

Livelihoods & social differentiation in 'post-agrarian' South Africa

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Context:

- Legacy: Settler colonialism & migrant labour
- Industrialisation & proletarianisation
- Dichotomous agrarian landscape
- Rural poverty, esp. former homelands
- Longstanding deagrarianisation



... & more recent developments



How do:

...‘fragmented
classes of labour’
reproduce
themselves?

...process articulate
with social
differentiation &
accumulation?

...these relate to
changes across
global South?



'Communal area' households sustained by:

1. Links to formal & urban labour markets
 2. Agrarian activities & endowments
 3. Informal sector activities
 4. State welfare payments
- Repertoires of activities & migration practices
(In realm of production & circulation)

1. Labour markets

(Formal labour market earnings)

- SA = high wage dependency
- Major determinant of pov. & class position
- Also mediate agri. production (& social differen.)
- But waning: capital intensive, labour 'un-intensive' growth path
- And deindustrialisation

2. Agriculture



- Agriculture (& land based activities)
- Variable, contingent, frequently small
- ‘Deagrarianisation’ led by racial land dispossession
- Largely unchanged since 1994

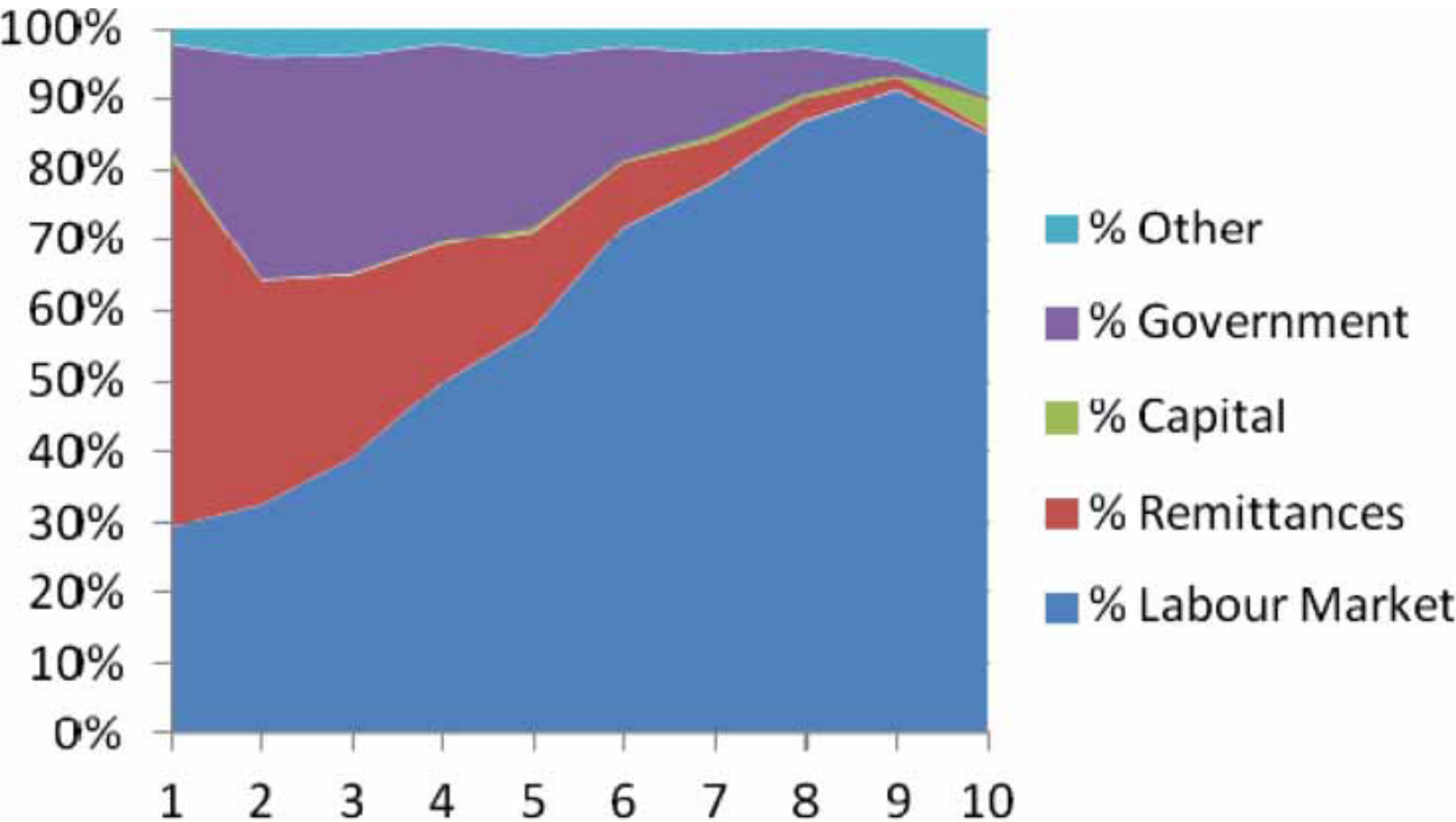
3. Informal sector employment

- SA paradox: small, beleaguered sector
- Why? Historically proscribed & credit, skill, infrastuct. constraints
- Also crowed out by powerful, core economy
- MEC (Minerals Energy Complex) concentration

