, a branch of the larger Goedgedacht Trust), and another non-profit organization called the West Coast Ubuntu Farmer's Association (WEKUFU, also a branch of Goedgedacht), along with all the grant applicants.

The next step of the LRAD application process assigned to the farmers was to search the real-estate market in the area for a suitable piece of land for the farm. Every potential farm site had to be brought before all members of the PMT,

examined in terms of the soil conditions, water supplies, infrastructure available, terrain, and a host of other factors to measure the plot's suitability for cultivation and habitation. The group met about every month to go over possible sites for the farm, and after a few months of searching, they found a site that looked promising. It was a 31 hectare section of a larger white-owned farm called Bokdrif. When divided, the parcel would leave slightly less than four hectares per family. This was a sufficient size for the small-scale scheme the group had in mind, and represented a plot size suitable for their training at ASFA. The site was tested in a myriad of ways—in terms of soil drainage, soil erosion potential, soil consistency and minerals, minerals in the ground water, depth to groundwater and many others. It was also important that the site have characteristics at least slightly similar to those at ASFA so that the farmers could render their training applicable on their own new farms. It is important to note that, as is the case with many other LRAD parcels, the land available for sale to the beneficiaries in Georg's group was the least productive corner of a white-owned farm. The white farmer who owned the larger Bokdrif was selling it in part because of its reduced productivity in comparison with the rest of his land. Still, this land was the best available to the Bokdrif beneficiaries.

Once all the tests were completed to determine that the site was sufficient, the PMT began examining ways to put infrastructure on the property. At the time, there was no electricity infrastructure, running water, housing, nor any agricultural buildings. Paul cites the first "big battle" of the redistribution process as the difficult negotiations with Eskom, the largest energy company in South

Africa, which functions similar to a para-statal. The farmers attempted to persuade the company to install the kind of transformer they felt was necessary for the success of their operation. In the end, Eskom refused their requests, building them only a 50 Rva system despite their call for a 100 Rva system. Georg believes this was ultimately because of a lack of funding.

Another unexpected “big battle” they encountered was something as seemingly trivial as the entrance to the farm. Bokdrif is located adjacent to a national highway, the N7, necessitating permission from the Provincial Department of Road Affairs to build a driveway entrance. This proved a very difficult task, and the project participants tired of waiting for responses from the bureaucratic layers of the Department of Road Affairs, who denied all the propositions put forth by the PMT. Despite the PMT’s proposal of many creative solutions, such as stemming off of existing driveways or cutting across others’ properties, for example, the permission for driveway construction on the N7 never came. Because there was no other access to the plot, this battle with the Department of Road Affairs delayed the progress of infrastructure construction on the plot, and set the whole project back by a few months. Finally, Paul and the PMT decided to “bypass” the Department of Road Affairs and simply build an access road themselves. They laid down a gravel road directly adjacent to an existing driveway, predicting that the Department of Road Affairs would have neither the time nor the resources to pursue legal action against them. Luckily, their predictions were correct, and they were able to continue work on the farm. Speaking in more general terms, Paul has said that many other governmental

departments “turn a blind-eye” to situations such as these, recognizing that they are too under-staffed and under-funded to be bothered with enforcing rules about driveways, for example. He claims that had he not taken the initiative to help the participants build their driveway, they would still be waiting today for a practical way to access their farm from the highway.

As another part of creating their management plans, the farmers brainstormed with the other organizations on the PMT to decide on their business goals. The Department of Land Affairs requires a five-year business plan of aspiring LRAD beneficiaries before approval of their grant applications, and it is at this juncture in the LRAD journey that the government has held the power to sway projects towards implementing a conventional farm business model. Unlike the structure of many LRAD business proposals before theirs, the participants decided to model theirs based on a gradual process of increased productive potential. According to their business trajectory, they would start out in the first few years as mainly subsistence level farmers and slowly increase their productive capacity to become individual, family-run small commercial operations. They would focus on vegetable farming, which suited much of the training they had received in Atlantis. As an additional measure to maintain food security, the farmers would also keep livestock on a family-by-family basis, including pigs, goats, cows, and chickens.

After these careful preparations, the grant applications were submitted to the Department of Land Affairs and were initially rejected because of the family-unit model that was being proposed. The Department criticized the low-input, low

productivity model and pushed instead for a farm structure that would afford higher productivity levels. According to Paul, it took a great deal of convincing and appealing to peers in government on his part for the project to gain approval and proceed as planned. As for funding for the project, each of the 35 grant applicants was eligible for around R20,000 (about US \$2,857), bringing their total LRAD grant money up to a little over R700,000 (about US \$100,000). After receiving the Department of Land Affairs's approval for their LRAD project, the participants were then also eligible for credit loans from the government-run Land Bank, which lends significant amounts of money to most fledgling LRAD projects, often hundreds of thousands of rand. In Paul's observations, however, the reason so many LRAD projects in the district were failing was not only because of the complicated co-management scheme with dozens of competing interests, but because of the large debt owed to the Land Bank by most redistribution farms. In interviews, he rattled off names of failed LRAD projects in the area, citing their inability to make a steady income for all the families involved while attempting to pay off their debts of hundreds of thousands of rand back to the Land Bank. Paul therefore insisted that the Bokdrif project acquire no debt whatsoever, and that the farmers refuse to rely on loan funding to get their project off the ground.

This meant a transfer of jurisdiction over the project—from the Land Bank to the Provincial Department of Land Affairs—after the group agreed to bypass any dealings with the Land Bank. Again, this plan did not align well with the Department of Land Affairs's vision for the project, and it was a lengthy and

difficult process to convince both the Department and the Land Bank that this unorthodox business plan was worthy of their approval. Their reluctance to approve this business plan did not lie specifically in the beneficiaries' refusal of loan funding, but in the implications that a smaller budget had for the structure and productivity levels of their future LRAD project. The negotiations with these two government agencies were long and frustrating enough to warrant political action on the part of the Bokdrif farmers. The group protested in front of Parliament in Cape Town on numerous occasions, performing South African *Toi-Toi* protest dances and demanding that the Land Bank and Department of Land Affairs commit to expediting the redistribution process. In retrospect, Bokdrif's efforts to disassociate from the Land Bank were well worth it. Having been accused of unnecessarily slow bureaucratic processing and mismanagement of funds for many years, the Land Bank was finally subjected to a governmental audit in late 2007. The audit revealed that Land Bank officials had embezzled over R2-billion that had been allotted for LRAD projects like Georg and Helen's, using the money to "fund their close friends' and associates' ventures," including "luxury golf estates, a sugar mill, equestrian estates and residential developments" (Mail & Guardian Online, 6 December 2007).

In spite of the Land Bank scandals, the group's efforts paid off in September 2003, when the Department of Land Affairs and the Land Bank finally approved the no-debt, low-input business model and the land for their new farm was finally transferred to the name of the Bokdrif Trust nearly two years after they had started the application process. Unfortunately, this two year time lag

from the application to the transfer of the farm represents one of the fastest LRAD project transfers committed so far in the Swartland municipality. Despite the fact that the farmers now held the title to the land, the property transfer alone was not enough for the group to be able to move on to the land to start cultivation. The provincial budget for the rest of the year of 2003 had already been spent, so the farmers were forced to wait until the new provincial budget approval was made in the next year to receive their balance of grants, which was about R350,000 (about US \$50,000) left over after the purchase of the 31 hectares. Without this money, the group could not complete any of the necessary infrastructure development on the property, such as building houses, finishing the bore-hole pump and irrigation system, and electrifying their parcels, so they remained at ASFA for another year.

When the balance of grants was finally paid to the Bokdrif Trust, the group finished electrifying the plot, but the irrigation system took nine months to even become operational, and was not yet completed as of January 2008. The Housing Authority was also very slow in providing funding and materials promised for building the farmers' houses on the property. As a result, Georg and Helen did not move onto the property until the latter part of 2004, and his was even the first family to move there. They received some housing materials with Paul's help when they did not come quickly enough from the Housing Authority, and have also resorted to dwelling inside government provided 'storage sheds', which are meant for storing harvested vegetables. The Swartland Municipality has also thus far failed to come through on its promise to provide plumbing infrastructure, so the families still share outhouses. The Municipality has tried to



shirk responsibility for the plumbing infrastructure by arguing that the Housing Authority should be financially responsible for it, as the plumbing systems they need should be inside of the houses. Alternatively, a spokesperson from the Department of Environmental Health and Safety told me that she was trying to get the Bokdrif farmers some grant money from governmental funds that provide for housing improvements for farm workers. She believes that since the government provides money for farm workers, they should also provide for the Bokdrif farmers because they are former farm workers struggling on their own farm now. She remains unsure as to where the plumbing money will come from in the end, citing a “severe lack of communication” and “inter-sectoral collaboration” between the different departments when it comes to land reform projects.

