Interview: Abie

1. : 2021-01-25
2. Time: 14:00

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| Hello, I am Zakes Hlatshwayo, I am a Ph.D. candidate doing an academic study on: Emerging black farmers’ practices and state support to them: a study of three government Agriparks in South Africa. This study will explore the practices of emerging black farmers and their successes and challenges in three selected areas where Agriparks exist. Thank you for your willingness to participate. We are interested to understand your role and experience. Information will be used only for academic and research purposes. You do not have to give your name if you don’t want to and can decline to answer any question. I appreciate your assistance and request you provide as much information as possible to help me understand your work.  The research study has been approved by the University of Pretoria’s Research Ethics Committee. Your privacy and confidentiality will be secured. No direct reference will be made to you, I will use a pseudonym, codes and categories to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage. You are not required to use your name, do not write your name on any of the documents. The data will be kept for 15 years in a password protected format and used for University of Pretoria research only.  For the purpose of this research I will use semi-structured questions, with your permission I will record the interview and take notes. The interview will not be longer than 50 minutes. Hopefully, the information will help policymakers, practitioners, officials and managers to make informed decisions on such programmes in the future. | | | |
| RQ1: What is your name? Abie  RQ2: What is your occupation? Researcher and community worker  RQ3: In what capacity? Policy research, land and agrarian reforms.  RQ4: How long have you been in this position? 20 years  RQ5: What is your highest qualification? Masters  RQ6: Gender: Male  RQ7: Age: 61 | | | |
| RQ8: Are you involved with Agriparks? | | Yes |  |
| RQ9: How are you involved? | |  | I have research interests in land and agrarian reforms, rural development and farmworkers. I have had talks with farmers and worker on what issues of land rights, tenure and social movements. |
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| RQ10: How did you get involved? | |  | I’m a lobbyist and advocate for land rights and rural reform, we spoke on those terms. |
| RQ11: What is the background of the Agriparks that requires them to support emerging black farmers? | |  | Given the failure of many other agrarian policy intervention, Agriparks are based on the reality of the global interconnectedness of the modern economy, altering land ownership and property relations significantly, reconfiguring the nature of the use of land resources and restructuring the accumulation trajectory. |
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| RQ12: What policy changes influenced the establishment of Agriparks? | |  | The current neoliberal policy approach focuses agriculture to the privatisation of agribusiness. if Agriparks are a public good or in the public’s interest, they should be under various forms of public ownership or control, not to be paid for by the public for the private sector to reap huge profits. |
| RQ13: What are the present functions of Agriparks? | |  | Under the CRDP, Agriparks are implemented as government’s flagship programme to fast-track agriculture transformation by providing support services to emerging black farmers. Agriparks provide the basic infrastructure and service to kick start small-scale farmers. |
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| RQ14: What are the priorities of the Agriparks? | |  | The idea of Agriparks is to alter indigenous forms of agriculture and undermine land redistribution. The industrialisation and commercialisation of practices pressure small-scale farmers and rural agriculture. |
| RQ15: What are Agriparks perceived efficiencies in fulfilling their functions? | |  | Agriparks promote poorly evidenced assertions about what motivates emerging black farmers, incorrectly present black farmers practices as largely uniform, and depicts emerging black farmer practices as backward and controversial. |
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| RQ16: What do you believe are the main success of the Agriparks? | In a way with the Agriparks the state provides a framework within which to analyse and understand small-scale farmer. Agriparks also demonstrates, one way or the other, the involvement of the state in pushing emerging black farmers. The district approach address farmers’ practices depend on beneficiaries’ security of tenure and use. This merit state service providers to go beyond their primary tasks of services provision, and to work together with local actors to process information and knowledge to improve implementation. | | |
| RQ17: What are the challenges, if any, that you see concerning land ownership, agriculture, and poverty alleviation? | In the short term, Agriparks fail to facilitate land redistribution as most farmers are allowed to stay on far beyond the agreed contract. This prevent the intake of new farmers and the reallocation of older farmer on land. In this way, only a few are empowered but without security of tenure. | | |
| RQ18: What processes are put in place to deal with the challenges? | The CRDP is close to collapse, funds are diverted elsewhere. In other provinces Agriparks have shutdown, the governments need to re-evaluate the future of the programme. | | |
| RQ19: How are emerging black farmers identified and recruited to be part of the programs of the Agriparks? | The farmers come through various farmer organisations, some are recruited through advertisements there are different ways. | | |
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| RQ20: What are the main farming practices of emerging black farmers? | |  | There is a difference between the urban and rural area both driven by the availability of resources. In rural areas people make use of communal land to grow maize and keep livestock. In the urban areas most people use backyard gardens or open public spaces. |
| RQ21: What legislative reform justified the emergence of the Agripark to provide support to emerging black farmers? | |  | The spread of neoliberal practices imposes the industrialisation and commercialisation of agriculture and food systems. |
| RQ22: Who decides on the type of support and services given to emerging black farmers? | |  | Agriparks are state drive programme influenced by commercialisation, that is how decisions are take and implemented. |
| RQ23: How are decisions communicated to emerging black farmers? | |  | The management and extension service are the main communicates of state decisions. |
| RQ24: How do emerging black farmers participate in the decision-making on priorities of Agriparks? | |  | In context of commercialisation, participation is token than real. If you can decide on the budget there is little else you can participate in. |
| RQ25: Are emerging black farmers given plans about the priorities of Agriparks? | |  | Agriparks plans are in the public domain, whether the farmers can make sense of them is another matter altogether. |
| RQ26: Are women and youth benefitting from Agriparks? If so, how? | |  | Women and youth are well represented. |
| RQ27: What are the challenges of the Agriparks? How are these challenges dealt with? | |  | In many ways Agriparks ignore issues of food security and sovereignty, also Agriparks do not practice sustainable farming practices. There is a need to reprioritise the initial decisions. |
| RQ28: What are the successes of the Agriparks? How is success determined? | |  | Very minimal, it is important that Agriparks exist in one form or the other, it is for civil society to mobilise for change. |
| RQ29: What are your recommendations for the future of Agriparks and wider support to emerging black farmers? Are there any other issues that you suggest I should look into? | |  | I think the issue of the state getting involved is important, change cannot be left to the private sector. In my experience black farmers encounter racial discrimination when going to the banks for loans or entering markets. This is as result of resistance of white farmers to corporate with black farmers or resisting change. |
| RQ30: How did you hear about Covid-19? | |  | N/A |
| RQ31: How did Covid 19 affect you?  RQ32: How did you respond to government’s lockdown, did you benefit? | |  | N/A |

Notes: He calls for the mobilisation of the farmers in the Agriparks and the formation of social movement to force change and transformation. He argues private institutions continue to discriminate against black, in general, and farmers in particular.