AGRARIAN REFORM AND DECENTRALISATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: CAN DONOR BROKERAGE BREAK THE MOULD?
EXPLORATIONS IN THE COMPLEX MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

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Abstract

The theme of decentralisation has, over the past three decades, resurfaced in public administration, aid management and development studies. In the mainstream paradigm, Official Development Assistance (ODA) to decentralisation is advanced as contributing to an overall more effective, efficient and democratic system of production and distribution of public goods and services. However, this mainstream view glosses over many well-documented intricacies and complexities in donors' support to decentralisation. In fact, decentralisation appears rather to be a complex, ongoing dynamic process which aims for a delicate balance between local- and central-led governance. Donor support to such a moving target involves moreover a mesh of governmental and non-governmental, international, national, local, organisational and individual actors. Given the highlighted complexity, donors increasingly acknowledge the need to adopt a wider range of context-sensitive approaches. They intend to improve the analysis of the local context, invest in more coordination, and commit to longer-term support. Yet, aspirations and hopes for 'best fit' instead of 'best practice' solutions through such a better understanding of local contexts, are often hindered by the (implicit) adherence to a simplistic principal-agent perspective. While many of the links in ODA to decentralisation do involve a principal-agent relationship, other types of relationships and collective action problems are often involved. The representation of ODA delivery as a linear chain that links a donor government to a recipient country via various intermediary actors and organisations, is therefore an oversimplification. We find it more appropriate to refer to it as an 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus'. We follow in this dissertation especially Booth's (2012) rebuttal of the predominance of the principal-agent perspective in favour of an alternative perspective, which emphasises that foreign aid to decentralisation is replete with multiple and diverse collective action problems, which require 'good fit' local solutions rather than best practice or best fit ones. Portraying the 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus' thus, allows us to combine this perspective with the one of brokerage in social network theory. In the political economy of aid literature, attention is increasingly paid to reframing the role of ODA donor agencies from implementing or managing agents to brokers. In our combining of theoretical perspectives, we consider the above-mentioned collective action blockages to create holes in the central-local relationship across political, fiscal and administrative scales. As third parties, donors may have a comparative advantage and interest in taking on or supporting the brokerage opportunities such holes between non- or lowly-connected actors present. By adopting the broader definition of brokerage, whereby one actor influences, manages, or facilitates interactions between other actors, a differentiation can then be made

between the network structure in which can be brokered, the specific opportunities grasped, as well as the actual brokerage outcomes (aimed for) (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014).

It is the objective of this dissertation to scrutinise whether the proposed combined perspective of multiple collective action blockages and brokerage can provide indications on how ODA agencies may, in practice, engage more systematically and effectively as brokers in supporting the local resolution of such collective action blockages. We explore the heuristic of the proposed perspective by applying it to three of our previous analyses of challenges to policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration in South Africa's agrarian reform programme between 2011 and 2019. The review of our existing research material through this lens takes the form of an *ex ante* assessment of likely and justifiable local brokerage behaviour, from the point of view of ODA agencies willing to assist in the resolution of collective action problems, in line with the official recommendations of the OECD and EU on 'more politically aware' assistance to decentralisation and rural development (OECD 2004 and 2019; EU 2016). We conclude from the application of this new perspective, that in most of the previously identified collective action problems in South Africa's encumbered state-led agrarian reform programme, bilateral ODA donor agencies can indeed find a strong justification to broker. As most of these collective action blockages are found to represent policy-induced holes, an ODA donor may assist in amending such holes and improve policy coherence and implementation. We find that there is only one formal broker role individual ODA donors can take up, which is the one of Liaison between three differently affiliated nodes. In the majority of scenarios, this will imply a strategy of binding between the two other nodes (*Tertius Iungens*), or what we call a *Liaison Iungens* approach. However, especially where strengthening the capacity of local civil society is involved, the Liaison brokerage can be undertaken with the intent to maintain - for the time being - the boundaries with the government nodes (*Tertius Gaudens*).

By revisiting previously identified problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration through the lens of donor brokerage, we are able to provide some valid pointers for a better understanding and positioning of the role of ODA donors in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. Notwithstanding the complexity and potential messiness engrained in adopting a perspective of brokering in multiple collective action-problem situations, our assessments illustrate that aid agencies can support decentralisation beyond the prescripts of best practice or best fit solutions. We conclude that donors can, in principle, play an active role in steering towards better fitting and more locally embedded solutions in agrarian reform in South Africa. We illustrate how this active role can take on various forms, depending on the collective action problems faced, available structural brokerage opportunities, opportune or allowed management strategies, and strategic outcome

orientations in terms of preserving or tearing down boundaries across governance levels. In short, we first find that by adopting the perspective of brokerage to assist in resolving local collective action blockages in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus, bilateral ODA donors can break out of the confined mainstream mould of principal-agent relations to improve development policy implementation. Since decentralisation and agrarian reform represent political processes of change, adopting the brokerage perspective can help to set out a more pragmatic and realistic ODA course of 'thinking and working politically' (TWP). The effective uptake of such an active broker role implies observing the core principles of TWP - political economy approaches; a nuanced understanding of and responsiveness to the local context; and flexibility and adaptation in design and implementation (Teskey 2021). Secondly, we show that in addition to literature review and political economy approaches, the need and opportunities for brokerage can be fairly easily identified and communicated through user-friendly assessment tools, such as the Systems of Innovation (SI) framework on collaboration we discuss in the dissertation. We therefore propose, thirdly, that adopting the perspective of donor brokerage has a distinct potential added value in terms of aid effectiveness, as both parties can motivate their actions from a genuine concern of actively seeking good fit rather than best fit or best practice solutions in South Africa's encumbered agrarian reform programme. This allows donors to TWP more openly, and to make good fit scenarios become more part of their theories of change and action. Such stance requires, however, a more open and pragmatic assessment by the donor of the degree of ownership of partners' policies, and of the need for real-life alternatives to best practice or best fit monocropping in most development contexts. In line with the spirit of Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approaches (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013) to develop more realistic, pragmatic and modest perspectives on TWP and ownership-as-an-outcome, the transparent reporting of particularistic experiences of brokering in case study research, monitoring and evaluation reports and management reviews, needs to be more systematically promoted. Obviously, promoting such alternative perspective on effective aid-to-decentralisation through brokering by ODA donor agencies, implies considerable efforts to further adapt methodologies, human resource skills, planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, institutional incentives, and strategies of communication and accountability, and this for both recipients and donors.

In conclusion, it needs to be noted that two simplifications used in the assessments of likely brokerage behaviour by donors do require further refinement, which are, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation. First, the static rather than dynamic, repeated take on brokerage used, provides a simplistic, one shot-depiction of the complex and sometimes messy reality. A dynamic

view on repeated brokerage may shed a more realistic light on assistance to agrarian reform and decentralisation in general, especially in view of the recommendations for longer-term aid objectives and commitment in ODA and flexible, adaptive management in TWP (OECD 2019; Teskey 2021). A second problematic feature of the present theory of brokerage, is that it limits its analysis of brokerage to three nodes (triads). Aggregate nodes such as donor, national government, local government, or civil society, may know considerable internal differentiation, and actually exacerbate collective action blockages due to their internal problems with coordination, harmonisation and complementarity. The development of more complex brokerage models that can accommodate the inclusion of multiple actors – at donor and recipient side - is therefore urgently due. A third area for further refinement in the proposed brokerage approach, pertains to Booth's (2012) proposal to focus attention on three generic intermediate factors that help to explain most local collective action blockages. His three inductively identified factors are policy-driven institutional incoherence, weak top-down performance discipline, and an inhospitable environment for local problem-solving. While the ODA recommendations all relate, at least to some extent, to dimensions of central-local institutional coherence, supervision and feedback, and local contributions to problem-solving, it is Booth's (2012) specific merit to frame the importance of second-best institutional arrangements to local problem solving. In the review of our previous studies on the promotion of an inclusive and integrated rural economy in South Africa, we have not been able to delve deeper into such mechanisms of local problem-solving. Going forward, case study research should not only lay bare systematic dynamics of local elite bias or capture, but also identify and study cases of localised (potential) problem-solving and the opportunities for brokerage they entail. Yet, given their particularistic nature, such new findings can be expected to further complicate the necessary attempts at developing systematic approaches to the analysis and praxis of donor brokerage in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus.

0.1 Introduction

0.1.1 Many tracks within one journey

When I entered this PhD journey quite a while back, I was looking for a way to frame and valorise my own experiences, lessons and questions on how local-level integrated rural development work could assist in making central-level policies better. Little did I know that I would find few straightforward answers to my general questions, or that my journey would be this long, variegated, yet eventually quite revealing. This dissertation has been a slow-growing undertaking indeed. There are a few other reasons worth mentioning, in addition to the usual self-doubts, frustrations and procrastinations one often encounters on such a journey. I can link them to three recurring comments from others on my engaging in writing a PhD dissertation. First, I am employed as a development policy implementer and aid manager; the reflecting is an extra. This has often resonated in comments that, professionally, I do not need a PhD degree at this phase in my career. All things well-considered, I am indeed to officially retire in less than 10 years from now. However, as I proceed in my professional journey, the search for a more integrated and informed underpinning of my own insights and experiences has anything but lost its appeal and relevance to me. Secondly, and in line with the latter, I was always cynical about those admitting that writing and obtaining a PhD is mostly in one's own interest, rather than for anything else. I was adamant that I would not be able to do such intense conceptual and research work without it having a practical benefit to the ob-/subjects of research. However, after facing drawbacks in finding empirical data to underscore my intuitive theorising around support to public sector agencies at the local level - the field of my employment-, I decided to get my insights published in journals. That would at least give me personal and formal acknowledgment of my work. Fear not-to-live-up to formal academic expectations was thus turned into a pragmatic and self-realising strategy. On the other hand, I did notice that through my prolonged searching for an encompassing theoretical framework and a crisp empirical strategy, I was indeed able to plough lessons and ideas back into my daily work, and hence the people I 'studied'. I was able to provide more informed inputs, channel readings, introduce research interests, broker research work, and coach staff by taking a step back from practical project work. Thirdly and lastly, a late friend of mine always came up with over-critical yet concerned advice, packaged in such a concealed and ambivalent wording that the likely meaning would only reveal itself later. While he was principled in his stance against my attempts to, in his words, try to 'matrix everything', he hinted that what I was staring at, was yet so obvious and self-revelatory. Probably an old educational trick from the guerrilla camps to go and look for your own self-

empowering pieces of truth. However, towards the end of my dissertation and pressured to find an encompassing thread across all my work and writing, I did indeed discover such thread quite at the centre of my daily thinking and working over the past decades.