As of January 2008, only five of the eight beneficiary households have relocated to Bokdrif (Plots 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8—see Table 1)<sup>3</sup>. Of the other three households, two live elsewhere and are charging rent to non-beneficiaries to live on and cultivate their plots. One of these plots (Plot 3—see Table 1) is titled to an elderly woman, Mrs. Alexander, whose grandson Daniel pays her rent to live and farm there while she lives and works in Malmesbury as a dentist’s assistant. The other (Plot 7—see Table 1) is titled to a man named Appelgrein who has since moved to the Northern Cape to work on another farm that his family owns, and he charges his friend Seim from Malmesbury to live on and cultivate his plot. The

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<sup>3</sup> Table 1 was compiled by me and is based on my own observations with help from Paul and Georg. Paul laid out the format of the different plots and the names of beneficiaries, while Georg helped me understand who was actually living at Bokdrif and the circumstances of each plot’s use. Georg also told me about the other income sources for the beneficiaries and helped me estimate what percentage of their income was earned in farming. The estimated percentages of plots in use, cultivars, and livestock categories are based on my observations and information from Georg.

remaining plot (Plot 6—see Table 1) is titled to the Frans family, who lives in Malmesbury. Though they had aspirations of cultivating some more expensive herbs and keeping a few pigs and sheep, they have not made any steps to actualize these plans, and their unoccupied plot is used as goat pasture for one of the resident beneficiaries who owns Plot 5, Adrian de Water, Senior.

<b>Table I: Land Use at Bokdrif</b>									
<b>Beneficiary Household*</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Resident?</b>	<b>Plot Manager*</b>	<b>% of Plot in Use</b>	<b>Plot Use</b>	<b>Farming as % of Income</b>	<b>Other Income</b>	<b>Cultivars</b>	<b>Livestock</b>
<b>Seppie</b>	1	Yes	Seppie	90%	Vegetable cultivation, limited livestock forage	20%	Manages his own electrical repairs business	Cabbages, onions, green beans, yarrows, pepperdews, sweet melon	pigs, chickens
<b>Jansen</b>	2	Yes	Jansen	75%	Vegetable cultivation, limited livestock forage	20%	Owns multiple mini-taxis	Cabbages, onions, green beans, yarrows, pepperdews, sweet melon	pigs, chickens
<b>Alexander</b>	3	No	Daniel, grandson of beneficiary	75%	Vegetable cultivation, limited livestock forage	0%	Works as dentist assistant in Malmesbury	Cabbages, onions, green beans, yarrows, pepperdews, sweet melon	pigs, chickens
<b>Georg</b>	4	Yes	Georg	80%	Vegetable cultivation, limited livestock forage	20%	Disability pension, lets house in Malmesbury	Cabbages, Onions, Olives, green beans, yarrows, pepperdews, sweet melon	pigs, chickens
<b>de Water, Sr.</b>	5	Yes	de Water, Sr.	100%	Livestock forage	25%	Railway pension	none	goats, chickens
<b>Frans</b>	6	No	de Water, Sr.	100%	Livestock forage	0%	Employed in Malmesbury	none	none
<b>Appelgrein</b>	7	No	Seim, friend from Malmesbury	75%	Vegetable cultivation, limited livestock forage	0%**	Farm in the Northern Cape	Cabbages, onion, limited vegetables for consumption	chickens
<b>de Water, Jr.</b>	8	Yes	de Water, Jr.	20%***	Limited vegetable cultivation***	10%	Employed in Malmesbury	Limited vegetables for consumption	chickens

\*Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the beneficiaries

\*\*Appelgrein lives in the Northern Cape, where he has another farm. I was not able to determine what percentage of his income is from that farm, but 0% of his income was derived from farming at Bokdrif.

Seim, an acquaintance whom Appelgrein allowed to cultivate the plot, does derive almost all of his income from the farm, and appears to be the least financially secure of any of the Bokdrif residents.

\*\*\*The remainder of the de Water, Jr., plot, is occasionally used by de Water, Sr., as forage ground for his goats.

De Water's use of the Frans' plot is a point of contention between the families, as he is not charged rent by the Frans family. Because of this, a number of the other beneficiaries believe they should all have equal access to the plot, but de Water argues that pasturing his goats requires more land than does vegetable cultivation. Though the other beneficiaries know this to be true, they argue in return that the beneficiaries were never intended to use livestock as their main income generator on such small plots, and that they should all instead cultivate vegetables as originally intended in the business plan and for which their training at ASFA had prepared them. The problems the rest of the group has had with de Water have led them to label him as "headstrong," "stubborn," and "difficult," and even Paul reiterated these sentiments. I was, however, unable to hear de Water's opinions on the situation as he was not willing to speak with me. The tension between he and the rest of the group was strong enough that the group failed to re-elect him as the president of the Bokdrif Trust two years ago when they last held elections, choosing Georg as a president instead.

Despite these problems, the fact remains that none of the rest of the farmers are fully cultivating their own plots, and so de Water continues to forage his goats on both his plot and the unoccupied plot, which are the only two that are being fully utilized. Though they have struck this uneasy balance with de Water, the situation may easily form more tensions in the near future as the productive capacity of Bokdrif increases, as the five-year business plan intends. That none of the other plots are being fully cultivated may stem from the fact that all the beneficiaries have other jobs or income sources in addition to farming (see Table

1). It remains unclear to me whether the beneficiaries ever intended farming to be their only, or even primary, source of income. The only person associated with Bokdrif who seems to derive his entire income from farming is Seim, Appelgrein's renter on Plot 7, and he appeared to me to be the least financially secure of the entire group.

Between my last visits in 2007 and those in January 2008, there was a clear difference in the Paul's morale with regard to Bokdrif, and he has become very critical of the fact that none of the beneficiaries' are at full cultivation yet. Despite the fact that Paul himself was one of the champions of the small-hold scheme, it appears he may have had a very different conception of what it would materialize as. The number one discrepancy between Paul's vision for the project and that of the beneficiaries seems to be that he had assumed the farmers would be using the project as their primary source of income. Additionally, even though Paul knew that one of the implications of employing a small-hold model was a lower production volume, he had envisioned each of the beneficiaries fully cultivating his or her entire plot. It also seems Paul thought they would have a more coordinated cultivation plan so that they could pool their produce to tap into markets that required higher-volume sales. Thus, Bokdrif was meant to have been more of a cooperative arrangement with a unified cultivation scheme—more closely resembling the typical large-scale commercial LRAD projects. It is important to note here, then, that though Paul advocated for a small-hold project model, he did not do so because he thought the large-scale commercial models were inherently flawed. Instead, he made this decision primarily so that it would

be possible to stay debt-free. It appears that he still hopes Bokdrif will reach full productive capacity, with the farmers dedicating almost all of their income-earning efforts towards their farm.

In addition to his wish for the farmers to spend more time working on cultivation their plots, he expressed specific frustrations that each year the famers added an increasing number of items to their 'wish list'. This wish list is a list of farm supplies for which Paul then applies to the government, through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASP), for grant money. Though the beneficiaries receive many of the items they request, Paul says that most of the materials are still either in their original packaging in the piles where they were delivered, or are not being utilized as they were intended. For example, most of the resident beneficiaries received large water storage tanks in 2005 for watering both their livestock and their families, but so far only Seppie has installed his. A large amount of fencing material that the group received in 2005 was never installed and is now nowhere to be found, leading Paul to believe that one of the beneficiaries sold it and kept the money for personal use. The Frans family received materials for pig housing, but as they have not yet moved to the farm to begin working there, those materials are sitting unused on their plot. Georg, who has pigs of his own, has requested to use the materials, but the Frans family has repeatedly denied his requests. One of the items that Georg received from the CASP funding in late 2007 was an expensive vegetable shrink-wrapper, which he had deemed absolutely necessary to the profitability of his vegetable sales on my last Bokdrif visit of that year. When we spoke again in January 2008,

he had had the shrink wrapper for some months, but had discovered too late that the supermarkets to which he sold most of his produce were uninterested in paying for the value-added on shrink-wrapped (as opposed to “naked”) vegetables. Aside from the shrink-wrapper being under-utilized, Paul adds, the vegetable scale that Georg received along with the shrink wrapper is not properly cared for; he recalls “cringing” at the beneficiaries’ carelessness with the delicate instrument.

