



Livelihoods after Land Reform – the South African Case

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Research questions

- What are the implications of land reform for livelihoods? (Direct and indirect; at levels of the individual, the household, the project, and the area)
- To what extent can these implications be understood in relation to the different ways land reform is implemented?
- What can we learn about better ways of designing and implementing land reform?

Background

- SA's land reform regarded as a failure
 - economic objectives – the spectre of 'failed projects'
 - changing the racial pattern of land ownership – too slow
- No consensus as to why, or what to do
- Even so, ambitious if vague promises
- Dominant ethos = modernisation
 - “Another focus area [of the Department] will be skills transfer, to promote the transfer of skills from white commercial farmers to black subsistence farmers”
(Joemat-Pettersson, 2010)

Limpopo provincial government is typical

- “Vision: A united and prosperous agricultural sector where people, livelihoods and natural resources are in perfect balance” (LDA, 2006)
- “...transform the agricultural sector from farming to agricultural industrial development” (MEC for Agric, 2006)

And yet...

'Livelihood type'	Average income (Rand)/hectare/yr
Large-scale commercial	420
Ex-Bantustan	683
Land reform	171

Interpretation?

Brief history of agriculture in Limpopo

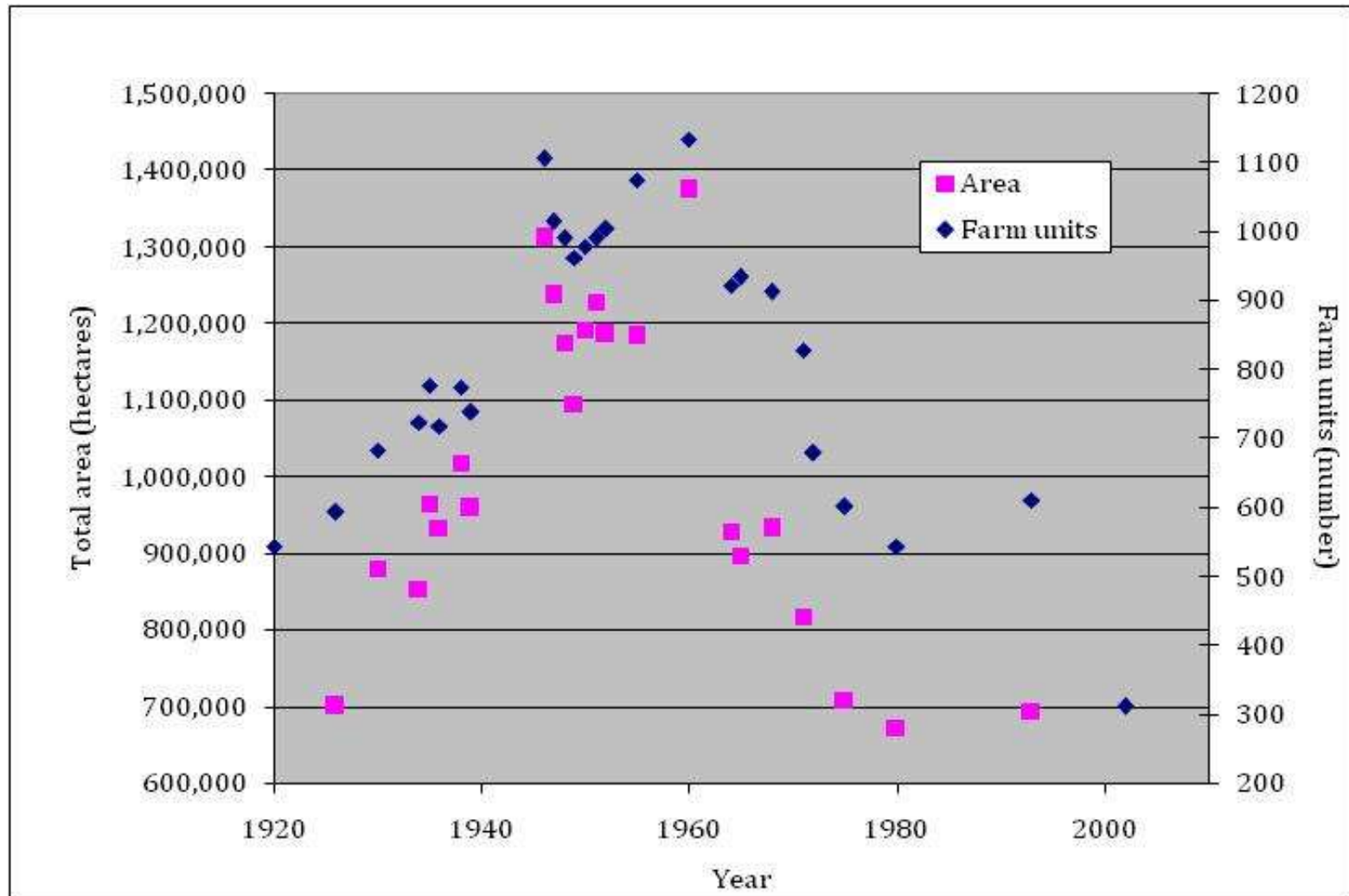
“They have fallen behind in the march of civilisation, and are, generally speaking, without any real knowledge of farming or of any skilled trade. They have formed no habits of industry, live a hand-to-mouth existence, and accumulate no reserves.... When they do come to grief they generally drift into the towns and become poor whites....”

(Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1908, on white farmers in Northern Transvaal)

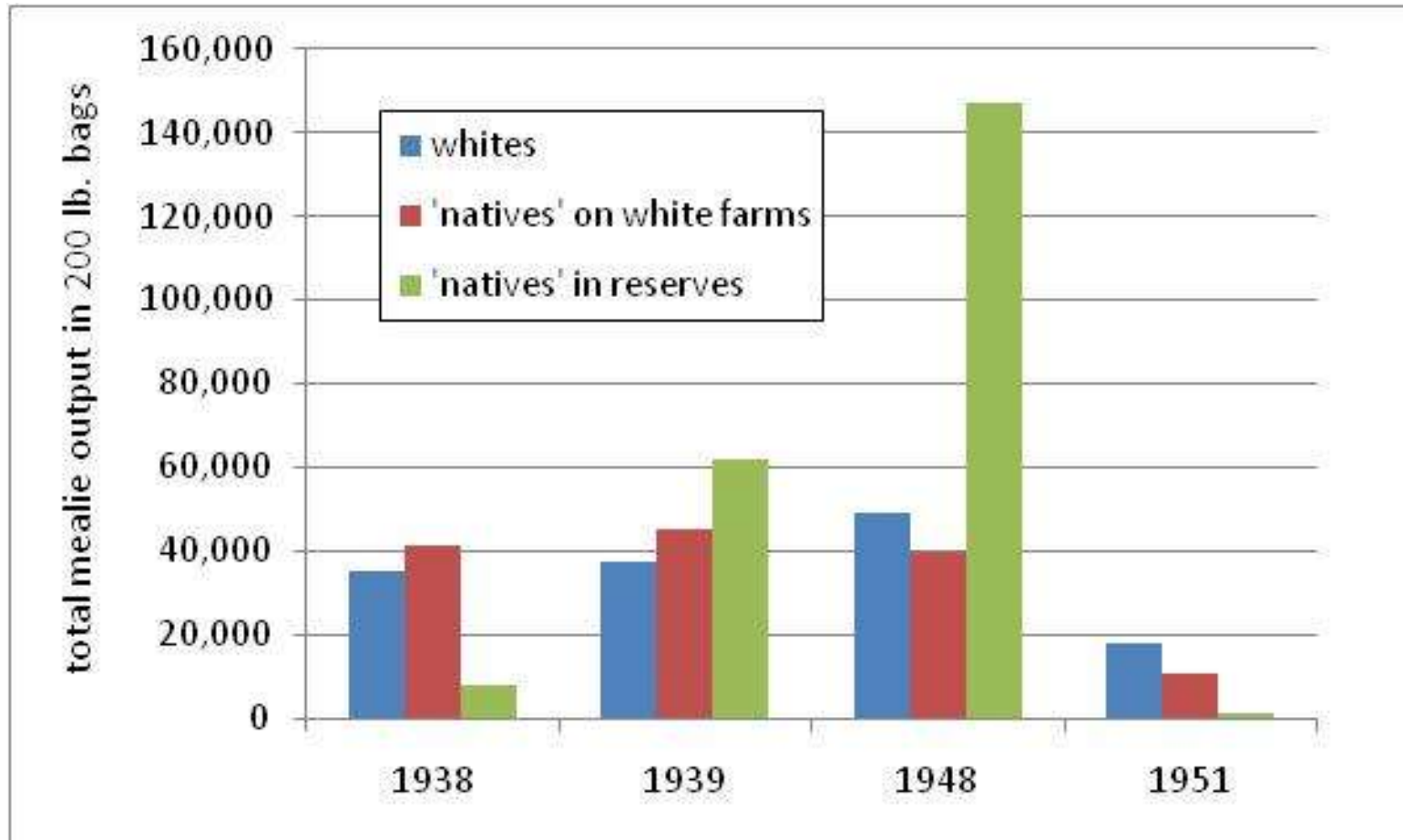
Brief history of agriculture in Limpopo

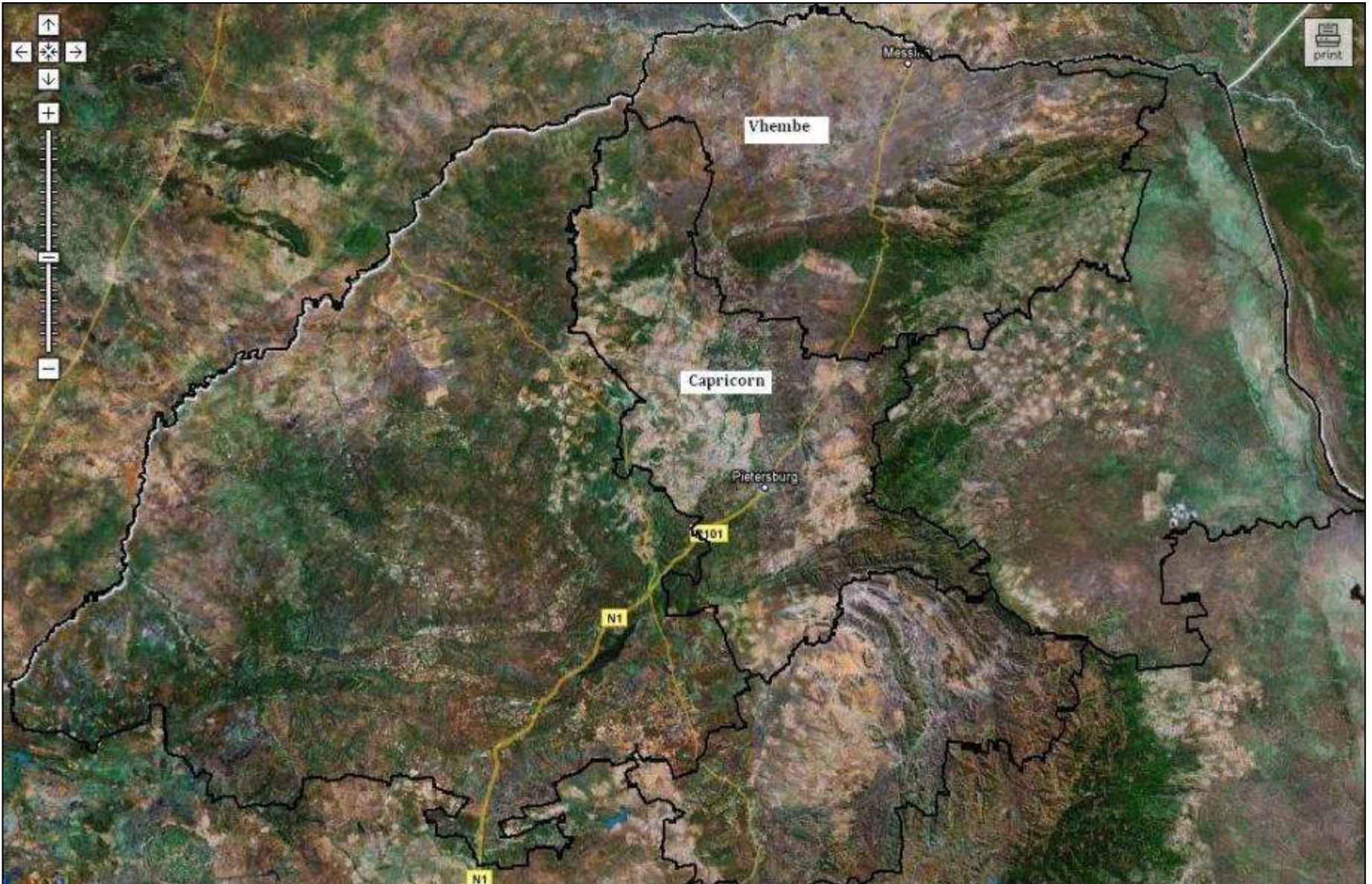
- From late 19th century, gov't-supported agric development was a tool to establish territorial control
- Slow process fraught with failure and reversal
- Relative lateness accounts for high incidence of restitution claims (90%? vs <10% for EC and FS)
- Rapid expansion from 1920s to 1950, then dramatic decline – exaggerated version of commercial farming in RSA?

