Interview: Ben

1. : 2021-01-25
2. Time: 9 am

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | |
| 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? Ben  RQ2: What is your occupation? Researcher and consultant  RQ3: In what capacity? Policy research, Agroecology and development funds manager.  RQ4: How long have you been in this position? 11  RQ5: What is your highest qualification? PHD  RQ6: Gender: Male  RQ7: Age: 49 | | | |
| RQ8: Are you involved with Agriparks? | | Yes |  |
| RQ9: How are you involved? | |  | I have research interests in land and agrarian reforms, agroecology, sustainable farming and agriculture, environment and development policy, and livelihood security. Most of my work has been undertaken in Southern Africa. My research work has fallen into the analysis of political economy, agroecology and political ecology. I research and make policy submissions on livelihood the environmental dimensions of modern agriculture. I’m a local fund manager for international donors on policy and development issue. I have lectured and worked with civil society organisation for more than 30 years. |
|  | | | |
| RQ10: How did you get involved? | |  | I’m a land activist of many years working with global and international organisations. I have written academic articles and commissioned papers on land redistribution and CRDP, among others. |
| RQ11: What is the background of the Agriparks that requires them to support emerging black farmers? | |  | Trade liberalisation and multi-nationalisation of agriculture leads to the global consolidation and concentration of large supermarkets in various parts of the world. In South Africa, agriculture is progressively being industrialised, causing a disconnect between land reform and farming. The global advance of capitalist agriculture (re)configures production and reproduction processes and investment and consumption patterns. This shapes the forces at play at the level of the farm, family and rural and land-based livelihoods to the extent that the reproduction of family farming is jeopardised. |
|  | | | |
| RQ12: What policy changes influenced the establishment of Agriparks? | |  | South Africa’s land and agrarian structure poses a complex historical background and context. Dispossession visited losses and destruction of African farmers, racially discriminatory laws and practices alienated Africans from their land and established an agriculture sector with incredible racial diversity and disparities. Agriparks draws from various existing models, both locally and abroad. Agriparks include experimental farms, collective farms, and farmer-incubator projects. |
| RQ13: What are the present functions of Agriparks? | |  | An Agripark are mainly about agro-production, processing, logistics, marketing and training and extension services that enables a market-driven integration of various agricultural activities and rural transformation services. The objective is to industrialise agriculture, expand production and ultimately link it to the global networks. |
|  | | | |
| RQ14: What are the priorities of the Agriparks? | |  | A long and complex agriculture supply chains have developed, with privatisation, deregulation and less government involvement with the markets. It is part of a well-developed global system where responsibility for dealing with farming, production and distribution is increasingly taken on by private interests. |
| RQ15: What are Agriparks perceived efficiencies in fulfilling their functions? | |  | For working class, rural people, and those who may have been dispossessed and divested, state interventions are the only way they will ever be able to play on a somewhat even field. |
|  | | | |
|  |  | | |
| RQ16: What do you believe are the main success of the Agriparks? | I think what is important is the mobilisation of resources for implementation, such as financial resources, technology development, skills transfer, and capacity-building, as well as the role of partnerships. | | |
| RQ17: What are the challenges, if any, that you see concerning land ownership, agriculture, and poverty alleviation? | The South African government has been running black farmer support schemes for ten or twenty years, yet we still have huge declines in success rates for black farmers. The state is constrained to entice investments into the rural economy. We need to see more strategy from the government as to how its various land and agrarian policy strands fit together into a consistent whole. | | |
| RQ18: What processes are put in place to deal with the challenges? | The industrialisation and consolidation of global agriculture have increased vulnerability for many small-scale farmers and communities and reduced their options for adaptation. I think small-scale farmers have little to mitigate the challenges | | |
| RQ19: How are emerging black farmers identified and recruited to be part of the programs of the Agriparks? | The state targets rural and urban farmers who are operating within the districts- the farmers are recruited with potential of integration into commercial agriculture. | | |
|  | | | |
| RQ20: What are the main farming practices of emerging black farmers? | |  | Many rural/urban and small-scale farmers use traditional methods that are sustainable, they do not have the resource for GMO seeds and fertilizers. |
| RQ21: What legislative reform justified the emergence of the Agripark to provide support to emerging black farmers? | |  | The CRDP focus areas are summarised as: food security, job creation and contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). In regard to the SGD the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme allows tracing how agri-food policies synchronise to the structures of agri-food systems and whether these adjustments correspond with communities’ livelihood reproduction. An Agripark has to drive a vibrant social mobilisation component for the organisation and mobilisation of black farmers and agri-business entrepreneurs to actively back the initiative. |
| RQ22: Who decides on the type of support and services given to emerging black farmers? | |  | The decisions are mainly top-down drive by profit motives and profit. |
| 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? | |  | At the district Agriparks adopt multidimensional approaches through diverse forums, fostering Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs), and facilitate strategic interventions. |
| RQ25: Are emerging black farmers given plans about the priorities of Agriparks? | |  | Agriparks entail the most elementary levels of farmers sharing their opinions, problems, and potential solutions; allowing small-scale farmers to collaborate with commercial farmers; to communities taking the lead on seeking change. |
| RQ26: Are women and youth benefitting from Agriparks? If so, how? | |  | In most instances’ women, youth and people with disabilities are prioritised. |
| RQ27: What are the challenges of the Agriparks? How are these challenges dealt with? | |  | The strategy was that grants, should catalyse local/provincial governments, non-government and private sector agencies for economic, and infrastructural developments. |
| RQ28: What are the successes of the Agriparks? How is success determined? | |  | South Africa is failing to transform and integrate it dual system. Agriparks are struggling to meet the socio-economic mandate of transformation and economic growth. |
| 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? | |  | We need a rethink of policy and priority given to small-scale farmers and look at agroecology as sustainable option which good for humanity and the environment. |
| 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 express strong reservation about the role of private investors and state that the state should be a protagonist for change and development.