Because the members of Bokdrif formed a trust, the land cannot be bought or sold yet, but when it is finally able to come up for sale, it must first be offered for sale to those in the trust. As of June 2007, it appeared that the families who were not yet cultivating the land themselves were willing neither to sell nor to begin cultivation, but none of the other Bokdrif members would have had the means to buy it if it was put on the market at that point. Upon my last visit in January 2008, the tensions both between the resident and non-resident beneficiaries and within the farm families at Bokdrif were at their highest yet, mirroring Paul’s frustrations. Georg was researching possible loop-holes to the trust laws that prevent him and the other beneficiaries from sub-dividing and selling their land. He is now expressing wishes to use what money he would get from the sale of Bokdrif to start his own, larger commercial operation apart from the rules, regulations, and interpersonal tensions of any trust. Despite Bokdrif’s choice to employ a individual family plot management scheme to avoid the difficulties with co-management, the classification of the whole operation as a trust complicates disagreements between the families.

For now, Georg and Helen, along with their grown daughter Anna<sup>\*</sup>, spend almost all of their time at Bokdrif, cultivating a variety of vegetables (cabbages, onions, green beans, yarrows, sweet potatoes, pepperdews, and watermelon) and raising a few pigs and chickens. Georg has also recently been the recipient of one hundred free olive trees as the part of the Goedgedacht Trust's Olive Path Out of Poverty Programme (or OP POP, which means 'pop up' or 'pop out' in Afrikaans). The trust received funding from the Dutch Postal Card Lottery to start the project, which has community service, public health, and environmental protection goals, especially in light of the dire predictions for climatic changes in the global south. The Goedgedacht Trust has undertaken research as to what options farmers in the Swartland have to prepare their crop regimes for the climate change predictions for the Cape (which mostly entail reduced rainfall in an already thirsty area). Olive trees use much less water and are hardier than the deciduous fruit trees that many farmers in the Western Cape region grow. They also have comparatively high returns per hectare when compared to the fruit trees and cultivated vegetables.

Georg's olive trees are still young and are not bearing fruit yet, but he does hope to increase his hectarage in olives to one full hectare (300 more olive trees) with the help of Goedgedacht. Before this happens though, the full irrigation infrastructure must be completed. Right now each Bokdrif farmer's plot has a drip irrigation system, but it does not cover the entire plot of land. The farmers must therefore spend a large amount of time every day simply moving the drip irrigation pipes around to water their vegetables. This is difficult for Georg

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\* Names of the project, beneficiaries, and some interviewees (where indicated\*) have been changed.



because he has had back problems since his days working in the vineyard as a child. His back is in bad enough condition that he is considered legally disabled, and must go to Malmesbury every two weeks to have his back readjusted, in addition to taking an expensive monthly prescription. It is also important to note that much of Georg's income is from a monthly disability pension, which represents a larger portion of his income than does farming. He additionally rents out a house he owns in Malmesbury, leaving farming (by my estimation) at around 20% of his income.

Though Bokdrif's support systems are, in many senses, praise-worthy in comparison to those of other LRAD projects, it has become clear that many are providing patronizing, and not collaborative, support. All who have spent time and effort helping Bokdrif succeed have had good intentions, yet some have fostered an unhealthy paternalism among the beneficiaries. Paul, for example, has never let the farmers themselves in on the grant application process, choosing instead to take on all the work himself in fear that they would not write an adequate grant. Because of this, the farmers come to expect a certain amount of 'free' grant money every year, and as mentioned earlier, Paul has begun to see them as ungrateful.

In addition to fostering a 'gift mentality', the ideology of those involved in post-settlement support systems has the power to shape the way the farmers themselves view their small-scale production scheme. This is where the hegemony of neo-liberalism and modern commercialized agriculture exemplifies Robbins' (2004) Degradation and Marginalization thesis. Even though Bokdrif

has managed to evade the government's overt economic policies that discourage small-scale agricultural production, their experience in working with government agents and others in the agricultural business is slowly internalizing in them a newer, more negative image of small-scale production schemes. Even Paul, for example, who spent much of his efforts on securing the small-hold model for the beneficiaries, does not necessarily view this as the best farming model. He promoted the small-hold model in this case so that no-debt would be acquired, and though he views Bokdrif as the most successful LRAD project in the entire West Coast District (see Figure 2), it seems that he labels this small-hold model as the best that *this particular population* (coloured former farm workers) can hope for. This probably stems from his training in apartheid era institutions, which seems to have left him with the mentality that large-scale, white commercial farms are the peak of efficiency and progress, while all other models are inferior. Thus, though Paul was a champion of the small-hold model for Georg and the rest of the beneficiaries, he still judges them against large-scale commercial farms. Now, the beneficiaries themselves do not let their own farm escape this scrutiny. I think this is why Georg is so eager to subdivide, sell, and start a larger commercial farm—even though just a year ago, he was a fierce supporter of their group trust structure.

## **Chapter VI**

### ***Results***

This results section is my own analysis, based on my experience with the farm and my field work, of how Bokdrif is faring as an *LRAD project*. I wish here to make a clear distinction between Bokdrif as a business entity in general and Bokdrif as it compares in the context of other LRAD projects. I aim here to compare Bokdrif specifically with more typical, large-scale commercial LRAD projects on the basis of economic viability, environmental sustainability, and participant satisfaction. It is clear that in comparison to a broader sampling of farms in the Western Cape, Bokdrif is probably not as economically viable, and may or may not be more environmentally friendly or satisfying to its owners. My research, however, is focused on contributing to studies of LRAD projects in particular, and judged in that arena, Bokdrif is faring remarkably well; it is easy to call Bokdrif a success in that context because the bar for success in LRAD projects is so low. Thus, when I use language that describes the ‘successes’ of Bokdrif, I wish to make clear that I am defining that success in relative terms. It remains evident that there are many improvements to be made on the Bokdrif model if it is to inform other potential projects.

#### ***i. Business Management***

In this section, I will provide my analysis of the business management strategies at Bokdrif, with particular attention to those of Georg. I do not endeavour to provide a quantitative economic analysis of his situation, as that is outside the scope of my training. I instead reflect more on the soundness of

Georg's business decisions, based on the information available. This analysis is also more qualitative in nature, at least partially out of necessity. The type of hard numbers I would have needed to provide a more quantitative analysis were, first of all, beyond the realm of what I deemed appropriate to ask in an interview. Second of all, it did not appear that the farmers at Bokdrif prioritized financial bookkeeping (at least for the income that farming at Bokdrif brought them), if they kept financial records at all. A sizable share of their business transactions were also conducted in more informal markets. I have chosen four categories on which to base my business management analysis: cultivation scheme, income, costs, and livelihood and food security. Though separated for organization's sake, these categories remain interrelated and successes in any one of the categories directly affect the others.

### ***Cultivation Scheme***

In terms of the cultivation plan for Bokdrif, there seems to be inconsistency and confusion as to what to plant where, and when, and to whom the crops should be sold. There does not appear to be future cultivation plans outlined other than those that have been outlined in Georg's mind. He claims that he plants what he thinks he will be able to sell, and has admittedly been wrong about his decisions on several occasions. The sense of uncertainty about the optimum cultivation scheme is reflected in the physical layout on Georg's four hectares. For example, on one of my visits May of 2007, he was having great difficulty finding a market for his crop of sweet potatoes. The sweet potatoes

stretched across a large section of his plot, a portion having been harvested, while the rest remained in the ground as Georg waited to see where he could sell them. Interspersed with the sweet potatoes were yarrows, large stretches of wild watermelon laying rotting on the vine, and new onions, while pepperdews and sweet green beans were planted haphazardly between patches of what was already growing. All of this was just in the section nearest the house, beyond which was a larger fallow area that was overgrown with weeds. At the edge of the property nearest the road was the new patch of olive trees, which were admittedly being given little attention in that important early stage of their life. Even so, he was still hoping to receive more olive trees from GARC at that time. I should note that although it has been shown that inter-cropping, when conducted properly, is beneficial for both soil and harvest yields, the type of cultivation pattern Georg was practicing was not an attempt at this strategy. Judging by his accounts, rather, his mixed crop cultivation scheme was the result of Georg's unsuccessful efforts to follow unpredictable markets.