0.1.2 Framing the research question

So what dissertation topic am I introducing here? My past work in Southern Africa has been coloured by the problematic relationship between local- and central-level development in different ways. As NGO programme coordinator, I was for instance involved in the direct support to farmer organisations in livelihood diversification and land reform at local level, as well as to their advocacy activities towards policy improvements at the central level. As policy researcher, I advised the subnational donor Flanders (Belgium) to use its comparative advantage in the downstream reaches of decentralisation, and to improve, at the same time, its coordination and harmonisation with the Belgian and European Union-level Official Development Assistance (ODA) players in the upstream reaches. And finally, as programme coordinator of bilateral institutional capacity strengthening projects in rural development and land reform in South Africa and renewable rural energy in Mozambique, strengthening relevant interfaces and feedback loops between central and local government development interventions is a key objective. In short, in both my development research and management capacities, the need to support and improve multi-level governance mechanisms has been prevalent. Especially in my research on aid effectiveness, the idea of a portfolio approach, which combines several aid modalities strategically in a complementary manner, has featured prominently. A coherent portfolio allows, in principle, an integrated use and mutual feeding and enrichment of up- and downstream support, as well as a better donor coordination and harmonisation (Verbeke and Waeterloos 2010). In Waeterloos and Renard (2013), this is illustrated for the Flemish-Belgian intra-donor harmonisation in Mozambique and South Africa. By applying a principal-agent framework, we found that a higher degree of complementarity and harmonisation among Belgian federal and subnational authorities is feasible from a development policy coherence perspective, yet contentious from the perspective of donors' concern for a clear political identity.

The mainstream paradigm of the past decades for donor support to decentralisation in developing countries, links decentralisation to better service delivery, local governance and social and economic development. The increase in types and range of instruments, modalities and actors as well as the various (inter)national efforts to address rising concerns about effectiveness of aid, have significantly enhanced the complexity of the field of development cooperation (see for instance Verbeke and

Waeterloos 2010; Schulpen, Loman and Kinsbergen 2011; Anderson 2011). In response to this complexity, donors increasingly acknowledge the need to adopt more varied and context-sensitive approaches. Official Development Assistance (ODA) donors to decentralisation are, to that effect, advised to improve their analysis of the local context, coordination, and long-term support. In previous research (for instance Verbeke and Waeterloos 2010; Waeterloos and Renard 2013; Waeterloos and Janssens 2016; Waeterloos 2020 and 2021), we focused on various problems of coherence, coordination and collaboration among ODA donors and in integrated rural development and land reform in South Africa. While generally pointing out the need to enhance innovation, networking, collaboration and learning, little more concrete guidance were we able to give on how donors may then, in practice, engage more systematically with the growing complexity and diversity of local contexts and actors. It is eventually Booth's (2011 and 2012) critique of the predominant principal-agent perspective and his alternative view on aid as enmeshed in multiple and diverse collective action problems, that allowed me to frame the coarse research question more concisely. In Booth's alternative perspective, the multiple and diverse collective action problems encountered require 'good fit' local solutions, to which donors as third parties, may be well contribute through for instance brokerage. It is then the objective of this dissertation to gauge if and how ODA donors may engage more systematically and effectively with such growing complexity and diversity by acting as brokers of 'good fit' local solutions. To address this research question, I will concentrate on the combined perspective of multiple collective action blockages and brokerage, and scrutinise whether its application can provide systematic indications on how ODA donors may possibly broker more effective resolutions of local collective action blockages in South Africa's agrarian reform programme.

0.1.3 A less typical methodology

As mentioned above, this dissertation has been part of a personal, academic and professional growth process. Having access to novel but patchy empirical material in the professional sphere, while struggling to find an encompassing conceptual framework, made me meanwhile write up and publish some of my academic research as well as practitioner's insights. Three of these write-ups form, as empirical material, an integral part of this dissertation (see Part 2). The search for an applicable conceptual framework, has eventually resulted in an explicitation of the interface between the perspectives of multiple collective action blockages in ODA to decentralisation and social network analysis, and of the brokerage role ODA donors may fulfil. The development of this

what may be called 'good fit' conceptual framework for our research question, is discussed and explained in the entire first part of the dissertation. In the second, empirical part, we will apply this perspective to problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration in agrarian reform in South Africa, which we identified in our previous research work. In applying this perspective to these previously identified collective action problems, we verify whether there is a potential role for brokerage to be played by ODA donors in these specific situations, and how this may be expected to look like. The empirical scrutiny will consist of an *ex ante* assessment of likely and justifiable donor brokerage behaviour from the point of view of officially recommended improvements in ODA to decentralisation. Such systematic *ex ante* assessment of previously identified problematic areas in building an integrated and inclusive rural economy in South Africa, allow us to then conclude with recommendations for a more systematic approach to this role of donors. This means that while, as usual in PhD dissertations, literature review and conceptual framework development feature in the beginning of our dissertation, the empirical material submitted is in the form of articles previously published, and revisited through a new lens in order to address the specific research question, which was kept lingering in our previous academic (and practitioner's) work.

0.1.4 Structure

In order to address the specific research question, we will, in Part 1, first deal with theories of decentralisation in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, we review the aid effectiveness discussion as it pertains to ODA to decentralisation. We note that as decentralisation is a complex, dynamic phenomenon, ODA donors acknowledge increasingly the necessity to adopt a wide range of varied and context-sensitive approaches and to 'think and work politically' (TWP). Yet, aspirations and hopes for such best fit solutions through a better understanding of local contexts, are often hindered by the (implicit) adherence to a simplistic principal-agent perspective. We then discuss Booth's (2012) alternative perspective, that emphasises that foreign aid to decentralisation is replete with multiple and diverse collective action problems, which require 'good fit' local solutions. Portraying ODA to decentralisation thus as characterised by multiple and diverse collective action blockages, allows us to combine this perspective in Chapter 3 with the one of brokerage between social network nodes. In principle, as third parties, donors may have an effective role to play in decentralisation, by taking on brokerage opportunities in blocked collective action situations. In Part 2, we will review some of our previous analyses of policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration problems in South Africa's agrarian reform programme through the lens of this combined perspective. In

chapters 4 to 8, we scrutinise *ex ante* how ODA donors may, in practice, position themselves as brokers in support of the local resolution of specific collective action blockages identified in three of our writings. Such systematic *ex ante* assessments of previously identified problematic areas in building an integrated and inclusive rural economy in South Africa, allow us to then conclude in Part 3 with recommendations for a more systematic practice and further analysis of such brokerage roles and TWP for bilateral ODA donors.

PART 1:

IN SEARCH OF A 'GOOD FIT' CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 1 Decentralisation: a complex moving target

1.1 Introduction

Over the past three decades, the theme of decentralisation has resurfaced in public administration, aid management and development studies (Tyler Dickovick 2014). In the mainstream view - diligently promoted, yet less systematically supported by donors -, decentralisation is assumed to result in an overall more effective, efficient and democratic system of production and distribution of public goods and services (Fleurke and Willemse 2004). However, many well-documented intricacies, conditions and complexities have been glossed over in the conceptual framework and implementation of this mainstream paradigm. In this chapter, we review some of these intricacies, conditions and complexities. Not only may the concept of decentralisation cover various forms, degrees, sequences, and (interrelated) expected outcomes. Empirical evidence, on the other hand, suggests that few cases can yet be found that approach the ideal-type of the decentralisation paradigm, which promotes a large degree of political, administrative and fiscal devolution. Partial successes of decentralisation seem to depend on a range of facilitating or inhibiting conditions in design and implementation. These various conceptual and empirical considerations plead, at the end of the day, for a dynamic approach, which pays attention to the complex relations of alignment between different scales and levels and to coordination between various actors involved. This dynamic and multi-scale framing of decentralisation aims to set the scene for our further study of the potential role of ODA donors in resolving collective action problems and scale challenges in the arena of decentralisation, agrarian reform and rural development in South Africa.

1.2 The concept of decentralisation

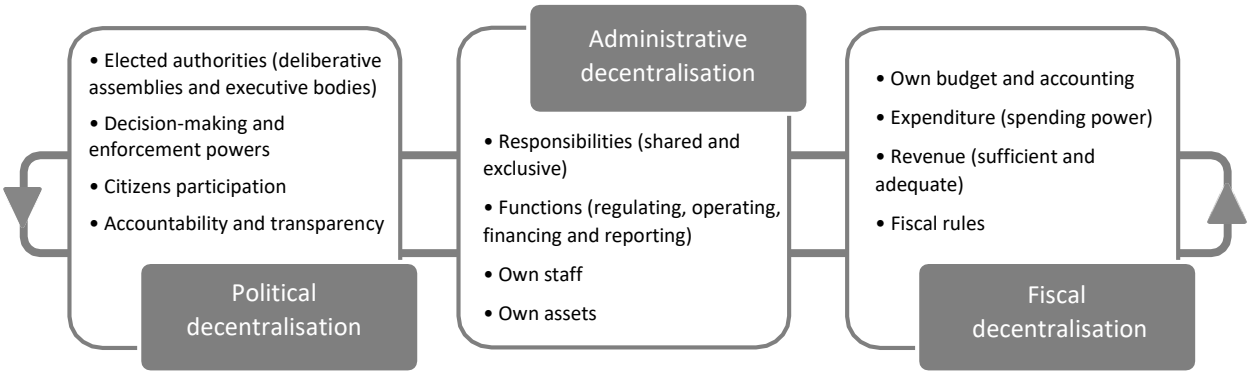
1.2.1 Multiple forms, degrees and functions