Area & units – Soutpansberg District



Maize production in Soutpansberg, white and black, 1938 - 1951





Current situation

	Vhembe	Capricorn	Limpopo
Agric employment	12,306	10,650	59,363
Employment	98,116	129,036	534,153
Unemployment (expanded defn)	176,726	216,507	893,696
Agric empl/all empl	13%	8%	11%
Agric empl/labour force	4%	3%	4%

	Vhembe	Capricorn	Limpopo
African HHs who farm	189,910	168,513	606,460
as % of all black HHs	67%	50%	44%
African individuals (15+) who 'farm'	387,941	297,718	1,084,365
as % of all African individuals	52%	35%	32%
African women (15+) who 'farm'	265,462	199,217	745,723
as % of all Africans 'farming'	68%	67%	69%

Land reform in Limpopo

	1994		2009	
	Farmland (HA)	Shares	Farmland (HA)	Shares
'Black'	3,394,518	38%	3,974,518	45%
'White'	5,488,613	62%	4,908,613	55%
Totals	8,883,131	100%	8,883,131	100%

- To date,
 - approx 500,000 HA restituted (and 4.4 million HA to go?)
 - Approx 80,000 HA redistributed
 - Unknown amount of white-to-black transactions outside of land reform – seemingly a lot?

Land reform is *project-based*

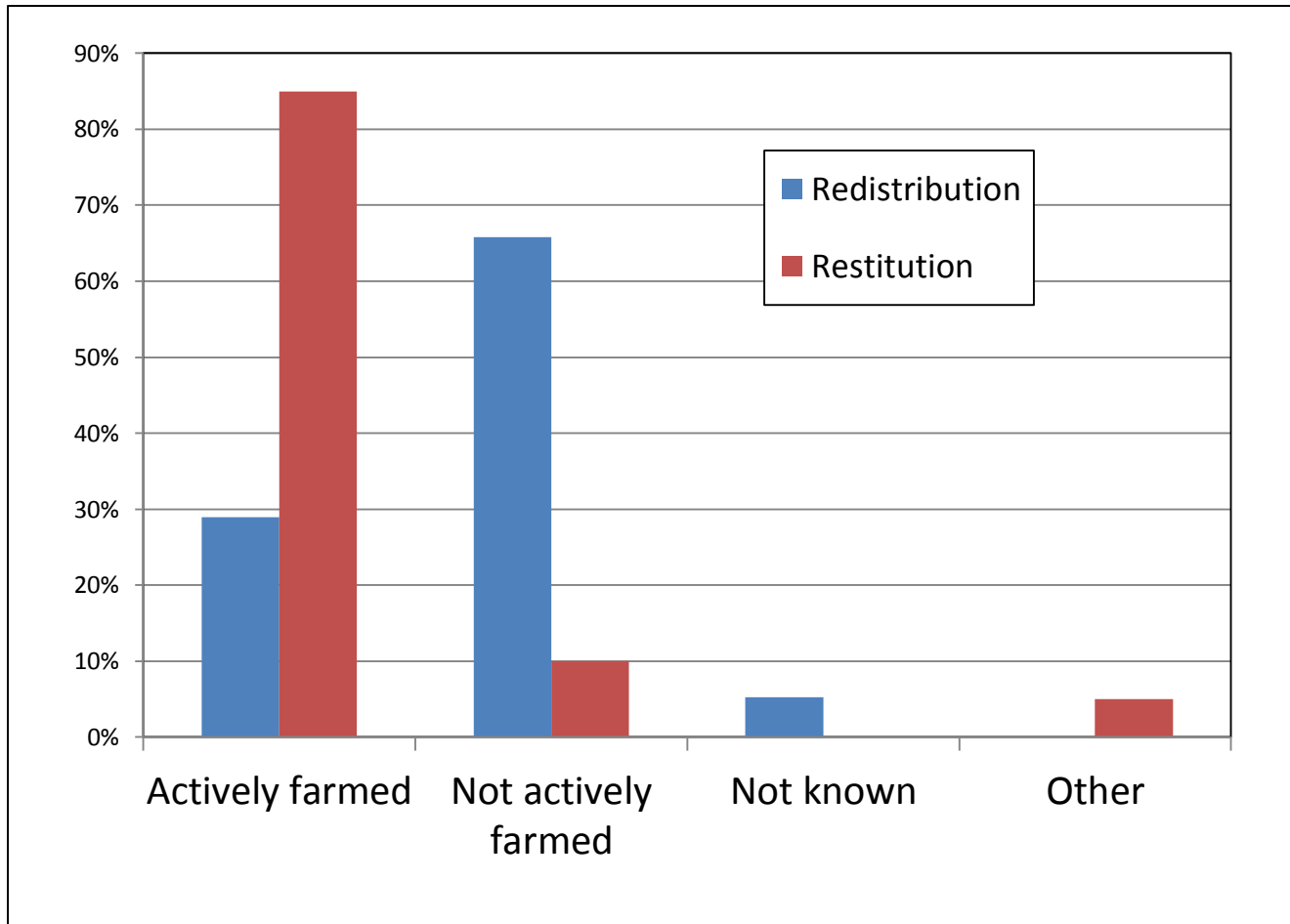
- **Restitution projects:** defined by claimant group and the land it claims
- **Redistribution projects:** defined either by seller (ie his land), or applicant group
 - ‘SLAG’ (1995-2000) – R16 000 per household
 - ‘LRAD’ (2001-2007) – R20 000 to R100 000 per adult individual
 - ‘LRAD’ (2008-2009) – R111 000 to R400 000 per adult individual

Findings from project census

— Project status (Vhembe and Capricorn)

	Redistribution		Restitution	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
No bens using land, nothing happening	41	51%	13	36%
No bens using, but some land leased out	1	1%	3	8%
Some beneficiaries using	23	28%	4	11%
Some bens using & some land leased out	8	10%	4	11%
Operational as a joint venture	0	0%	8	22%
No information regarding project	8	10%	4	11%
Total	81	100%	36	100%

Status of farm just before acquisition



Trajectories – the approach

‘Project trajectories’