During my visits in January 2008, the cultivation scheme seemed to be faring only marginally better than the year before. He was planting primarily cabbages and onions after securing a contract with a nearby Pick & Pay supermarket (to be discussed in more depth below), along with smaller plots of pepperdews, green beans, and yarrows, for which he had no pre-set market. There was still a significant area of fallow land. In early 2007, the Department of Agriculture announced plans to implement a new nation-wide SMS market information system for farmers, in which they could sign up for alerts to price

changes for certain crops and livestock. Despite Georg's initial excitement about this when I last spoke to him in 2007, it has not proven particularly helpful, as it only tells him what nation-wide price levels are, and does nothing to alert him to more specifically local demand which he has the capacity to supply.

As Paul has stated, it is clear that this small farm, at least in its current state, has nowhere near the per hectare production levels of a larger commercial farm, and it is clear that a larger commercial farm would have failed long ago if it had the type of erratic cultivation scheme that is being used at Bokdrif. The small-scale of Bokdrif, in this way, has been a blessing, but in others, it has been a curse. Local buyers, for example, are not as accustomed to buying in such small quantities, and seem generally disinterested in forming any lasting business relationships with a small farm that doesn't have the capacity to supply produce at the level the grocery chains are demanding. It seems, instead, that they see Bokdrif and other small farms as potential 'shelf fillers' of last resort for occasions when there is a gap in what their larger, more stable farm partners are able to supply. There are informal markets that Georg and some of the other farmers have participated in, but they have been neither more stable nor more lucrative than trade with larger chains. For example, whole-salers who supply to markets in the townships outside of Cape Town occasionally venture northward towards Malmesbury, stopping at farms on the way to purchase bulk quantities of vegetables. Georg has sold to these buyers on a handful of occasions when he could not find another market. These whole-salers paid very low prices because they asked for un-cleaned and un-cut vegetables, and because they had to pay to

transport bulk shipments of vegetables all the way back to Cape Town. Both Paul, and one of the other farmers, Seppie, have called selling to the Cape Town wholesalers “stupid,” saying that it is usually a decision made in desperation. There are also opportunities to sell fresh vegetables on the side of the national highway, the N2, that runs in front of Bokdrif. However, because there are other vegetable farms on both sides of Bokdrif that also sell produce along the highway, it does not seem at this point that road-side sales would provide a significant or consistent market for Bokdrif.

Thus, there have been very few stable business relationships that can help inform the Bokdrif farmers what they should cultivate. Moreover, the five-year business plan laid out by the PMT was necessarily vague, and has not been useful to Georg in making the more specific season-to-season choices that should be based on more current market information. It is safe to say that Georg has access to neither the market information nor, more importantly, the business contacts that he needs to make financially sound cultivation decisions.

### ***Income***

His cultivation scheme is thus based simply on which crops Georg thinks he will be able to sell, rather than on adherence to a more inflexible, pre-determined plan. His main buyers include the Pick & Pay and Spar supermarket chains in Malmesbury, who have mostly bought his produce based on customer demand, leading to inconsistencies and unpredictable income for Georg. There is also a nearby packing and processing plant called Patagonia that buys his produce

occasionally. In addition to selling fresh produce, Patagonia makes and sells some of its own products, such as sweet chilli sauce, which fetch a higher price than the produce. Georg only discovered by accident that he could earn more money this way by planting the vegetable ingredients Patagonia needed for their finished sauces and other products—hence, his preference for pepperdews. Though he is attempting to plant based on market factors, he has not managed to create any stable source of income. It is clear, then, why Georg has not come to the point of being able to save money yet, as he has intended to do. Even so, he has remained somewhat optimistic after receiving the olive trees from the Goedgedacht Trust and finally securing a contract with the Pick & Pay supermarket in Malmesbury.

Bokdrif's Pick & Pay contract was signed in late 2006, and included three of the original beneficiary families, Seppie's, Jansen's, and Georg's, along with Mrs. Alexander's grandson and Seim, the two renters. The contract stipulated that these five farm entities supply Pick & Pay with cabbages and onions over three years. I did not get a clear answer as to whether there was a certain quota amount of onions and cabbages the farmers were obligated to supply. Paul insists that there was no set amount at all, and that Pick & Pay was just entering into the contract as a publicity stunt. Bokdrif has been receiving a modest amount of publicity because of its novelty in the redistribution process, including appearances in local newspapers and magazines and an audience with the National Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture, Lulu Xingwana. I am sceptical, however, that even in light of this publicity, Pick & Pay would not require an annual minimum tonnage. Adding to my scepticism is the fact that the



farmers had occasionally expressed feeling pressured by Pick & Pay to produce more than they were.

Whether or not there was a produce quota, Pick & Pay was to give the farmers the entirety of the contract money, a total of R800,000, as an advance at the signing, on which there was no interest. However, at that point, a non-profit member of the PMT, the West Coast Ubuntu Farmers' Union (WEKUFUF), stepped in to broker the contract and charge the farmers 8% interest on the Pick & Pay advance over the three year period. Georg and Paul were both upset at this, as it appeared that WEKUFU had gone behind the farmers' backs in dealing with the Pick & Pay. Pick & Pay then distributed the advance to WEKUFU instead of the Bokdrif Trust, and Georg says that though the farm was supposed to have received the entirety of the money up front, WEKUFU has been very slow in distributing the full amount. At our last meeting, he recounted that he had even had to pay for the cabbage and onion plants, on which the contract was based, out of his own pocket because WEKUFU had not yet given him the money. He had also bought his first pick-up truck after signing the contract, thinking he could rely on the advance money to pay for it, but as of June 2007 had not yet been able to pick it up yet as he was waiting for the funding. By January 2008, he had his pick-up, but remains weary of WEKUFU and their integrity as an organization. Bokdrif has still not received the full R800,000, and Georg attributed their problems with WEKUFU to difficulties it experienced after the untimely death of their director, a friend of Georg's, who was killed in a car accident shortly before the signing of the Pick & Pay contract.

The last time we met during my 2007 field work, Georg believed that the cultivation of the new olive trees represented great promise, despite the fact that the trees would not bear fruit to give the farm a profit for some years (a period which will lengthen if the trees are neglected as they have been, although they will still bear fruit eventually). It would definitely be a more stable source of income, as the Goedgedacht Trust who is helping the farm with project has supportive infrastructure set up for small farmers in the area. The Goedgedacht Trust is a farm that cultivates many hectares of olives itself, and invested in olive processing and packaging equipment. Using this equipment, Goedgedacht is now selling olive oil and other olive-based products under its own label and will represent a sure buyer of any olives produced by the small farmers in the area. It has funding to plant another five hectares of olives every year for free on the land of small farmers in the Swartland region, which is part of its initiative to prepare farmers for the effects of climate change on their crops.

The Trust also has a support program in place called the “3C’s”, or climate change crops. This program is aimed at finding as many crops as possible that small farmers can produce with as little water as possible. In addition, Goedgedacht researches which types of crops can be grown well with the olive trees in the interim period before they begin bearing marketable olives. They do this to ensure that the farmers have some source of income before the olive trees can provide any. Goedgedacht will retain control of the aforementioned olive processing equipment and thus will inevitably make more money than the farmers for the value added in processing, but the organization is committed to re-

investment in small-hold farms. Hopefully, it will remain consistent in its dedication to helping small farmers achieve sustainable livelihoods.

Despite the potential stability offered by a partner like Goedgedacht, Georg, as mentioned earlier, was set on subdividing and selling Bokdrif as soon as was legally possible. If this happens as soon as Georg would like, the olive trees will not bear fruit in time for him to see whether they would have been a viable, steadier income source or not. It seemed that he did not wish to include olive trees in the plans he had for his own commercial farm in the future, and Goedgedacht would not be willing to provide them to a larger commercial farmer if his plans were realized anyway.