Many scholars have lamented the proliferation of definitions and typologies in the study of decentralisation in the public sector, based on its various formal and functional characteristics (Tyler Dickovick 2014). Rondinelli introduced, for instance, the classic formal differentiation between delegation, deconcentration, devolution, and deregulation (Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson 1989). Delegation refers to the transfer of responsibility for the provision of public goods and services to parastatal or semi-autonomous institutions, which act on behalf of and are directly liable

to the central government. Deconcentration implies the outsourcing of central government functions to local or regional officials who are subject to directives from the centre above. Devolution is the creation of autonomous subnational administrations, which dispose of full discretion over most local affairs. They are not or only to a minor extent accountable to the central government. Deregulation or privatisation relates to the transfer of previously public functions, or at least the right to implement those, to private organisations and companies. Another common distinction differentiates between the administrative, political (or democratic), and fiscal functional dimensions of decentralisation (Rao, Scott and Alam 2014). Administrative decentralisation refers to the transfer of authority, resources and responsibilities from central government to subnational offices and to agencies. The lower levels of government remain accountable to the delegating body. Deconcentration is the main form of administrative decentralisation, whereby hierarchical accountability is maintained between the local units and the central government. Delegation is another form of administrative decentralisation, and refers to the transfer of authority and responsibility from central government to specialised agencies, such as a hospital board or local project implementation units. Political decentralisation is the transfer of power to lower levels of government which are (in various ways) elected by local citizens, have some degree of local autonomy and are downwardly accountable to their constituency. Sometimes referred to as democratic decentralisation, political decentralisation requires a constitutional, legal and regulatory framework to ensure accountability and transparency. Devolution is the main form of political decentralisation and refers to the transfer of substantial responsibility, decision-making, resource and revenue generation to a local government that has a significant degree of local autonomy. These devolved units are normally independent legal entities and fully elected. It is generally seen as the most comprehensive form of decentralisation. Fiscal decentralisation, on the other hand, is not really a separate form of decentralisation, as it denotes the financing mechanisms that underpins all forms of decentralisation. It refers to the transfer of funds, and sometimes revenue-raising powers, from central government to lower levels of government. Adequate financial resources are necessary for local government to fulfil its responsibilities, and so effective fiscal decentralisation is vital for the success of any form of decentralisation. In any country there are likely to be both deconcentrated and devolved systems operating in parallel. For example, centrally appointed district officers and elected local governments may both work in the same locality. There may also be agencies with delegated powers, such as local offices of national social action programmes (Rao, Scott and Alam 2014). This threefold typology of inter-dependent functional dimensions of decentralisation is used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD 2019) (see Figure 1). In its own words, the OECD deems that “there can (or should) be no fiscal decentralisation

without political and administrative decentralisation. On the other hand, without fiscal decentralisation, political and administrative decentralisation are meaningless" (OECD 2019).

Figure 1: Political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation



Source: OECD 2019

In spite of these efforts to draw up typologies on formal and functional characteristics, the comparison between various articulations of decentralisation in different political, social and economic contexts is far from straightforward (Moore and Putzel 1999). Treisman (2002) points for instance out that decentralisation can first be analysed from a static or dynamic perspective, referring to the state of being decentralised, as opposed to the process of becoming decentralised respectively (see also further). Secondly, a state can, from a dichotomous point of view, be considered to be either decentralised or not, or decentralised to various degrees from a continuous one. Thirdly, as a modern governmental system is usually composed of legislative, executive and judicial bodies, their jurisdictions do not necessarily need to display the same degree of decentralisation. The jurisdictions may overlap or contain each other, giving rise to compound systems of more than one tier, where the key system attributes may be distributed across different tiers. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches can – like onions - each exist of numerous layers or tiers, and thus form a separate and differently constituted compound system (Treisman 2002). In a decentralised political system, for instance, decision-making authority, appointment authority, elections, fiscal resources, and government personnel may be distributed over the different tiers, and in the case of overlapping jurisdictions yield polycentric relationships among multiple authorities (Anderson and Ostrom 2008). Focusing on the rise of compound, polycentric systems, Hooghe and Marks (2003) discern two ideal-types of multi-level governance which represent a departure from the centralised state in western democracies. So-called 'Type I'

governance bundles competencies in jurisdictions at a limited number of territorial levels. These jurisdictions are mutually exclusive at each territorial level, and each level is perfectly nested within the next higher level. Each jurisdiction caters to an encompassing group or territorial community. The best-known example of this ideal-type is democratic decentralisation. 'Type II' governance, on the other hand, splits public good provision up into a large number of functionally discrete jurisdictions. These jurisdictions do not conform to the blueprint of a compound and nested system. Rather, Type II-jurisdictions are task-driven, designed to address a limited set of related problems. Hence, the same individual may be part of several overlapping and intersecting jurisdictions. Type II jurisdictions are often designed to have low barriers to entry and exit so as to engender competition among them (Hooghe and Marks 2003). The best-known examples of this type of decentralisation in the European context are municipal intercommunal associations or interregional committees. A concern in the literature on multi-level governance is that in terms of accountability and democracy, while Type I-multilevel governance is closely connected to representative democracy, elected politicians are often absent in Type II, and democratic oversight is at best indirect (Bache and Chapman 2008).

In short, in the study of the public sector, the concept of decentralisation is used to describe and analyse a range of forms and degrees to which functional competencies and resources may be distributed over different tiers and actors of governance. It follows that for external development assistance to decentralisation to be effective, it needs to properly understand which forms and degrees are foreseen *de jure*, prevail *de facto*, and/or which envisaged improvements may be supported in a particular context. The need for a context specific understanding has been increasingly articulated in academic analyses and donor discourse and practice, as will be extensively discussed in what follows. To that effect, the discussion needs to turn to the three expected core outcomes of decentralisation which the mainstream paradigm incorporates.

1.2.2 Three expected outcomes and their interlinkages in the mainstream paradigm

In the mainstream paradigm, the three main purported benefits of decentralisation refer to improved efficiency of service provision, more effective local social and economic development and poverty reduction, and wider and deeper governance and equity (De Vries 2000). These three core expected benefits are usually, albeit not always explicitly stated, being closely associated with administrative, political and fiscal devolution, and are to be distinguished as follows:

1. Higher productive and allocative efficiency: the informational advantage of governance close to the people is thought to allow a better identification of the priority needs, which should yield a higher efficiency in the production as well as the allocation of public goods and services (Romeo 2003; Smoke 2003).

2. More effective local socio-economic development and poverty reduction: the local information and transactional advantage of decentralised governance is deemed to yield a more conducive legal and institutional environment, assume fiscal responsibilities locally, provide inputs to local firms and entrepreneurs, distribute public resources and target poverty more equitably, and assure better coordination among key local public, private and community actors (Smoke 2003; Joshi and Moore 2004).

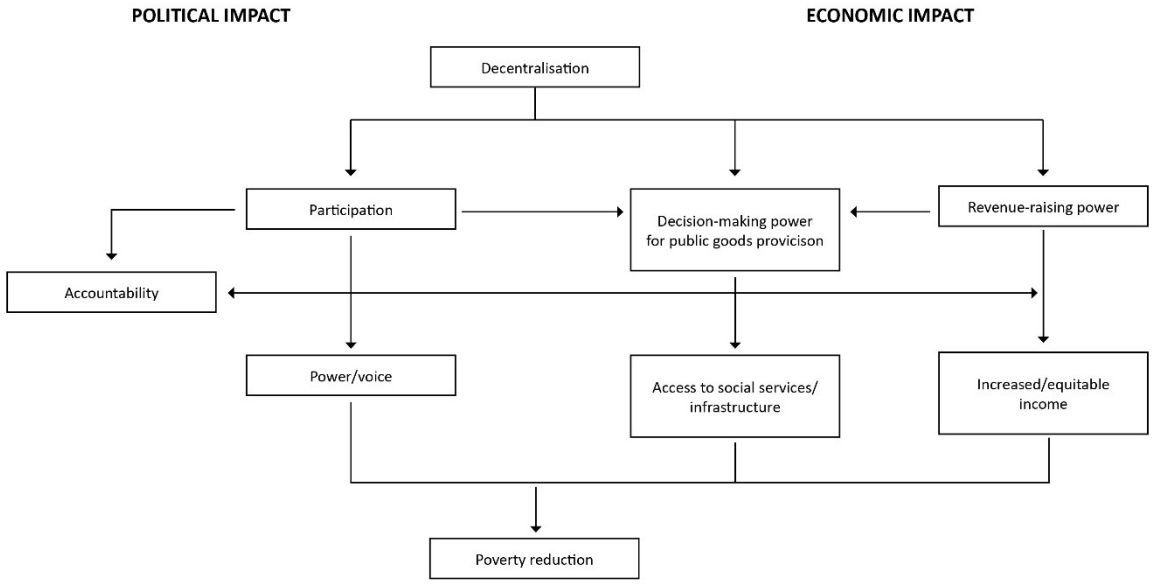
3. Better local governance through the participation of citizens: decentralisation may generate incentives for people in general, and the poor in particular, to invest in local governance. This is in line with Court's (2006) understanding of governance as "the nature of rules that regulate the public realm where state, economic and societal actors interact to make decisions". When constituency members perceive governments to be taking decisions that are more consistent with their wishes, they feel empowered and better governed by a local government that is more accountable to them (Bardhan 2002; Smoke 2003). In the case of devolution, such 'good local governance' is then associated with participation of citizens in local decision-making, legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and general security (Brett 2003; Romeo 2003; Ackerman 2004; Kauneckis and Andersson 2009). Of the six core principles of good governance proposed by Court (2006) - participation, fairness, decency, accountability, transparency, and efficiency -, it are participation, accountability, efficiency and transparency that feature most highly in this kind of decentralisation literature.

The three expected beneficial effects of decentralisation are in many ways intricately interlinked, as Steiner (2005) illustrates (see Figure 2). Since poverty is understood to consist of multiple economic, human, socio-cultural, political and protective dimensions, it is clear that the reduction of poverty requires a combination of country-, sector- and local-specific policies rather than a single decentralisation remedy. With regard to measures to promote opportunities and facilitate empowerment to reduce political poverty (left side of the flow diagram in Figure 2), the potential political impact of decentralisation is conceptually fairly straightforward. Decentralisation should bring about increased opportunities for people to participate in public decision-making which, provided citizens' voices are heard, represents in itself a form of poverty alleviation as poor people are thus given a degree of power (Steiner 2005). Increased representation can in itself lead to

improvements in self-identity and self-worth, and help break down customs of inequality and discrimination. Membership in local administrative bodies can also provide important skills such as bookkeeping or leadership (Blair 2000). At the same time, participation can increase the supervisory power of local (poor) people, which can lead to higher accountability of public officials, and this can in turn impact positively on the political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of poverty.