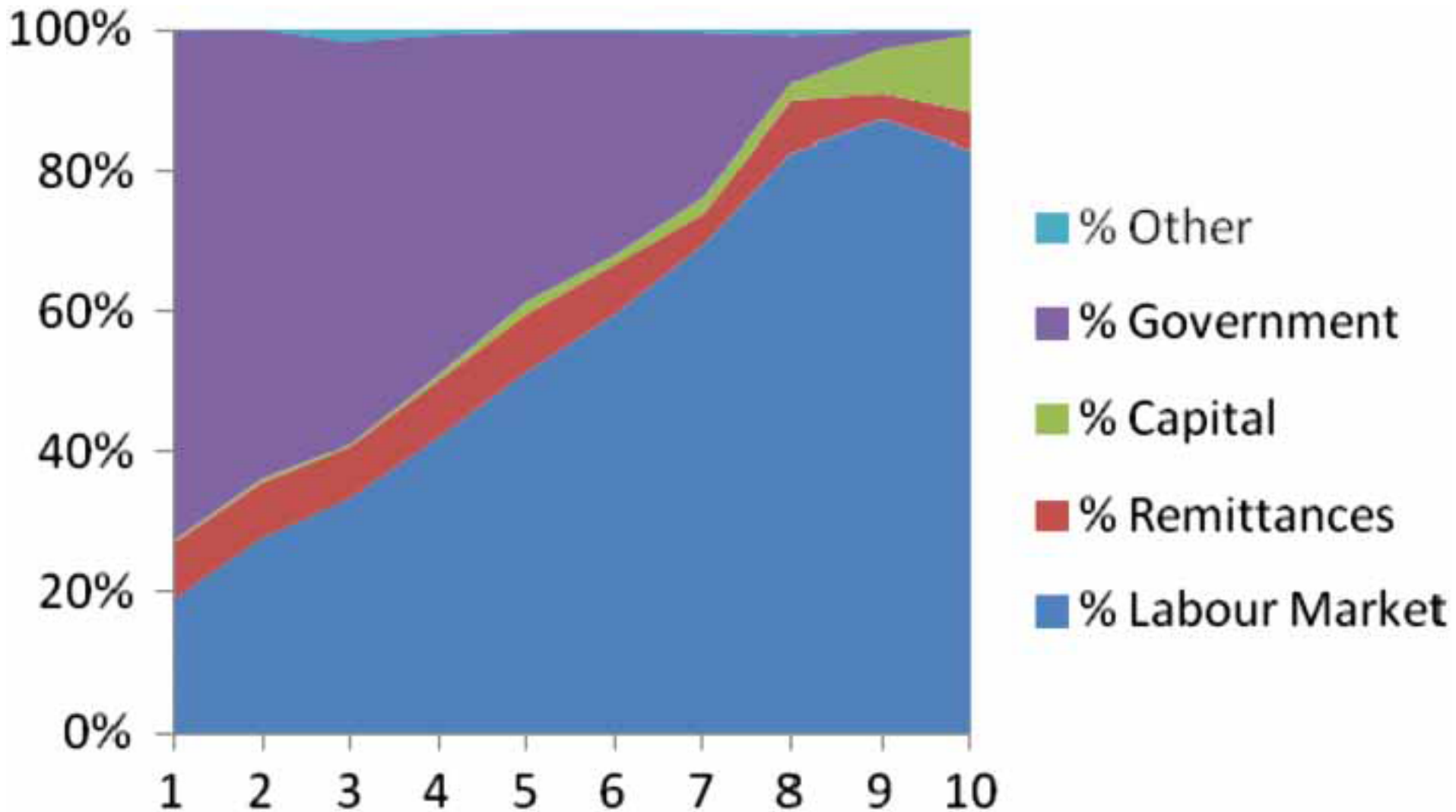
4. State welfare grants

- Unconditional cash transfers
- + 30% of pop
- Categories: elderly, disabled, children
ZAR 1500 (€95),
(child) ZAR 350 (€22)
- Embedded in larger 'distributional regime'
- Inequality reducing

1993 Income composition by decile (SALDRU 2004)



2008 Income composition by decile (SALDRU 2008)





'post-agrarian' countryside

- Constrained opportunities
- Limited place of land based activities & endowments
- But crucial locale for social reproduction (recuperation, retirement etc.)
- Deagrarianisation / post-productivism

Observations/questions:

1. 'SA path': foreshadowing 'jobless deagrarianisation' elsewhere?
2. Influence of 'Productivist thinking' (Ferguson)
3. Significance of growing (global) state welfare transfers?
4. Limits of understanding (rural) poverty as 'exclusion'?