It appears that income from farming thus far at Bokdrif has been inconsistent but sufficient, and that the farmers are at least attempting to move slowly towards more reliable sources. If some of the other farmers continue on at Bokdrif, even if Georg leaves, they would need to focus their efforts on securing more stable buyers. For this, they would probably need help from the government, possibly in the form of tax breaks for companies who buy LRAD produce. A tax break seems an effective possibility in light of the fact that Pick & Pay was apparently willing to advance Bokdrif R800,000 without any pre-set contract for how much produce they would receive. Because of the scale of operation of Bokdrif, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for its income flows to come even close to that of larger commercial farm redistribution projects. The reason Bokdrif is still running, whereas many other LRAD projects at this stage in their

life were failing, appears to be a combination of their reduced costs, discussed in the next section, and the farmers' diverse income sources.

Though the discussion of income thus far has centered on Bokdrif's farming income, the key point to consider when looking at the farmers' income is that all but one of them have other significant income sources (see Table 1). The only person at Bokdrif who does rely solely on agriculture for his income, the renter Seim, appears to be the least well-off financially of all the residents. If the farmers did not have these other varied income sources, it is difficult to say whether they could still afford to continue farming at Bokdrif. At the same time, however, perhaps if they did not have to dedicate another portion of their time to earning money in other ways, more of their time and energy could have been spent in attempts to reach full cultivation at Bokdrif and find new markets for their produce.

Though Paul expresses wishes for the farmers to dedicate more, if not all of their time to Bokdrif, it could be argued that this allowance for income diversification is one of the strongest points of the small-hold family model. Many other LRAD projects in the district were large and labor intensive enough to require most of the resident farmers' time and energy. Though normally only a small portion of the beneficiaries are dependent on their farms for income (while many of the rest retain outside jobs), the large-scale project represents a more narrowly-focused livelihood strategy for those who do depend farm income. In an already volatile, unpredictable industry, livelihood diversification may be one of

the only realistic ways for LRAD beneficiaries to reduce risks and lessen the income shocks typical in the agricultural economy.

Additionally, if and when larger LRAD farms failed, the farmers were left with nothing because they had abandoned their former livelihoods to invest themselves in their new projects. In many of these cases, the farmers were worse off financially than before they received LRAD grants. If Bokdrif were to fail completely, almost all the residents would be able to recover relatively quickly from any financial losses they incurred. That said, in Bokdrif's case many government workers would argue, as Paul does, that the project had received far too much grant money to exist as a supplementary form of income, rather than a primary livelihood. The large amount of government money received, and the apparent inefficiency in how the money has been spent, does not seem to justify labelling Bokdrif as 'supplemental'. Though Bokdrif is not an exemplary model in fiscal responsibility, I believe other LRAD projects could benefit in an allowance for other supplemental activities that would reduce the severity of the income shocks that are inevitable in the agricultural market, especially for newcomers like LRAD beneficiaries.

### *Costs*

The costs incurred by the farmers running Bokdrif so far have been particularly low in comparison to other LRAD projects, due at least in part due to the large amount of grant money they have been able to secure. Aside from the grant support systems Bokdrif has in place, one factor sets it apart from so many

other LRAD projects and many farms around the world: it has no debt. This was primarily because of Paul's insistence that 'no borrowing' be a stipulation of the business management plan, and it has been possible primarily through his and Georg's efforts at finding and taking advantage of government programs that will provide funding for whatever costs they sustain. One program in particular, South Africa's Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASAP), has been especially helpful. Bokdrif received in excess of R600,000 of free grant money from this program from 2005-2007, which benefits many small farmers. Under this program, the farmers meet with Paul and discuss specific equipment, building materials, and implements they need for the year, determine the costs, and write an application for funding that details the specific items—this is the 'wish list' discussed earlier. It is this money that has funded the irrigation system (so the farmers will not have to move the drip irrigation pipes daily), the construction of vegetable shade houses, shelters for the pigs, fencing, the un-used vegetable packaging equipment discussed earlier, and various gardening tools, among others. It remains to be seen how long the farmers will be able to take advantage of this program, as the funding for it has been drastically cut in recent years. It is funded on a provincial basis, and the Western Cape's budget dropped from R75 million in 2005 to R33 million in 2007.

The cost of large implements is one factor that has been a problem for Bokdrif, as they have not been able to afford all the equipment they need to become the small commercial enterprise they are aspiring to be. They currently need to borrow almost all large equipment (tractors, ploughs and disc ploughs,

rakes, etc) from the Goedgedacht Trust, and Georg remains uneasy about the farms dependency on implements that belong to someone else. He hopes that with moneys from the CASP application next year (this year's money has largely already been spent on the above mentioned items) and the Pick & Pay contract, the farm will someday be able to afford their own equipment. This would reduce their dependency both on Goedgedacht and on hiring temporary labourers. Three to five temporary workers are needed to complete tasks over several days that Georg could complete in one day by himself if he had the right equipment.

Right now, it is difficult for Georg to afford hired labourers to help with farm tasks even for busy times, so it remains to be seen how long it will actually take to save up the kind of money needed to buy expensive implements like tractors. Still, the cost of family labour is 'free', and Georg, Helen, and their daughter all work the farm. Other input costs are less concerning: the cost of seeds is relatively inexpensive and easily covered by the farmers, and they do not use enough chemicals for them to constitute a large operational cost (and these are often paid for with CASP money). They also get fertilizer for very cheap, and sometimes at no cost at all, from the neighbouring chicken farm. However, as mentioned earlier, the Bokdrif Trust was only able to attain a less-productive parcel of land from a larger white farm. Because their land is less productive, they do need a significant amount of fertilizer to maintain healthy vegetables.

This is one instance where Bokdrif's small scale is both good and bad for cost minimization. Because Bokdrif is a small-scale farm, the nearby chicken farm all but donates for what would be a significant cost to the farmers, whereas

they charge one of the larger farms down the road much more for their manure. Additionally, the Bokdrif farmers apply the manure ‘manually’, with shovels and wheelbarrows, allowing them to be more discriminating about where they apply the fertilizer. This reduces the amount of ‘per-crop’ manure they need to fertilize relative to a larger, more mechanized operation with the same cultivation scheme. Therefore, Bokdrif’s fertilizer costs are reduced both because of the smaller per-crop volume they need and because of the chicken farm’s benevolence to its smaller-scale neighbors. One could also argue, however, that the time costs of manually applying the fertilizer make up for the reduced monetary costs of fertilizer for the Bokdrif farmers. Based on the economics of family farms and the advantage of family labor exploitation, I would say that Bokdrif still has a cost advantage over larger-scale operations in terms of fertilizer costs. Their smaller scale, then, allows them to keep costs of fertilizer down even on less productive land. It is important to note, however, that if Bokdrif did begin to operate at a larger scale, the fact that they have less fertile land to begin with would quickly turn into a disadvantage.

Beyond the cost of fertilizer, one payment that has been difficult for the farmers to pay has been the electricity bill to Eskom, which is R150 per month per family. It seems to be more the rigidity of the amount and the day that it is due that is the real problem, as the farmers’ incomes are highly variable and dependent on seasons, weather, and markets that electricity bills do not heed. The R150 monthly amount was written into the Trust’s laws at its inception, yet there is still debate over why each group should have to pay this. Here again, there is



tension between Adrian de Water, Senior, and the rest of group, as Mr. de Water claims he uses less energy and that the payments they make should be proportional and not a pre-set amount.

Where the Bokdrif farmers may have difficulty paying R150 a month in electricity bills, beneficiaries of a large-scale commercial redistribution project would have been faced with significantly higher costs. This is primarily because of the debt they almost necessarily incur in their purchase of the implements and inputs necessary to run a successful large farming operation. Even in cases where commercial redistribution projects in the Malmesbury area experienced a larger flow of income, Paul says, the proportion of income they dedicated to paying the operational costs and interest on debt was clearly much higher than they could afford to keep up with—or even to survive. The fact that Bokdrif is both surviving and even slowly expanding suggests that the costs of this small-hold operation are much more manageable.