The effects of decentralisation on the economic, human, socio-cultural and protective dimensions of poverty reduction are more complex (Steiner 2005). Due to the supposed informational advantage of local authorities with regard to local conditions and preferences, decentralisation is thought to allow a better aligned demand and supply, and hence efficiency gains in the provision of public goods and services. However, since it cannot be taken for granted that local governments possess perfect information on local preferences, participation of the people concerned plays a crucial role in achieving such efficiency.

Figure 2: Conceptual links between decentralisation and poverty reduction



Source: Steiner 2005

Such responsive public good provision is thought to give poor people better access to social services and infrastructure (right side of Figure 2). And better access can have an impact on people's opportunities to engage in productive activities, which can in turn improve their income situation, albeit in the medium to long run. Decentralisation could also lead to improved resource mobilisation through local government's ability to better identify taxable households and enterprises, or through

a higher motivation of the population to commit to the common good. This presupposes, of course, that local governments are accountable and respond to people's demands, or that people at least trust their governments to do so. But the opposite may also be true, where relying more on local revenue could help to increase accountability. Local voters are more likely to hold elected officials accountable if local public services are mainly financed from local taxes, which would in turn affect the political poverty dimension. And finally, if equity concerns are considered in assigning tax-raising power to the local level, taxes may to a certain extent correct for an unequal distribution of income and influence the economic dimension of poverty (Steiner 2005). This conceptual flow-exercise illustrates how the economic impact side of decentralisation is intricately linked to the concomitant political decentralisation processes.

In brief, the conceptual framework of the mainstream decentralisation paradigm - which as we will discuss in more detail in the following section has predominantly informed ODA support over the past decades - tends, at least implicitly, towards devolution in the administrative, political and fiscal functions. However, in this paradigm, the relations between allocation and provision of goods, governance and local social and economic development and poverty reduction are inherently complex. This points out again that for external ODA support to be effective, a clear conceptual understanding of the envisaged, actual and feasible outcomes in the operational context is required. The following section deals with the importance of specific context factors and the need for potential external assistance agents to gain more in-depth knowledge of these, in order to make their support more effective.

1.3 Decentralisation in practice: facilitating and constraining conditions

Despite the theoretical and normative praise sung of decentralisation, empirical studies find that, in most developing countries, the extent and impact of decentralisation have been rather limited. This is usually attributed to the fact that, in practice, decentralisation has only been partly implemented in either or all of the three interlinked functional dimensions—political, fiscal, and administrative (Jütting et al. 2004; Steiner 2005; Tyler Dickovicks 2014). In general, decentralisation appears to have progressed more *de jure* in legal frameworks, and less in devolving functions *de facto* at the subnational level (Tyler Dickovicks 2014). This aligns to the above-highlighted conceptual concerns that decentralisation's outcomes depend on appropriate political, administrative, organisational and behavioural conditions (Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson 1989). The growing body of empirical research shows almost no instances of strong or democratic decentralisation, where a devolution of

decision-making powers is combined with accountable representation. Decentralisation has for instance often led to devolution of expenditure responsibilities outstripping fiscal devolution (e.g., Eastern Europe), expenditure and (some) fiscal decentralisation without administrative authority (e.g. Pakistan), or political decentralisation without fiscal authority (e.g. India and Bangladesh) (Bardhan 2002; Ahmad, Devarajan et al. 2005). However, it needs to be noted that most of the recent research focuses on public service provision or macroeconomic stability; fewer studies investigate the effects of decentralisation on the quality of governance. This is because the data on service provision are more commonly available than those for governance issues, and because many commissioned studies are prone to highlight short-term visible outputs rather than longer-term governance outcomes (Faguet 2014).

A comprehensive review of experiences in nineteen countries by the OECD Development Centre confirmed that evidence for the link between decentralisation and the reduction of multi-dimensional poverty, as described above, depends largely on country specificities and process design (Jütting et al. 2004; Steiner 2005*).* In only one third of the countries, decentralisation actually led to improvements in poverty reduction (Jütting et al. 2004). In countries where the state lacks the capacity to fulfil its basic functions and with high inequalities at the outset, there is a definite risk that decentralisation will increase poverty. Globally, and contrary to findings among some European countries where larger countries tend to favour decentralisation (De Vries 2000), country characteristics like country size and income levels have less influence. Factors related to the design and implementation of the decentralisation process, on the other hand, such as elite commitment, powers and resources delegated, coherent policies, information flow to local institutions or participatory mechanisms, were found to be more crucial for achieving pro-poor decentralisation. When there is a political commitment of the elites and central government, local governments tend to receive more resources, there is more policy coherence and information flow between central and local government and the population, which enables citizens to participate better in decision-making. In the administrative realm, time for capacity building at local/regional level should be allowed. In the fiscal realm, a secure resource flow from the central level to local governments is crucial, since decentralisation may increase interregional disparities if local governments are only funded by local revenues (Jütting et al. 2004). Other case studies reveal that decentralisation proceeds in fits and starts, and occasionally even with reversals. The way in which decentralisation is carried out - the sequencing, the choice among different forms of decentralisation, and how the politics are managed, may therefore be just as important to service delivery as the decision to decentralise itself (Ahmad, Devarajan et al. 2005).

More recently, the OECD observes an increasing trend among its members of sharing responsibilities among levels of government rather than a clear-cut separation (OECD 2019). The need for such polycentricity may be functionally motivated, as is common between municipal and regional tiers around issues of transport infrastructure, environment or water, but also by reasons of economies of scale in financing, such as for instance in the case of social services. Another trend increasingly noticed in the OECD countries is so-called asymmetric decentralisation, when governments at the same subnational level have different political, administrative or fiscal powers. This trend seems to apply especially to unitary countries and to major urban areas. The quality of the institutional environment appears to be a conditioning factor for the extent of decentralisation within the same country. When institutional quality is higher, as is usually the case in major urban areas, further decentralisation appears to foster convergence; however, in areas with lower institutional quality, it tends to exacerbate territorial disparities (OECD 2019).

In brief, empirical reviews of the state of decentralisation illustrate that the potential of local participation and its contribution to the other expected outcomes of poverty reduction, local development and efficiency in service provision in the mainstream paradigm, is conditional (Rao, Scott and Alam 2014). Poor people are not only frequently prevented from participating in local government politics by local elites, but also by institutions, or the required investments in terms of time and costs involved to participate. Many poor and disadvantaged groups also face multiple (contradictory) loyalties that undermine the expression of an effective (class-based) voice. Poor people also often lack the education, capacity or self-confidence to engage effectively in local politics (Mohan and Stokke 2000; Johnson 2001; Brett 2003; Vedeld 2003; Cleaver 2007; Faguet 2014). In this context, Thede (2009) concludes that by providing new venues for access to basic services and political voice, decentralisation creates toeholds for the excluded. But the actual ability of the excluded to benefit from them, plays out differently in each context and in relation to the local configuration of political power. Since the mainstream paradigm of decentralisation implies, as discussed above, an alignment of the various functions, sequences, objectives and actors involved at the national and local levels, coordination is a key concern (Blair 2000; Smoke 2003). In the next section, we will expand further on the challenges of coordination especially in the context of a cross-sectoral development arena such as rural development and agrarian reform.

1.4 Coordination challenges in decentralisation, agrarian reform and rural development: a dynamic and multi-scale framing