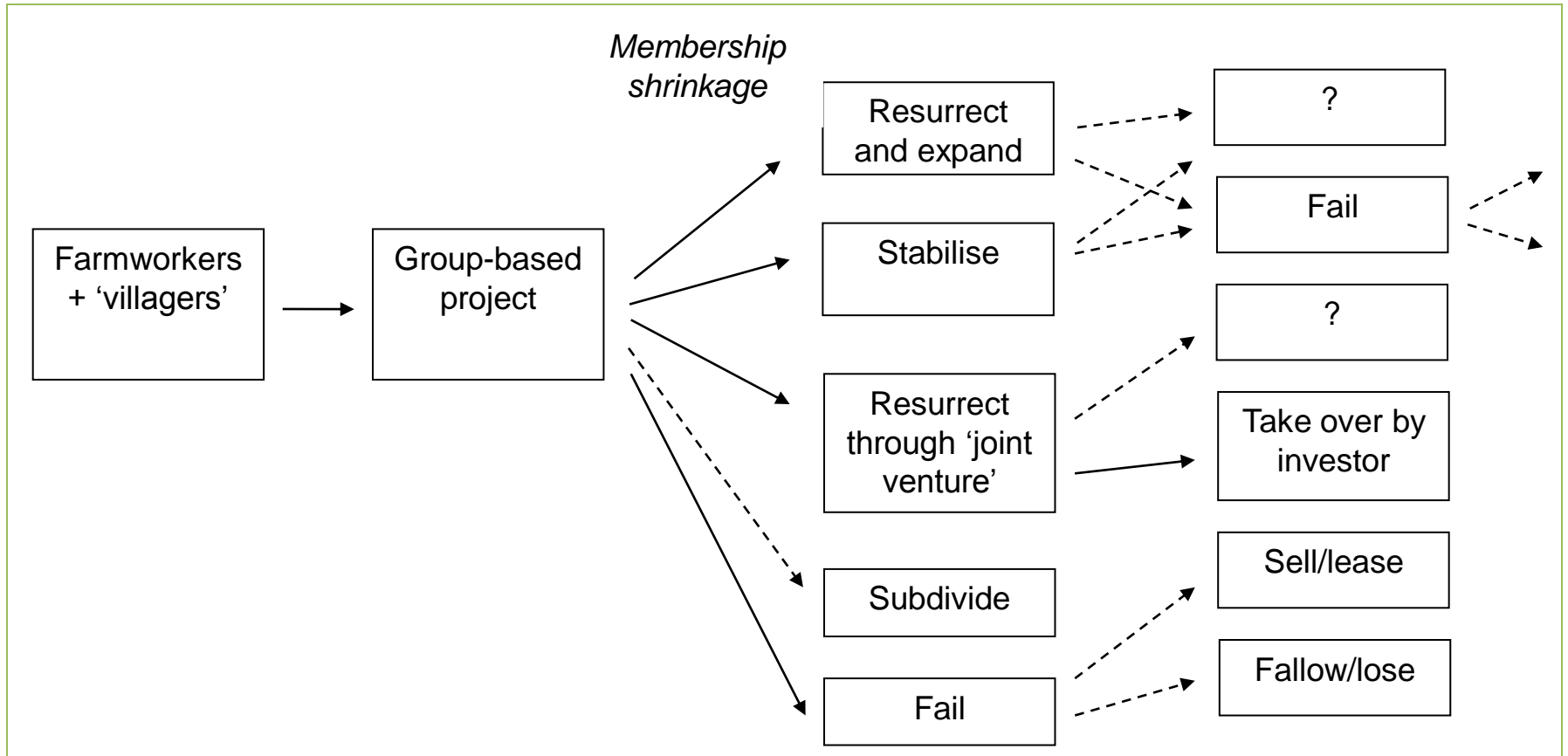
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‘People types’

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Livelihood trajectories in/through land reform,
i.e. ‘outcomes’