### ***Livelihood and food security***

With all the support mechanisms in place, the fact that they have no debt, their full ownership of the land, their steadier income from non-farming sources, and their relatively low cost of living, Georg and Helen seem very secure in their livelihood, increasingly so as they learn more about predicting and cultivating for specific markets. As discussed earlier, other income sources make a larger contribution to the beneficiaries' income, but owning their own land can be seen as an additional measure of securing the families' economic futures. None of the

families appear to be struggling with food security (as this could be a source of embarrassment it would be understandable if the situation were otherwise and the farmers did not want me to know about it, but I think this is unlikely). With the high rate of failure experienced on the large scale commercial projects in the area, it is difficult to see how those participants could have been more secure in their livelihoods. At first glance, it may seem that Georg's wish to sell his plot would suggest a defeat for the project, and while this is true in some sense, this is a very different 'defeat' than that experienced by most other LRAD projects. Many other projects that fail are completely liquidated and leave the beneficiaries with little or no assets. In Bokdrif's case, Georg is looking to use what he's saved from his LRAD project and expand on it, working to develop his farming abilities rather than get out of the business altogether. Whether this is a wise economic decision or not, it does at least indicate that he has more financial security than most other LRAD beneficiaries in South Africa.

## *ii. Environmental Management*

In this section, I discuss the environmental impacts that Bokdrif has and draw some comparisons between Bokdrif's impact and that of more conventional LRAD projects. Again, it was outside the scope of my project to conduct in-depth quantitative studies; even if the kind of data I would need for a quantitative analysis of Bokdrif's chemical usage, soil health, and water and energy consumption were readily available, there have been no published studies that I am aware of addressing the environmental impacts of LRAD projects (see Rippon

& Meadows, unpublished, 2006). Instead, as in the last section, I provide a more qualitative analysis of decisions that have been made at Bokdrif with regard to four categories: soil, chemical use, water, and energy consumption.

### *Soil*

The soil at Bokdrif is very sandy, a soil type classified by the South African Soil Classification System (SASCS) as Fernwood, which is comparable to the Entisol soil type of USDA Soil Taxonomy system (INCO-DC, 1999). Entisols are often described as soils with no horizontal profile development evident, and when found in dry, hot, sandy areas, they can have a high infiltration rate (meaning that water is unlikely to runoff the surface of the soil). These soils are moderately well-suited for growing the vegetables that Georg and the others have selected (the sweet potatoes, onion, yarrow, and cabbage are best-suited, but all are growing fine there). Before the farmers bought that section of what was once a larger farm, the previous owner mined the sand from that section, leaving a relatively thin layer of topsoil that was not particularly fertile.

The sandiness of the soil makes it well-drained, the land is relatively flat, and there are rarely excessive amounts of rainfall in the area—all of which mean that the potential for erosion is very low. In addition, the fact that fewer plants would grow on the soil if the farmers did not plant them means that the soil now has more plant roots to hold it down. The soil's sandiness, however, does make leaching a problem, as nutrients tend to sink below levels where plants roots can effectively use them. The chicken farm and broiler houses in the farm adjacent to

Bokdrif are convenient, giving the farmers a cheap and easy way to replace these leached nutrients. The chicken manure contains nitrogen, first and foremost, but also has helpful trace elements such as copper, zinc, manganese, and boron. Because it is applied by the individual farmer rather than a larger machine, it is used more sparingly than would be done on a larger more mechanized farm, meaning there is less potential to over-fertilize (which often contributes to eutrophication in nearby streams, rivers, or lakes—but because there is so little runoff this would be less of a problem at Bokdrif anyway). There is also something to be said for the fact that they are not using more harmful synthetic fertilizer, but are instead using a nearby source of nutrients (in the form of chicken manure) that would be going to waste otherwise.

### ***Water***

Water is the biggest environmental risk factor for farmers in the Western Cape, according to Paul. The region has a Mediterranean-like climate, with winter rain fall (May-August) and very dry, hot summers (November-February). The Western Cape's annual precipitation is only 348 millimeters, and it has the most variability between annual averages of any other South African Province (ENPAT, 2001). There is little availability of underground artesian wells and aquifers, and there are few bodies of water from which to draw for cultivation. Bokdrif is lucky in that it is situated atop an artesian well that is as yet uncontaminated. The farmers applied to the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to extract 63 cubic meters per hectare on 7 hectares of land (they applied

for only seven hectares, because as previously mentioned, none of the plots are near under full cultivation). Their application was approved, and they have consistently been extracting the maximum amount. This is troubling, because as Paul reports, 63 cubic meters is no less water than would be used per hectare on a large commercial farm. It remains a mystery where the water is being consumed, as Bokdrif is producing so much less per hectare than a large-scale commercial farm.

Paul says that he doesn't understand Bokdrif's water consumption levels, while Georg argues that the farmers need every bit of water they are extracting. Georg has complained that the larger farm across the road, which shares the same small aquifer, consistently withdraws more than its water permit allows. Perhaps Bokdrif's withdrawal levels are a knee-jerk reaction to their neighbors' overconsumption, leading them to withdraw as much as they can in fear that they will be missing out if they do not extract as much as they possibly can before their neighbors use up their shared supply. Another possible explanation for their high water use levels is that their already sandy soil had been mined by the former owner, leaving them with high infiltration rates. This would mean that the water they do give their crops drains more quickly to a level below which the plants utilize.

At this point it is important to reiterate that market-led agrarian reform (MLAR) proponents, as previously discussed, have argued that state-led reform will lead beneficiaries to receive marginal land. In the case of Bokdrif, however, the MLAR system was what led the beneficiaries to receive marginal land, as

their plot is a less desirable—but more affordable—plot of land that a more successful white farmer no longer wanted. This, in turn, may be affecting both the financial viability of Bokdrif—in that they need to buy more inputs to make their soil productive—and the environmental sustainability—in that their soils have higher infiltration rates and they use more water than they would otherwise need to. This represents a major environmental problem, then, because Bokdrif has access to sufficient water supplies where many other farms do not, and is producing less per hectare than other farms while using just as much water. As water is one of the most precious resources in the Western Cape, this is a problem that Bokdrif needs to address.

### *Chemical Use*

The use of chemicals on the farm is very low compared to a larger commercial farm, as Georg uses only two insecticides (no herbicides or fungicides are necessary): cypermethrin and deltamethrin. He applies these by hand with a rudimentary hand-held bag sprayer, which is one of the main reasons he uses so much less than a large farm that would spray by machine. At least part of the reason that only these two chemicals are used is that South African farmers are finding their products unmarketable to European markets unless they comply with “Europgap,” the regulations for chemical usage standards put out by the European Union. Although Paul claims that these two insecticides are not harmful to humans at all, do not cause cancer or any other adverse health effects, and do not contaminate groundwater, my own investigations have proven otherwise. The

EPA has labelled all pyrethrins (the chemical group that both cypermethrin and deltamethrin fall under) as having at least moderate potentiality as carcinogens, and also found that it is highly toxic to aquatic animals. It is also suspected that this family of chemicals are endocrine disruptors, which often has consequences for reproductive systems of both animals and humans (EPA, 1998). This makes the fact that the farmers at Bokdrif are aspiring to become more commercialized and employ mechanized spray systems problematic.

### ***Energy Consumption***

Energy consumption, both in terms of electricity consumed and fossil fuels burned, is significantly lower at Bokdrif than it would be on a large scale commercial farm. In the case of electricity, this is because there is really not any infrastructure at Bokdrif that is even capable of consuming large amounts of electricity, as evidenced by the fact that the farm only has a 50 Rva system. Their biggest factor in electricity consumption is the electrified water pumping system; household uses are negligible. They also clearly use less fossil fuels than would a large farm because they do not have the equipment, and instead rely far more on expending human energy (in terms of hiring farm workers instead of mechanizing the same task) than on fossil fuel energy. Again, however, the farmers, if at all possible and when they can afford to, will become more mechanized as soon as they can. This will make their fossil fuel consumption patterns increasingly similar to those on large-scale commercial ventures.

### *iii. Participant Satisfaction*

Though this part of my analysis is far from being objective or quantifiable, it remains one of the most important to the success of the project. I have attempted simply to relay what the farmers have expressed to me and give reflections on my observations of the farm.

It seems clear that the farmers are materially less well-off than they were while they lived together at the Atlantic Small Farmers Association. Georg and Helen both spoke nostalgically of the comfortable accommodations and the conveniences that were available to them while they lived there. The simple fact that three of the families have not yet moved to Bokdrif and do not intend to is evidence enough that the material conditions elsewhere are more favourable. Bokdrif has yet to receive many of the materials promised by the Department of Housing (hence, their resorting to dwell in vegetable storage containers) and has not yet received funding or support services to put in plumbing systems on the farm (the responsibility of the Swartland Municipality).