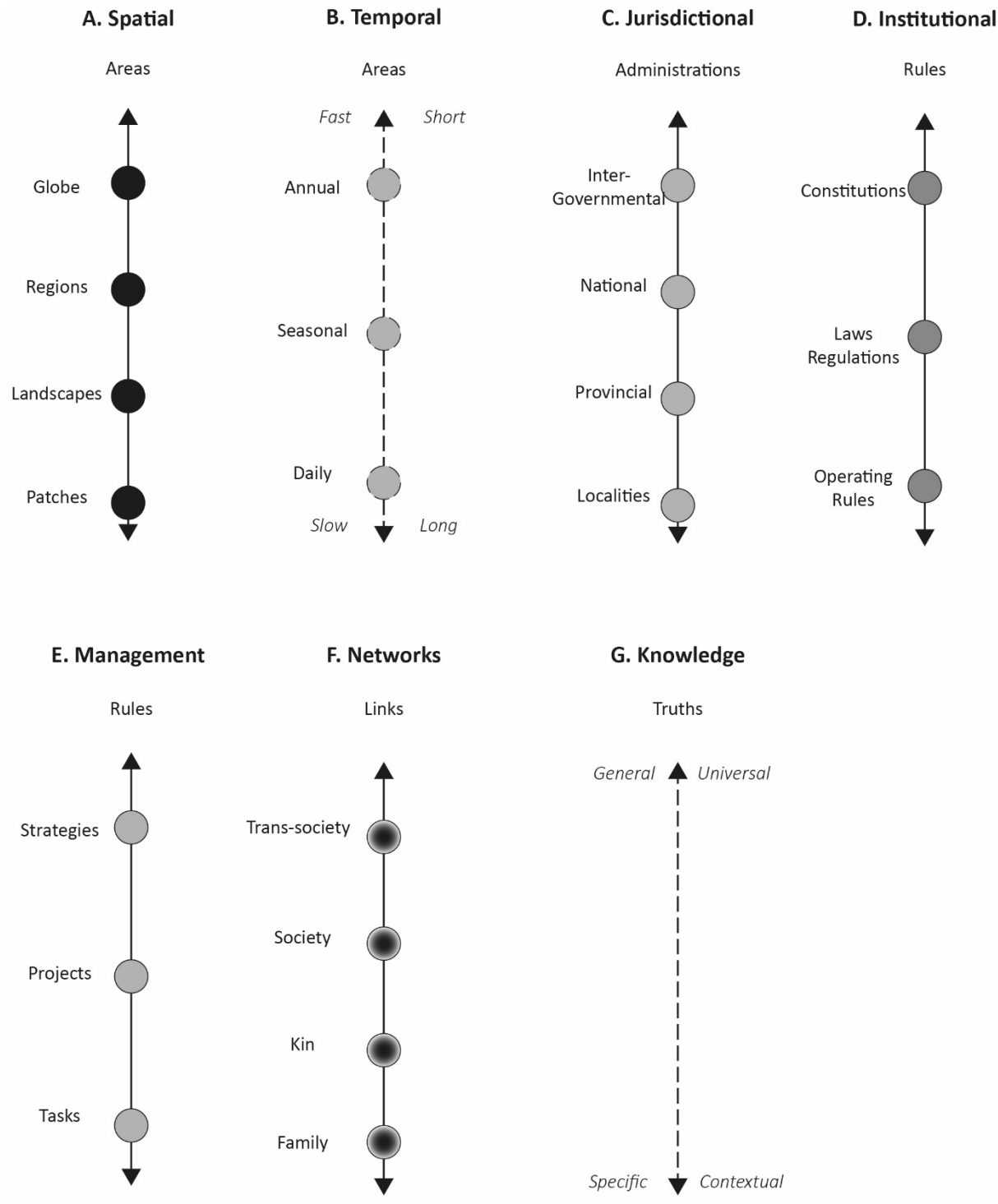
When a local rural economy is affected by external shocks that are characterised by strong, negative spill-over impacts beyond the local level, such as natural disasters or highly fluctuating (inter)national commodity prices, decentralisation can contribute to the resilience of a local community (Romeo 2003). This can be for instance through the protection of property rights or local safety nets. Certain public goods and services, on the other hand, are better provided at a higher-level governance level because of economies of scale. Decentralisation seems, in fact, more favourable to improve allocative efficiency where diseconomies of scale prevail, and goods and services are less well-understood; where economies of scale are at play, centralisation tends to improve cost efficiency (De Vries 2000). Another argument against unqualified decentralisation is that it may tread on the principle of equality, as domains such as environmental protection, social security or education standards cannot be allowed to differ significantly between localities (Treisman 2002; Fleurke and Willemse 2004). Thirdly, decentralisation is also seen to possibly exacerbate collective action problems as cities, departments and regions will compete against each other to be more attractive to businesses and investors. Municipalities may for instance all try to provide a variety of services in competition with one another and thus ruin the market, leading to a tragedy of the commons of an economically unsustainable provision of poor-quality services. In the same line of thinking, free rider problems may occur when for instance a poorer municipality finances and subsidises a library or sports centre, but residents of the relatively rich neighbouring municipalities are the main users without sharing in the costs (De Vries 2000; Fleurke and Willemse 2004). In brief, an understanding of decentralisation that only emphasises local autonomy and active participation of citizens, is persistently challenged by the need for central steering to support national goals such as rule of law, efficient use of public funds, equity, or macroeconomic stability (Hutchcroft 2001; Anderson and Ostrom 2008).

A dynamic approach to the study of decentralisation, which zooms in on the interaction between the central and local level, seems therefore more fitting (De Vries 2000; Treisman 2002; Gómez 2003; Fleurke and Willemse 2004). Such a dynamic approach focuses on the actual working of central-local relations, rather than on their mere formal specification and delineation. Decentralisation is then considered as a never-ending political balancing act of (re)distribution of tasks, competencies and resources over multiple tiers of government and governance. In such a dynamic perspective, it is difficult to objectively measure decentralisation and compare its impact across differing countries and trajectories. Much more needs to be done to understand the dynamics of de-/recentralisation

better and, most importantly, whether and to what extent public goods and services are successfully provided and equitably allocated during this dynamic and intrinsically political process (Ahmad, Devarajan et al. 2005; Eaton, Kaiser and Smoke 2009; Booth 2012). In addition, while various sectoral ministries tend to be in charge of the (re)distribution of tasks, responsibilities and resources, there is rarely one single agency clearly in overall charge (Smoke 2003). Thus, various actors may have different visions of decentralisation, and may be competing with each other to control the decentralisation agenda. One of the common shortcomings in decentralisation efforts lies, therefore, in the coordination and alignment between the various levels, functions, objectives and actors involved, thus giving rise to various collective action problems (see further) (Blair 2000; Anderson and Ostrom 2008; Eaton, Kaiser and Smoke 2009; Charbit 2011; Booth 2012).

Insights from the realm of sustainability studies allow us to frame these challenges of coordination and alignment more comprehensively in the domain of interest in this dissertation, agrarian reform, which is at the interface of decentralisation, land reform, and rural development. Cash et al. (2006) provide such an analytical perspective on coordination challenges within or between multiple operational levels on different functional dimensions. On each functional dimension - or so-called 'scale' -, different operational positions or levels can be discerned (see Figure 3). A spatial scale may, for instance, consist of various levels, ranging from specific localised patches to the entire globe. The jurisdictional scale may, for instance, span from well-bounded localities to supranational intergovernmental linkages. Institutional arrangements may display a hierarchy of rules ranging from basic operating rules and norms through to rules for making rules (constitutions) (see also Crawford and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom 2007). Management interventions can range from tasks through projects to strategies. And while some social networks may not be closely correlated with spatial scales such as trans-society social media networks, others may interface with spatial scales in the process of decentralisation, such as in the case of local service delivery and the risks of nepotism and cronyism linked to family, kin or geographical or political affinity networks (Cash et al. 2006).

Figure 3: Scales and levels critical in human-environment interactions



Source: Cash et al. 2006

These insights borrowed from eco-systems thinking, illustrate that interactions within or across scales lead to substantial conceptual complexity and difficulties in operational coordination. In fact, the mainstream concept of decentralisation is a clear example of cross-scale interactions between spatial and jurisdictional scales. In turn, cross-level interactions refer to interactions among levels within a scale, such as for instance between local and central governments. Cash et al. (2006) describe three common 'scale challenges', where the combination of cross-scale and cross-level interactions threaten to undermine the resilience of society as a system. A first challenge is the failure to recognise important scale and level interactions altogether (ignorance), for instance when national policies adversely constrain local policies and actions. A second one is the persistence of mismatches between levels and scales, for instance when local governments deal solely with transboundary problems such as environmental pollution. The third scale challenge is the failure to recognise plurality, which is the heterogeneity in the way scales are perceived and valued among different actors. When problems are framed only at one level or scale, such as for instance local employment opportunities, other players relevant to regional or national economic dynamics will not be considered in the solutions proposed locally. All three types of scale challenges have surfaced in our review of the mainstream decentralisation paradigm above. Cash et al. (2006) highlight three responses to problems of scale, which are relevant to our study of ODA assistance to decentralisation in agrarian reform and rural development. A first response is institutional interplay, which refers to the degree of aligned interaction among or between different institutional arrangements (Young 2002). Seemingly, in the normative theory of decentralisation, effective institutional interplay between the local and central governments is assumed to automatically crystalize. However, as discussed above, institutional interplay is not always well balanced, and can on the contrary be highly asymmetric, leaving the local level for instance with very little autonomy. A second response is co-management between governments and local communities in the provision of services. Co-management is, however, very complex as the sharing of power and responsibility is seldom well-defined, and often implies adaptive, self-organising processes of learning-by-doing (see also Sandström 2009). Finally, and especially relating to the plurality challenge, differences across levels about what is perceived as legitimate or important may result in knowledge which is framed and stored differently. This scale challenge can be addressed by boundary or bridging organisations, which perform intermediating functions in the co-production of knowledge (Cash et al. 2006). We will, from the next chapter, concentrate on the latter response, and enter into a deeper discussion of boundary maintaining versus bridging (or rather binding) behaviour by ODA donors in the development arena of decentralisation, agrarian reform and rural development.

Globally, approaches to rural development have, in response to the persistence of such scale problems, over the last decades shifted from technological, managerial and centralised to more constructionist, participatory and decentralised ones (Ambrosio-Albalá and Bastiaensen 2010). Since the mid-2000s, rural policies have not only been influenced by trade and fiscal pressures, but have also started to pay more attention to natural and cultural amenities, and decentralisation. Additional factors contributing to the search for a new rural paradigm of so-called territorial development are rapid urbanisation and the high social and political costs associated with uneven regional development (Rodriguez Bilbao 2015). Critical features of these new territorial or place-based approaches to rural development, which - as we will discuss - are also prevalent in our domain of research, are: differentiated and tailor-made solutions in function of a locality's unique geography, history, institutions, structures and actors; a bottom-up approach; cooperation between multiple (non-)governmental actors on a common negotiated strategic vision, action plan and implementation; strengthening of sectoral interlinkages; a focus on multi-level governance; a widened perspective on functional territories, defined as the places in which people actually conduct most of their social life, which involve more than a single locality, and which often do not correspond to official administrative areas such as districts. Finally, the strategic and transformative value of place-based policies should be important enough to justify the significant added coordination costs (Proctor, Berdegué and Cliché 2016). A key concern is to provide proper integration and coordination incentives to make rural communities act at the decentralised level in a way that is dynamic and rewards initiative and experimentation, but at the same time promotes consistency in public policy across sectors and regions (OECD 2006; Charbit 2011). Hence, territorial development's specific coordination issues entail a complex governance process of putting bundles of complementary assets and capacities in place (Proctor, Berdegué and Cliché 2016). However, the qualitative capacity of (local) state actors to promote local bottom-up energies in such a manner that existing privileges do not perpetuate, new ones do not dominate, or that the momentum of sourcing diverse local perspectives is kept alive, are equally of concern in addition to the coordination challenge (Bastiaensen et al. 2015).

1.5 Conclusion

Our discussion of the mainstream paradigm of decentralisation of the past decades, establishes two key points of further attention in this dissertation. First, the term 'decentralisation' covers different forms and functional domains conceptually, as well as extents or degrees especially in implementation. However, in practice, there are few cases that approach the ideal-type of the

decentralisation paradigm, which promotes a large degree of political, administrative and fiscal devolution to contribute to more efficient service provision, effective local social and economic development, and better local governance. Where decentralisation is known to have enabled such poverty reduction, this is partly due to a range of facilitating conditions and specific context factors. It is therefore important when considering the supply of ODA to decentralisation, to identify which specific form, degree and objectives are (in)formally pursued or aspired by the various actors, and which facilitating or constraining conditions prevail in the particular context. A second point of interest to our study is that, as both local autonomy and central-level steering are required for an effective support to development goals within and across different localities country-wide, a dynamic approach seems more fitting. Such an approach zooms in on the ongoing balancing act of (re)distribution of tasks, competencies and resources between the governance levels. Insights from eco-systems thinking to these challenges of coordination and alignment illustrate, in fact, that decentralisation consists of various cross-scale and -level interactions and related scale challenges. In the rest of this dissertation, we will especially concentrate on collective action problems and scale challenges of plurality in the arena of decentralisation, land reform and rural development in South Africa, and whether they may be addressed by boundary maintaining or binding behaviour by ODA donors with a disposition towards context sensitivity.