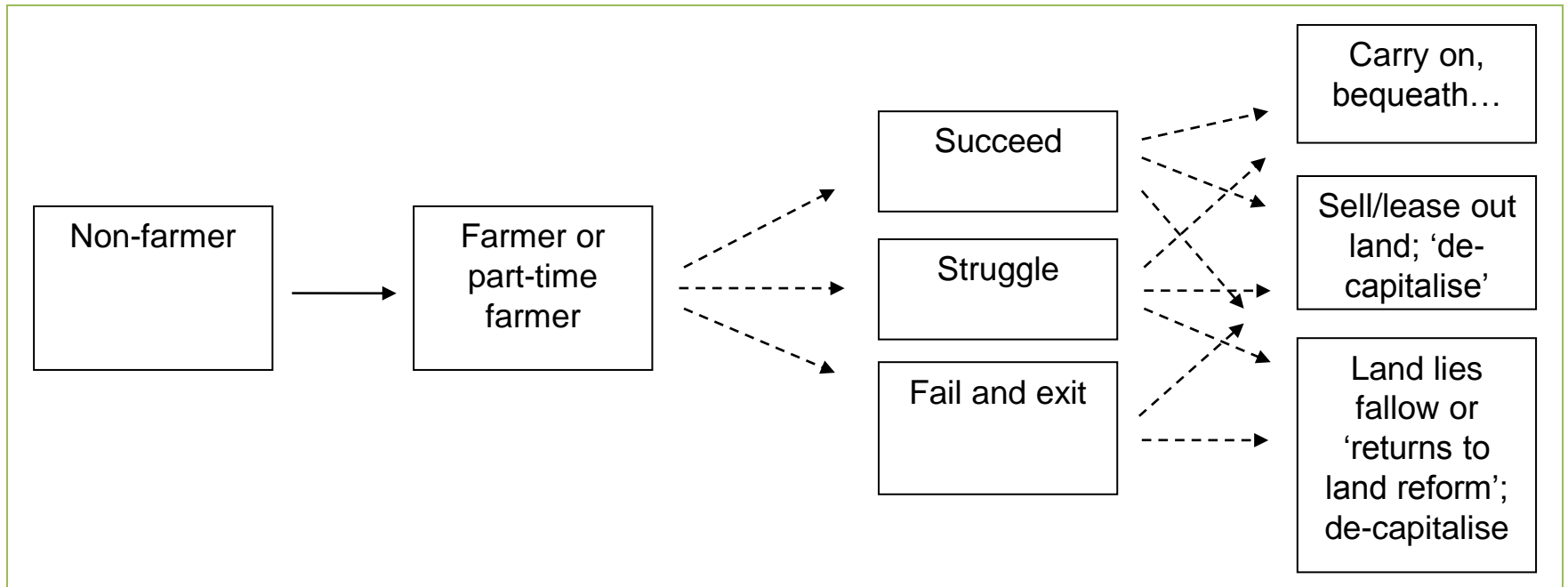
SLAG project trajectories



SLAG and livelihoods

- Common denominators:
 - Seller-driven (unintended consequence?)
 - Combination of farm workers and extra recruits ('rent-a-crowd')
 - Membership shrinks, leaving core of mainly original farm workers – 'lifetime farm-dwellers'
- What we don't see – subdivision, involvement of farmers from ex-Bantustans, new settlement (why not?)
- What we didn't expect to see – 'black capital' sloshing around
- Implications for livelihoods? Bleak with exceptions