Though Helen was one of the main informants for my project, this case study is clearly biased towards Georg's point of view because he was the primary decision-maker on matters dealing with Bokdrif. Helen's account provided mostly background information, and therefore even in the re-telling of the story of the project to which she has dedicated all her efforts in the past few years, she seems a peripheral figure. This in itself reveals much about the power dynamics of Georg and Helen's relationship. Perhaps it is this clear lack of decision-making power that made Helen the more likely of the two to express dissatisfaction with



the project and their new lives there. Although both Georg and Helen have expressed concerns about the current state of Bokdrif, Helen seems to have found the transition more fraught with difficulty than Georg has. For example, while Georg has more access to better farming equipment for the work that he does fulfilling his 'role' as husband and provider, Helen has less access to the conveniences that made her 'role' as a wife and mother much easier at Atlantis. She also seems more distressed that her two sons had no interest in living with them on a farm, as they had grown up in town and wished to stay there. It also seems clear to me that their daughter would move to town if she could, but has nowhere to go and a child to support, and needs the help of her parents. It seems safe to say that Helen does not have much decision making power in the relationship, as evidenced by her constant reference to the fact that she loves her husband and must follow where he goes when asked what she would like to do instead. Despite these concerns of Helen's, she has expressed in genuine terms that she does love living away from the city and feels very proud of the fact that she and Georg own their own farm now.

If Helen speaks in glowing terms of farm life, Georg nearly bursts with excitement when the subject comes up. He attributes what success he has had with the project to the fact that he has a born passion for farming—"You must be born a farmer, you can't make a farmer. It must be inside you," he says. "But once it's inside you, you can't take it out." By all his accounts, he is pleased with what he's achieved so far, even if he realizes that there is still much work to be done. He is deeply proud of his achievement in getting this farm of his own, and very happy

to give advice to any other potential LRAD grant recipients who come around—which is a lot, considering the relative fame this project has brought him. Because this project is one of the first of its kind, it has become a bit of a ‘poster-child’ for land redistribution in the Western Cape, scoring Georg appearances in newspapers and magazines, and an audience with the new National Minister of Agriculture, Lulu Xingwana. It is ironic that the government at the provincial level, on one hand, made it so difficult for the beneficiaries to participate in a small-hold project, yet the government at the national level is holding up Bokdrif as a an innovative new method they are using to address problems with the LRAD process. It seems that though the government is using Bokdrif as a ‘feel good’ story to promote their efforts to improve the LRAD system, they are not wholeheartedly behind the concept of small-hold redistribution projects.

Though it is clear that Georg is proud of his accomplishments at Bokdrif, the fact remains that he aspires to sell it and move onto a bigger, more financially lucrative commercial farm as soon as he can. His dissatisfaction in the project appears to be located in the group dynamic, and in particular, with Mr. de Water. The biggest problem Georg has with Bokdrif is that he does not have full power to make his own business decisions, even with the individually-owned plot model. I believe that his dissatisfaction is greater than the rest of the farmers’ in this arena, possibly because he is the president of the trust and is responsible for making decisions that affect the group, and is therefore the person most open to criticism by the other farmers. Another element of what dissatisfaction he has with project stems from his wishes that Bokdrif would be more lucrative. Here, it

seems that Moseley's (2007) assertion that many LRAD beneficiaries have unrealistic expectations for profit levels stemming from their impressions of agriculture during apartheid's protectionist era is very applicable. To Moseley's point, I would add that in addition to expectations of more profitable ventures, the LRAD beneficiaries have high expectations in terms of simply being able to break into the network of their white counterparts, when in reality, this is much more difficult than they predict it will be and than the South African government would probably like to admit.

Despite what problems the farmers have with Bokdrif, and the tensions between the members, they are faring far better than most other LRAD projects would normally be at this point in their project's history (see Table II for full comparison between Bokdrif and other LRAD projects). Even in January 2008, when, as mentioned earlier, tensions within the group were at their highest that I witnessed, Paul still labelled Bokdrif as the most successful LRAD project the district had ever seen, and all the resident participants except Georg were still clearly tied to the work they had done, and expressed plans to stay at Bokdrif. That, in itself, puts Bokdrif in a better place than other LRAD projects, even if it does not represent the 'perfect' LRAD model.

<b>Table II: Categories for Analysis</b>		
<b>Broad Category</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>	<b>How does Bokdrif compare?</b>
<b>Economic Sustainability</b>	a. Cultivation Scheme	Erratic cultivation scheme shows less knowledge of and access to markets than a larger commercial LRAD project
	b. Income Sources	More diverse than those of residents at a typical LRAD project; almost none of the residents makes more than 25% of his or her income from farming
	c. Costs	Much lower than a typical LRAD project because of no-debt model and additional CASP grant money, their biggest fixed cost is a monthly energy bill
	d. Livelihood Security	More secure than the typical LRAD project because they have risked less by not acquiring debt and are able to dedicate time to other income-earning activities
<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	a. Soil Health	Soils poorer than most commercial farms, but they apply natural fertilizer manually, thus reducing the risks associated with both synthetic fertilizers and runoff from overfertilization
	b. Water Consumption	Uses just as much water per hectare as a large-scale farm while producing less, may stem from soil's high infiltration rate or competition with farm across the road
	c. Energy Consumption	Negligible in comparison to typical LRAD project, but intentions to expand in future will require much greater energy use
	d. Chemical Use	Much lower than a typical LRAD project because their small-scale allows more sparing manual application of less toxic pesticides, although these still pose health risks for people and animals
<b>Participant Satisfaction</b>	My interpretation of Georg and Helen's feelings about the project	Bokdrif is faring much better than a typical LRAD project in this category, even though there have been group tensions and Georg wishes to subdivide and sell his plot

## **Chapter VII**

### ***Conclusions and Policy Recommendations***

Reviewing this case study and its particularities has been informative for the broader body of literature on land reform in South Africa. First of all, this case shows that contrary to market-led agrarian reform (MLAR) proponents' argument that state-led reform leads beneficiaries to receive marginal land, the opposite is true: the MLAR system is what let these beneficiaries to receive marginal land. South Africa's MLAR system dictated that best possible plot available at an affordable price to Bokdrif's beneficiaries was a smaller, less-productive corner of a white owned farm whose top-soil had been mined. This has important implications for the future structure of land reform programs in South Africa. It implies that beneficiaries could have access to better plots if the state took a more authoritative position to securing productive land for LRAD projects. Already, under the relatively new National Agricultural Minister Lulu Xingwana, the South African state has begun expropriation of land for the land reform program within the last year. Hopefully this will have a positive effect on the successes of LRAD projects in the future.

On the other hand, giving the state more responsibility on paper may lead to an even more difficult, bureaucratic land reform process overall, because Hall's (2004) problem of 'big policy and the shrinking state' is evident in this case study. The beneficiaries' experience illustrates the tremendous amount of bureaucratic layers ('big policy') one must traverse to participate in the land reform program in South Africa, even while there were instances where it was clear that the different governmental departments involved were too under-funded

and over-worked ('shrinking state') to enforce these contracts and laws. In Bokdrif's case, this is evident in their 'battle' with the Provincial Department of Road Affairs to get approval for an access road. Additionally, there was a lack of communication between the different governmental departments who 'touched' Bokdrif, and occasionally their different policies were contradictory. This is exemplified in the confusion as to which governmental department was responsible for funding for Bokdrif's plumbing systems. Perhaps this lack of communication and collaboration between the different branches of government stems from what Bryant and Bailey (1997) label as the 'functionally-defined state'. Functionally-defined states, like South Africa, divide the government into different resource management departments (eg, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Department of Land Affairs, Department of Minerals and Energy). With each branch of government focused specifically on managing their particular resource, it is very difficult to create a unified strategy for LRAD projects, whose success depend on careful management of multiple categories of resources that refuse to fit neatly under the jurisdiction of one governmental department.