Chapter 2 Official development assistance to decentralisation: adding to complexity

2.1 Introduction

The mainstream paradigm of aid-to-decentralisation for improved service delivery, local governance and local social and economic development, has provided a rationale for ODA to support such public sector reforms in developing countries. We will in this chapter first review the official recommendations to improve ODA's effectiveness in supporting the above-described complex and dynamic processes of decentralisation in developing countries. These advocate, in short, increasingly for donors to adopt varied and adapted approaches, which require a more profound analysis of the local context, a better coordination among the various (inter)national actors, and a longer-term commitment. We will analyse some of the challenges to such efforts to 'think and work politically', and relate them subsequently to the opposition in the aid literature between a simplistic principal-agent perspective, and one which pays attention to multiple, simultaneous and often hidden collective action problems. We will explore further this rebuttal of the predominance of the principal-agent perspective in favour of one that views foreign aid to decentralisation as characterised by multiple collective action problems, which require 'good fit' local solutions rather than 'best practice' or 'best fit' ones. By approaching aid to decentralisation thus as support to overcoming collective action blockages in the local-central flow of resources and governance, this collective action perspective may open a new outlook on improving the effectiveness of ODA to decentralisation.

2.2 Official development assistance to decentralisation: additional challenges to alignment, harmonisation and coordination

The above-described mainstream paradigm has over the past decades provided a rationale for official upstream and/or downstream development assistance (ODA) to decentralisation in the public sector of developing countries (Romeo 2003). Upstream support refers to assistance to institutional reform such as drafting of legislation or regulations, and capacity building in central government interfacing with lower tiers. Downstream support, on the other hand, consists for instance of assistance to deconcentration in sectoral line ministries, or to integrated rural and urban territorial development programmes which combine strengthening of sectoral devolution and local

institutions. However, as argued above, decentralisation consists of various cross-scale and -level interactions, and related scale challenges multiply further when including ODA support and its specific alignment, harmonisation and coordination problems (Tyler Dickovicks 2014). In itself, the proliferation (number of channels of aid) and fragmentation (number of donor-funded activities) of the supply of ODA in countries and sectors -even among national and subnational entities from the same ODA donor-, add to complexity and under-coordination (Verbeke and Waeterloos 2010). Specific problems of alignment, harmonisation and coordination in the realm of decentralisation appear, for instance, when donors do not interlace their upstream support with strategic downstream support, but leave that to others (Romeo 2003). In integrated rural or territorial development projects, donors often restrict their support to investments in specific sectors such as health or agriculture, and often target only a sub-set of local authorities in an area, thus undermining the strategy of an integrated territorial approach (Winters 2012). As ODA support to decentralisation reforms in developing countries involves, in principle, additional cross-scale and -level interactions and related scale challenges, a wider range of (inter)national governmental and non-governmental and organisational and individual actors need to be taken into consideration. This underscores the growing acknowledgment that donors need to adopt varied and adapted approaches to decentralisation rather than only best practices or institutional monocropping (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Evans 2004; Booth 2012). A range of reviews of ODA support to decentralisation have produced recommendations and guidelines to that effect.

2.3 Official guidelines for improved ODA to decentralisation: context analysis, coordination, and long-term commitment

In 2004, a DAC-OECD study formulated three general recommendations for more effective ODA support to decentralisation: better intra- and inter-donor coordination, more profound analysis of the local context, and longer-term commitment to pro-poor decentralisation (OECD 2004; Jütting et al. 2004). Firstly, donor policies should be more coherent and their interventions better coordinated for the purpose of alignment and harmonisation**.** Donors are for instance not careful enough with potential incoherencies in simultaneously supporting decentralisation and sector-wide approaches, as the latter tend to recentralise power. And in community-driven projects, donors often support parallel administrative structures that may undermine the authority and capacity of elected local governments. Secondly, with decentralisation being a political change process, donors should be more aware of the political economy of decentralisation. This requires a proper analysis and understanding of the local context - such as the likely winners and losers – and the promotion of

reforms on several levels within government. And finally, donors should promote decentralisation as an instrument for poverty reduction and development, and not as an end in itself. They should assist in creating systems of incentives for good governance, constantly monitor the process and adopt a flexible and learning-oriented approach. As one size does not fit all, donors need to display enough flexibility in form, process and time (OECD 2004; Jütting et al. 2004).

Such recommendations have been picked up and specified further in the wake of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 (OECD 2005), which in brief, sees aid at its most effective if harnessed to plans owned by beneficiaries, channelled through their own systems, with progress indicators agreed and reviewed by all stakeholders, harmonised, untied, long-term, predictable, and with strong mechanisms of mutual accountability built in (Armon 2007). For instance, in the run-up to the 2011 Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance re-emphasised the need to recognise multi-level governance in the delivery of effective aid, to further strengthen local governments, and to increase harmonisation, alignment and coherence (DeLOG 2011). In the 'European Charter on development cooperation in support of local governance', the European platform of local and regional authorities for development PLATFORMA acknowledges the increasing proliferation and fragmentation of aid (PLATFORMA 2008). The multiplicity of cooperation actors at local level - international organisations, states, local and territorial authorities, civil society organisations and private sector - is seen to highlight the necessity to improve the coherence, complementarity and effectiveness of their support. European development partners commit therefore to harmonise and coordinate their interventions, and align to local authorities and national strategies and systems (PLATFORMA 2008). With the rise in popularity of territorial approaches as introduced above, the 2005 'EU Consensus on Development' introduces the theme of territorial development in the promotion of agriculture and rural development (European Commission 2006). More recently, the EU describes the 'territorial approach to local development' (TALD) as "development that is endogenous and spatially integrated, leverages the contribution of actors operating at multiple scales and brings incremental value" (EU 2016). Local development can be promoted at multiple levels (i.e., local, urban, metropolitan, regional, national and supra-national) and requires cooperation between the various levels. The EU recommends therefore the following four specific support measures (EU 2016):

1. Recognise the specificity of territorial development as well as its relation to national/global development efforts.

2. Advocate for the role of local authorities in managing territorial development and for appropriate forms of intergovernmental cooperation.

3. Document success stories in promoting territorial development on how local authorities build and mobilise social capital, facilitate active citizenship, and bring additional private and community resources to bear on improved local service delivery and local economic development.

4. Raise awareness and develop capacities of local authorities in order to promote territorial development, develop strategic goals, and leverage local community resources.

In its most recent handbook on decentralisation for policy makers, the OECD (2019) defines decentralisation normatively in terms of devolution, democratic decentralisation and geographical location as "the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the central government level to elected authorities at the subnational level (regional governments, municipalities, etc.), having some degree of autonomy". To support countries and donors in making decentralisation work, the OECD developed ten guidelines:

1. Clarify the responsibilities assigned to different government levels;

2. Ensure that all responsibilities are sufficiently funded;

3. Strengthen subnational fiscal autonomy to enhance accountability;

4. Support subnational capacity building;

5. Build adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government;

6. Support cross-jurisdictional cooperation;

7. Strengthen innovative and experimental governance, and promote citizens' engagement;

8. Allow and make the most of asymmetric decentralisation arrangements;

9. Consistently improve transparency, enhance data collection and strengthen performance monitoring;

10. Strengthen fiscal equalisation systems and national regional development policies to reduce territorial disparities.

The OECD is here more outspoken and prescriptive than in 2004 on how to deal with decentralisation reforms within but also beyond its own group of countries. Like the EU, it notes that engaging in a decentralisation reform is ultimately a political issue of intergovernmental relations and relations with other stakeholders, and should be conceived and pursued as part of a broader strategy of other types of multi-level governance reforms, notably territorial and public

management reforms. In all cases, decentralisation systems require regular review and adjustment (OECD 2019). These ten guidelines can be regrouped into three categories.

1. A first relates to governance aspects: clarify the responsibilities assigned to different government levels, strengthen innovative and experimental governance, and promote citizens' engagement; allow asymmetric decentralisation arrangements and consistently improve transparency, enhance data collection and strengthen performance monitoring.
2. A second category is fiscal: ensure that all responsibilities are sufficiently funded; strengthen subnational fiscal autonomy to enhance accountability; and strengthen fiscal equalisation systems and national regional development policies to reduce territorial disparities.
3. A third deals with the implementation and management of decentralisation policies through subnational capacity building, adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government, and cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

These guidelines of EU (2016) and the OECD (2019) do all align, albeit with more specification and nuance, to the earlier three general guidelines for donor behaviour by the OECD (2004): more profound analysis of the local context, better coordination among the various (inter)national actors, and longer-term commitment. The need for better analysis, coordination and long-term commitment is for instance underscored by recent findings that successful cases of external assistance to decentralisation occur only where donor efforts align with pre-existing political incentives of partner governments (Tyler Dickovic 2014*)*. Of special interest, therefore, are donor programs that can promote the dynamic of local autonomy combined with responsiveness to the central level through simultaneous assistance to local government, local civil society and central government (Jütting et al. 2004; Tyler Dickovic 2014). The more profound understanding of the local context such interlocking and intrinsically political assistance requires, has led to a wider-spread interest among donors in 'more politically aware' approaches in general, and instruments of context analyses specifically, such as political economy analysis, which we will discuss in the next paragraph.