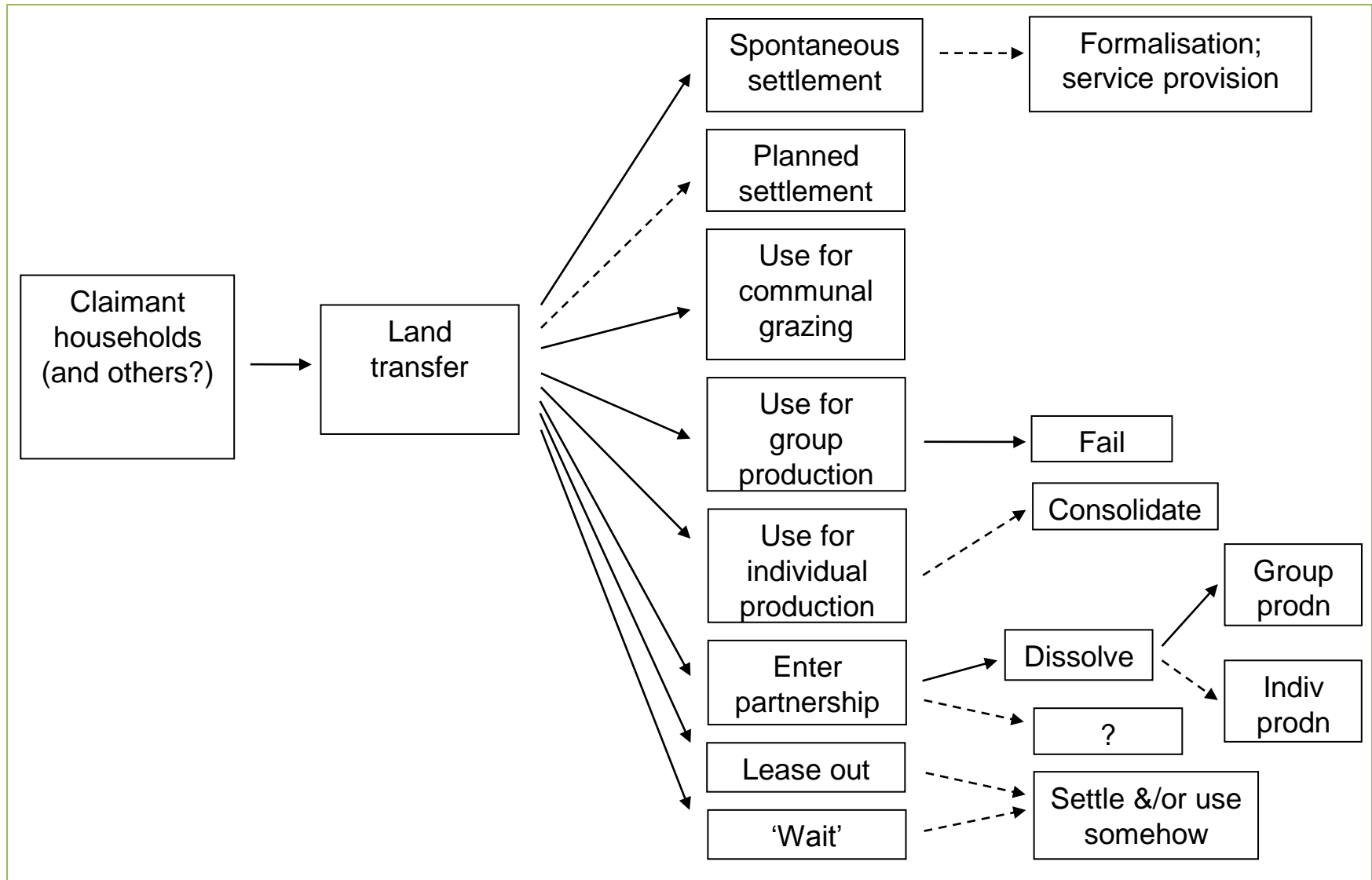
LRAD project trajectories



LRAD and livelihoods

- Common denominators:
 - Trajectories are straightforward
 - Dominated by those who are connected and have wealth – ‘successful businessmen’ and ‘civil servants’
 - Some variation inre whether full-time or part-time, on own account or for family – ‘poor nephews’
 - Instances of creativity and land-use intensification (why?)
- Implications for livelihoods? Modestly positive inre *employment creation*

Restitution project trajectories



Restitution and livelihoods

- Highly diverse, depending on ‘initial situation’ (type of land, location of people....) and events; eg
 - Levubu – reallocation of who gets the wage jobs on the plantations
 - Manavhela – struggling to maintain game reserve
 - Morebene – commercial farming with new investment and job creation + organised small-scale subsistence maize production
 - Munzhedzi – land invasion leading to large/rapid re-settlement
- High incidence of nothing (‘waiting’)
- Livelihoods implications? Difficult to characterise

General findings

- Who is and is not involved is largely not deliberate, but there is 'logic' that determines this – key issues = information, initiative, resources, bureaucratic ease
- Main trend: 'new farm' maintains production system of 'old farm'
 - Exception 1: LRAD, where *some* intensification
 - Exception 2: the Munzhedzi invasion
- Models are especially badly suited to:
 - Farm workers/dwellers – included by arbitrarily so
 - Ex-Bantustan dwellers *and* farmers – excluded

...General findings

- One-sided appreciation of the nature of need/demand
- No spatial strategy/logic

Policy implications

- Can build on what is working, whether deliberate or spontaneous, eg:
 - many LRAD projects working well (intensifying, attracting additional resources), but overall impact is very modest, and cannot serve as dominant model
 - Settlement-oriented ‘projects’ can be great, especially if location is advantageous
 - ‘Non-traditional partners’ can play a significant role, eg to assist resurrection of collapsed projects?

...Policy implications

- However,
 - For redistribution, need to revisit delivery approach and clarify targets
 - For restitution, should try to disaggregate claimants by need and interest?
- Bigger picture – commercial agriculture is in a silent crisis and increasingly vulnerable; is land reform a remedy for this or irrelevant to it?