In addition to the policy contradictions between different governmental branches, there is an inherent contradiction in the roles of the state itself—again, Bryant and Bailey (1997) are helpful with their analysis of the 'dual role of the state'. They argue that the state's responsibility to protect its most vulnerable populations and resources is perverted by aspirations of developing a globally competitive market economy. In Bokdrif's case, this is clear in the paradox of the government holding Bokdrif up as a poster-child LRAD project while

simultaneously having discouraged their small-hold model to begin with. On the one hand, the social development side of the state champions a more socially contextualized small-hold, family farming model as better for the project participants; on the other hand, the neo-liberal state discourages a less productive small-hold project model as economically inefficient and bad for the economy. It seems that, with Georg's wishes to have a more productive, large-scale farm, even he has internalized in him an increasingly negative view of the small-hold model that seems to originate in the neo-liberal state's unwavering emphasis on high-input, high-output farming models. Again, this internalization of the government's neo-liberal development strategies can be seen as an instance of Robbins' (2004) Degradation and Marginalization thesis—where state development intervention compromises the environmental sustainability, and thus, the economic sustainability, of local production systems. Though the small-hold model is shown in this case to be more environmentally innocuous overall than typical LRAD projects and represents a more economically secure livelihood, it does not fit into the state's neo-liberal economic development strategies that measure success based on national-level macroeconomic indicators.

Finally, this case contributes to Hall's (2004) arguments that the LRAD program is failing because it fails to address agrarian dualism in the countryside. She argues that the overall binary structure of agricultural systems in South Africa—the modern, capital intensive side that is subsidized by cheap labor from the more traditional production systems—is not being targeted by LRAD policies. Instead, the LRAD program is simply attempting to create an elite class of black

commercial farmers without restructuring this problematic dualism. The struggles of the Bokdrif beneficiaries to have their small-hold model approved by the state shows clearly that the state is focusing on creating large-scale, commercial LRAD projects. Even though the state finally did approve the small-hold model scheme, the Bokdrif farmers are being pushed by government discourse, by the structure of the markets that they have not yet been able to break into, and even by Paul, to boost productivity levels and to increasingly resemble a large-scale commercial farm. Thus, even these small-hold model project beneficiaries, that have proven their project to be more successful overall than the typical large-scale commercial models, are being pressured to move away from their original structure and to become part of this class of elite black commercial farmers.

In terms of refining policy recommendations from these conclusions, it would be unreasonable to attempt to generalize or make broad value statements concerning all small-hold and all large-scale commercial farms after having examined only one small-hold model. There can be no clear-cut answer as to whether the small-hold model is in all cases better or worse, because the success of the project depends very much on all the different contexts in which it is created. There have been large-scale commercial operations that succeed, and there are aspects of even this well-supported, well-funded small-hold project that are not faring well.

After discussing the project's strong points and shortcomings, it seems clear that there are five very important factors in the relative success of this project when compared to other LRAD projects. The first is that it had no debt,



which plays an enormous role in the financial viability of the farm. As the Land Bank has recently become so embroiled in scandal and corruption, now seems as opportune a time as any for the government to de-emphasize agricultural lending for LRAD projects. Though it does not seem feasible to stipulate that LRAD projects receive no loan money, I would recommend that other LRAD projects, like Bokdrif, do as much as possible to research grants and other support systems that provide ‘free’ money, rather than borrowing from credit institutions. This may be increasingly difficult as government budgets are cut, as evidenced by the CASP programs funding shortages of late. However, if LRAD applicants steer clear of large-scale commercial models that require so much more start-up capital, it is much more plausible that other groups could follow in Bokdrif’s ‘no-debt’ footsteps.

The second factor of Bokdrif’s relative success is the amount of support systems it has in place, in terms of both finances and infrastructure, and simply people who are invested in the success of the project. This justifies the findings of numerous authors who cite the lack of post-settlement support as one of the primary points at which many LRAD projects fail (such as Zimmerman, 2000; Mather, 2002; Cousins, 2005; Moseley, 2007). Without the support of financial mechanisms like CASP, organizations like the Goedgedacht Trust, and people like Paul (who admits that the Bokdrif farm is the project that is the “closest to [his] heart” of all he worked with so far), it would be infinitely more difficult for Bokdrif to have succeeded to the point it has. Because of the publicity Bokdrif has had, it is difficult to say if other projects would be able to secure as much support

as they have, and it would be misleading to assert that their success in this arena is something that all small-hold LRAD projects could attain if they become more common.

Still, one aspect of Bokdrif that has worked greatly to their advantage was collaboration with NGOs like Goedgedacht, rather than strict reliance on government support systems. South African government departments, in most cases, are under-resourced and have not exhibited the ability to provide the full extent of services a fledgling LRAD project requires. Local NGOs provide another potential support mechanism for such projects. Further research should be conducted as to the possible roles NGOs could fill in relation to land reform in South Africa, and into the logistics of NGOs potential relationships with government agencies in assisting with LRAD projects. In light of the government's shortcomings in its land reform programs so far, should NGOs be considered a part of the national land reform program? How can their work be incorporated into or encouraged by national-level land reform policies? These are just a handful of the many questions that could be researched, and I believe the NGO community holds great potential for improving the LRAD project success rates in South Africa.

The third important factor in Bokdrif's operations is the individual household management scheme. Although there have been arguments between the households at Bokdrif, they have not had as much of a negative impact on business decisions on the farm as they would have if there were a joint management scheme. One recommendation I would have as to how to improve

the group dynamic in future small-hold model LRAD projects would be to add a required group constitution in addition to the business management plan. Many of the problems between the households at Bokdrif could have been fairly resolved if there had been a pre-set list of rules regarding use rights, group expenses, and resource use. Though Bokdrif does have a constitution, it outlines little but the process of electing a new board president. The group would have benefited greatly from a more in-depth constitution, and it seems that other LRAD projects would do the same. Here, for example, lies an opportunity for NGO involvement in the LRAD process. An NGO in Cape Town, the Legal Resources Center (LRC), has a land reform sub-branch that has helped more recently emerging LRAD projects draft constitutions that are legally binding. I paid a visit to one such project that was showing at least as much promise, if not more, than Bokdrif, in large part thanks to the help they had received from the LRC and other local NGOs. Beneficiaries there had a much clearer picture of their role within the larger project, and at least from my superficial examination, their operations appeared to be running with far fewer conflicts than Bokdrif.

The fourth important factor in Bokdrif's relative success is the fact that the small-hold scheme allows the farmers enough time and energy to continue to earn income in other ways, which, in effect, subsidizes their farming operation. Despite the fact that they are not at full cultivation capacity yet, the farmers are financially stable and are slowly working towards full capacity. This would suggest that LRAD projects could benefit if the government allowed for a more gradual 'transitional model' business plan, rather than attempting to reach full

productive capacity in as short a time period as possible. A transitional model business plan would allow for beneficiaries to retain other means of income while building up their farms, and should a beneficiary, such as Georg, wish to expand capacity further, he or she would have the agricultural base and financial stability to do so. Here again, however, as Robbins (2004) might argue, the hegemony of national-level neo-liberal economic policies that push for maximum production could easily prevent the realization of a more locally contextualized solution for LRAD beneficiaries.

The final crucial factor is the determination and ambition of the farmers. In this project in particular, the amount of hard work put in by Georg is noteworthy. Paul admits that he would have nowhere near as much will to help Bokdrif so much if he was not so inspired by all the work Georg put in himself. It is clear, though, that Georg has had much more agricultural training than have most other LRAD applicants, received during his days at ASFA. This draws contentious questions in terms of trends in South African land reform thus far—is the land reform program as it stands effective at recruiting ‘the right type of applicants’? What are the merit and qualifications, both professional and personal, of potentially successful applicants? Could the government possibly operationalize a ‘recruitment’ strategy to improve the success of land reform projects, and what are the ethical implications of such a strategy? Currently, the LRAD process seems to discriminate against the poor in its reward for up-front financial contributions. In light of the fact that there must be some discrimination in who does and does not receive LRAD money simply by virtue of the fact that

there is not enough to go around, what factors could the government use, instead of the applicants' finances, to decide who is awarded grants? These are very difficult questions to grapple with, and are deserving of careful research and consideration.

As a model, small-hold farms hold great potential for the land redistribution program in the Western Cape. Although there are not many in existence from which to draw data, it appears after examining Bokdrif that there are many aspects of this type of management model that would suit some grant applicants better than a large-scale commercial endeavour. More research, perhaps more quantitative research than my study can provide, will be valuable to the discussion on the viability of the projects. What can be determined from my research is that small-hold projects can be successful, that they represent opportunities for livelihood security for rural populations, and that they can be a great source of pride for those who work on them. It is very clear, however, that the government and other support mechanisms play a crucial role in the success of any redistribution project. Hopefully with more research, new alternative small-hold models for land reform can begin to help South Africa towards reaching its land redistribution goals in the name of poverty alleviation and giving justice to marginalized South Africans.

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