2.4 ODA and local context: donor interest in 'more politically aware' approaches

As discussed in the previous section, ODA donors increasingly acknowledge the intrinsic political character of decentralisation reforms, and hence the importance of a good understanding of and engagement with the local context. This has in the recent past, led to a wider-spread interest in so-called political economy analysis (PEA) (Tidemand 2010; Mcloughlin 2014). Earlier, traditional ODA limited itself to best practice or blueprint top-down solutions to technical problems, thought to be

caused by lack of resources or technical capacity. Linear, rationally sequenced projects of expert technical assistance and capacity development within limited timeframes, were the technocratic flavour of the month (Booth 2012). More recently, in ODA approaches which Rocha Menocal et al. (2018) call 'more politically aware', problems of misaligned institutions, power dynamics and incentives to reform efforts are to be identified and refined by and with domestic actors on an ongoing basis. 'Best fit' solutions are to be sought, grounded in contextual realities and based on what is politically feasible as well as technically sound. Rather than working through linear technocratic projects, donors are to facilitate, convene and broker local partnerships on a longer term.

A consensus has indeed been growing in the debates on aid effectiveness that technical knowledge, implementation capacity, and financial volumes are, in themselves, not sufficient for developmental change to take place (Laws and Marquette 2018). It is increasingly acknowledged that the persistence of poor policy and dysfunctional institutions has less to do with such lack of knowledge or finance, but rather with the influence of powerful actors who benefit from the status-quo and resist change. Hence, the critical difference between programmes that support successful developmental change and those that fall short, is found to lie in a deeper understanding of, and a proactive engagement with, variations in context and often shifting political interests. These critiques of the conventional approach to development assistance, where a linear theory of change based on institutional best practice is established at the outset, all point to the primacy of understanding and adapting to domestic politics and power asymmetries (Teskey 2015). Incorporating recipient voices and preferences into development policymaking and practice has been an important part of the aid effectiveness agenda since the early 2000s. Several prominent donors moved hence to incorporate better understandings of local political contexts and dynamics into their policymaking and operations (Laws and Marquette 2018). In the words of Akmeemana, Booth, Brown et al. (2015), "successful implementation usually happens when programs are aligned with a domestic support base that is influential enough to generate reform momentum, and overcome the resistance of those benefitting from the status quo. Too many times over the past few decades, we have seen projects fail because they demand changes that are not politically feasible". This growing recognition of the need to engage more flexibly with power and politics in development theory and practice has even led to its portrayal as a 'second orthodoxy' (Teskey 2015), as opposed to the chronologically first orthodoxy of technical and apolitical development assistance. In the second orthodoxy, aid actors need to be able to better understand the local context ('thinking politically') in order to support processes that enable local actors to bring about

sustainable developmental change ('working politically'). Although the understanding of working politically is sometimes confined to direct engagement with political actors, or even interfering with state politics for that matter, it refers more generally to "supporting, brokering, facilitating and aiding the emergence and practices of reform leaderships, organisations, networks and coalitions" (Laws and Marquette 2018).

In 2021, Teskey (2021) retraces the evolution of the idea and practice of 'more politically aware' approaches to aid from 2013 to late 2021, and tries to identify what has been successful and what not. Three different initiatives have given rise to the 'second' orthodoxy according to Teskey (2015 and 2021). Andrews, Woolcock and Pritchett's (2013) publication on 'Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation' (PDIA) was the first, to be soon followed by the 'Harvard Manifesto' of 2014 on 'Doing Development Differently' (DDD) (CID 2014). In this manifesto, participants from various aid agencies and research institutes committed to common principles of more effective aid. These common principles imply a focus on solving local problems that are debated, (re)defined and really owned by local people in an ongoing process. These locally bred solutions involve local conveners; rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection, learning and revision; embrace small risks; foster real solutions to real problems; and thus empower people and promote sustainability. A third and final initiative emerged at about the same time, when a group of governance advisers, practitioners and researchers began to promote 'Thinking and Working Politically' (TWP). Late 2013, the International Community of Practice on TWP was established, aiming to promote the evidence for and the uptake of TWP approaches by donors (Teskey 2021). The ideas underpinning TWP, DDD, and Problem Driven (PDIA) came to be seen as largely synonymous, with each emphasising different aspects of the 'more politically aware' agenda. In Table 1, Teskey (2015 and 2021) summarises their common features and differences.

Table 1: Comparison between DDD, PDIA and TWP

	Doing Development Differently (DDD)	Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)	Thinking and Working Politically (TWP)
Three features emphasised	• Use locally legitimate institutions • Partnership not principal-agent • Focus on real results	• Relentless focus on a specific problem • Make many small 'bets' • Learn and adapt as you go	• Explicit recognition of competing interests • Engage with reformers/pro-poor coalitions • Based at all times in political economy perspectives: country/sector/programme/issue
Common features	• Context is everything • Best fit, not good practice • No blueprint; rather flexible, responsive, adaptive programming • Real-time learning • Long-term commitments with staff continuity • Enabling, not doing		

Source: Teskey 2021

In early 2015 the CoP published its 'Case for TWP' flyer, which highlights three core principles of analysis, context and design that stand together (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015). The core principles are the use of political economy approaches (PEA) to inform analysis; a nuanced understanding of and responsiveness to the local (policy) context; and iterative monitoring and learning that leads to flexibility and adaptation in design and implementation (Teskey 2021). These three principles were further developed in 2017, as:

• being much more thoughtful and analytical at the selection stage (thinking about what is both technically appropriate and what is politically feasible);

• being more rigorous about the theories of change (how change actually happens) and theories of action (how and why the interventions proposed will make a difference);

- being able to respond to changing policy priorities and contexts, and to adapt implementation (changing course, speeding up or slowing down, adding or dropping inputs and activities, changing sequencing)
- showing the willingness and ability to intervene actively and support social groups and coalitions advocating reform for the public good (Teskey 2021).

Donor agencies such as DFID, EU, USAID, Danida or World Bank have experimented with PEA since the early 2000s (see for instance Tidemand 2010; Unsworth and Williams 2011; Rocha Menocal et al. 2018). PEA looks at the underlying drivers of political behaviour in specific contexts and the effects of those drivers on policy and development interventions (Tidemand 2010; Copestake and Williams 2014; Rocha Menocal et al. 2018). Ideally, PEA should thus encourage donor officials to understand development as a locally-driven political process and to 'think and work politically' (Booth 2012; Mcloughlin 2014; Dasandi et al. 2019). Working politically entails engaging for a longer term with a broad range of actors, and brokering and facilitating local political processes with a focus on state-society relations. However, these attempts have not been impressively effective (Copestake and Williams 2014; Dasandi et al. 2019). The evolution of PEA since the early 2000s has seen a move away from country-level studies aimed at institutionalising 'political thinking' in donor agencies, towards more *ad hoc* analyses directed at specific practical problems in particular development interventions. As a result, it has increasingly been used as a technical tool to inform programme planning, increasingly carried out by external consultants who produce analyses that are often too sensitive to be distributed outside the commissioning agency (Mcloughlin 2014). This sensitivity means that – in contradiction to the prevailing donor rhetoric on 'local ownership' and 'partnership' – recipient governments and local actors have tended to be consciously excluded by donors from the PEA process, except as objects of external analysis. An additional critique is that PEA is often carried out only at the start of programme cycles, rather than being refreshed continuously as projects develop and local political dynamics change. This is particularly problematic from the perspective of TWP, as project assumptions that are built on insights gained from a political analysis completed at the outset of a project are likely to be outdated if the political context around a given reform is uncertain and fluid (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Laws and Marquette 2018). In the face of such growing criticism, Copestake and Williams (2014) try to provide a few general pointers on how to make PEA more effective. In general, the critical stance on PEA is that it still serves a rationally controlled intervention model; while there is talk of evidence-based policymaking, the walk is often that of a biased selection of evidence that supports policy options already made at higher donor levels. The engagement with civil society in PEA is often seen as a manoeuvre of co-

optation on the side of donors, to achieve already set development goals in their struggle with the 'client' governments. And while there is agreement that PEA needs more refined tools for mapping actors, fuller incorporation into monitoring and evaluation, more sector- and problem-specific approaches and scenario analyses, the basic assumption that PEA commissioning-donors remain the principals in this exercise, is not challenged. PEA should, rather, also stimulate debate on the internal constraints which donors face to mainstream PEA within policy design and implementation, and on the need for them to deliver quick and measurable results within rigid and often unrealistic timeframes (Booth 2012; Copestake and Williams 2014). Rather than supporting the strategies of development agencies through seeking specific change elements, PEA should focus more on networks and relationships for consultation, exploration of divergent models, acknowledgment of emergent opportunities, collaboration and mutual learning (Copestake and Williams 2014; Mcloughlin 2014; Dasandi et al.2019). Duncan Green (2019) emphasises that, unlike PEA, TWP isn't a tool. It is an encompassing way of thinking and working that keeps the understanding that everything is political front and centre. A poor PEA without TWP may therefore lead to decisions that do harm. PDIA without TWP can build states' capability in ways that could do harm. And without TWP, adaptive programmes may also cause harm by doing the wrong things flexibly and adaptively.

In what is termed a spectrum approach, the so-called revolutionary uptake of TWP refers to a wholesale shift away from traditional approaches to aid. Evolutionary approaches to TWP, on the other hand, remain more traditional, but pay increasingly attention to political insights to improve effectiveness. Teskey (2015) posits that "we need to move beyond the hand-wringing that 'all development is political' and adapt our thinking habits and our working practices to reflect how change actually happens". However, barriers and vested interests in the own organisation persist and militate against the changes the uptake of TWP represents. The ambition of TWP is often confronted with active resistance from management, general bureaucratic inertia, inflexibility in procurement, and the rigid use of linear project frameworks (Teskey 2021). Although there has indeed been an impressive imprint on the current mainstream development narrative to develop more politically informed and aware ways of thinking and working, there is yet limited evidence that these efforts are yielding improved development outcomes. It is therefore that more systematic and comparative evidence on the actual practice and effectiveness of 'more politically aware approaches' are called for (Copestake and Williams 2014; Mcloughlin 2014; Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Laws and Marquette 2018; Dasandi et al. 2019).

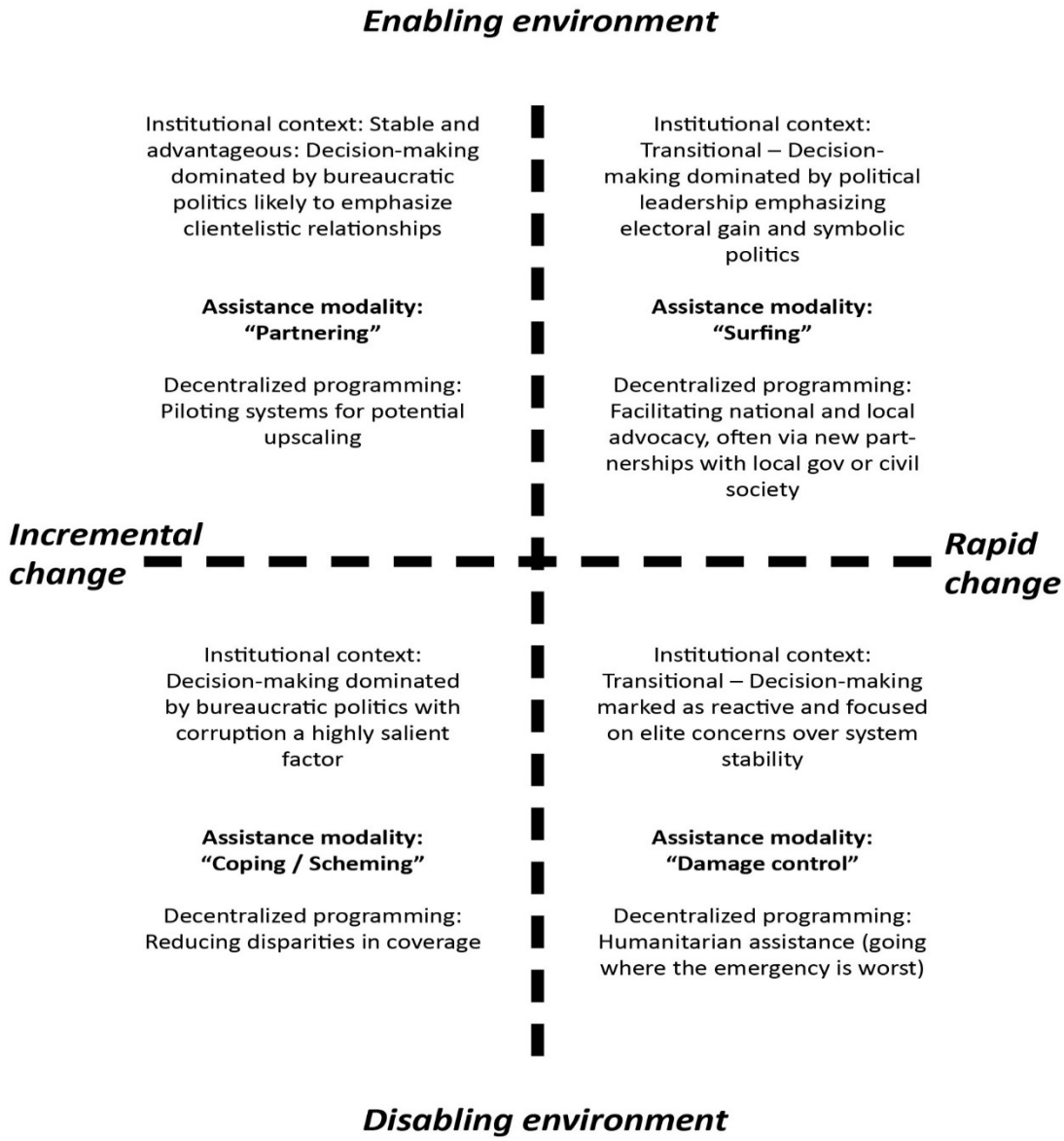
In a more recent reflection, Teskey (2021) is indeed less optimistic than in his 2015 writing about the future of the 'second orthodoxy' of 'more politically aware approaches'. Green (2022) even describes Teskey's most recent contribution as 'close to a damning post-mortem', and concludes with his personal assessment that 'TWP may have won some battles, but it lost the war'. TWP got lost in the maelstrom of changed international relations and geo-political priorities since the launch of the TWP CoP in 2013, according to Teskey (2021). National interests appear to trump universal values again, and renewed short term project visibility seems to prevail over concerns for general aid effectiveness and contextualised ways of operating. In spite of the rhetorical support for TWP, the 'second orthodoxy' has failed to find a solid footing or to escape from its Western aid department confines. Most aid departments are not equipped with the organisational mandates or human resource profiles that contextualisation and flexibility in implementation, monitoring, learning and adapting require. With foreign affairs departments taking over aid agencies, the space for TWP has actually shrunk. Moreover, at the local level, still few national actors are actually able or allowed to influence the debate or to propose appropriate alternatives to programming and implementation. Translating the 'Thinking' - often limited to one-off PEA studies - into coherent 'Working', remains a work in progress. To the extent that the more technical sounding 'Adaptive Management' may have substituted for TWP, the efforts 'to bring politics back in' have actually resulted in exactly the opposite (Teskey 2021). If TWP is to survive and prosper in the following years, Teskey (2021) deems that in first instance, donors must match their rhetorical commitment to 'more politically aware approaches' with the active promotion of a more flexible programme logic that enables the actual operationalisation of TWP. Second, more effort must go in collecting and synthesising evidence of where and how such approaches have been (effectively) applied. And in conclusion, TWP applied to urgent thematic issues, such as security, resilience or climate change, should demonstrate the relevance of TWP in a wider context, beyond the one of ODA. It is in the realm of the first two concerns that this dissertation will try to contribute to the discussion on the need for and feasibility of 'more politically aware approaches'.

2.5 Four ideal-type 'more politically aware' ODA strategies to decentralisation

How donors face specific challenges in being 'more politically aware' in programming support to decentralisation, emphasised by OECD and EU to ultimately imply a political engagement, is illustrated by what Fritzen Scott (2007) calls the 'strategic triangle of challenges' to donors. Donors need to balance a variety of objectives, considerations and stakeholders in this strategic triangle of challenges: donor interests and particularities, often divided between policymaking and implementation agencies; partner country context specificities; and decentralisation process

characteristics. In programming their decentralisation assistance strategies, ODA donors need to accommodate changing modalities of donor support, such as for instance the shift from support to a single line-ministry to sector-wide approaches (SWAp), where emphasis is put on improved coordination and upstream policy advice. They also need to cope with a diversity of country-specific governance regimes, which may range from failed or authoritarian states to relatively strong and democratic ones. In the end, they also need to attune to some of the rapid changes that are likely to occur during the decentralisation roll-out process itself (Fritzen Scott 2007). This explains partly why donors often fail to clearly articulate, communicate or coordinate their specific assistance objectives and strategies. Four 'ideal-type' donor assistance strategies are then distinguished, which correspond to distinct typical governance contexts (see Figure 4) (Fritzen Scott 2007). On the vertical axis, the 'enabling' and 'disabling' environment poles reflect the strength of the country's political, operational and social capacities as assessed by the donor. The pace of change in decentralisation policy reforms and macro-economic and -political context is lined out on the horizontal axis. The quadrants reflect ideal-type donor assistance strategies, from which a number of possible implications for programming support to decentralisation flow. At the side of the enabling environment in the upper-left quadrant, the 'partnering' assistance modality reflects the potential of working with partner governments and other counterparts within a generally facilitative and stable environment.

Figure 4: Four 'ideal-type' donor assistance modalities to decentralisation



Source: Fritzen Scott 2007

Here, the major opportunity is one of promoting policy learning and the institutionalisation of best-fit practices, as there is generally a positive commitment to the donor agenda. Figuring out how to overcome specific implementation constraints is the key issue in this mode. In the upper-right quadrant, rather than controlling the pace of change and carefully selecting the organisational response to it, donors must in this environment attempt to 'surf' the changes, positioning themselves to take optimal advantage of and influence the direction changes are taking. For the donor, the role of entrepreneur might best fit the challenges in this quadrant. The 'coping/scheming' lower-left quadrant reflects a dual focus. Donors need to work towards changes in the governance capacities (incremental and/or advocating for the removal of major constraints) in a non-receptive yet stable, underperforming or dysfunctional system. This requires 'scheming' in the sense that forthright advocacy for systemic change is highly unlikely given pernicious governance patterns; donors must therefore be strategic in the types of changes and avenues pursued. Donors may thus 'cope' with adversity to get at least some essential services delivered, while 'scheming' to plant the seeds of more effective localised systems and capacities, even if these will only bear fruit and become sustainable if country-wide developments turn more positive. Finally, and arguably the most stressful working modality for a donor, is the 'damage control' mode in the lower-right quadrant. This represents a crisis mode in which change is rapid and usually negative, as the overall policy environment is unfavourable. In this mode, the donor is geared to combat a rapid further deterioration in the environment. Many donors will ultimately pull out or reorient their assistance to humanitarian relief or targeted interventions to prevent or manage sectoral collapse (Fritzen Scott 2007).

A first implication of the distinctions made in the above scenarios is that if, in any of these modalities, donors intend to provide downstream support, they need to establish how and with whom they will formulate the related decentralised programming. In any setting in which donors aim to contribute ultimately to more effective centre-local intergovernmental relationships, it will be essential for them to involve actors from the various levels and sectors (with the potential risk of ensuing scale challenges as discussed above). Yet, donors' planning exercises are usually not open participatory processes, but controlled by coordinators who previously dominated programme decision-making and who (may) resist the inclusion of new partners and voices. A second implication following from these four ideal-type donor strategies, is the need to ensure an optimal information balance of nationally aggregated and decentralised indicators and goals. Assistance needs to be balanced between top–down implementation versus processes rich in community participation, but with generally weaker technical, financial and administrative expertise (Fritzen Scott 2007). A good understanding and handling of both central and local context and actors, puts a considerable

demand on the insights, skills and workload of donor agencies. Unsworth and Williams (2011) conclude that, in general, the promotion of PEA bears significant implications to the involvement of in-country staff from a range of disciplines, as well as from senior technical staff. This may require longer in-country postings, more specialist staff, or more flexible ways of responding rapidly to sudden opportunities to support change processes.

In brief, attempts by donors to improve their political awareness in analysis and implementation, ability to work more flexibly and adaptively, and to actively intervene in support of social forces of reform, are not forthright. To 'think and work politically' by understanding development as a locally-driven political process and aptly engaging with it in its messy practical appearance, proves to be much more complicated and demanding. As we will argue in more detail in the next section, it requires, all in all, much more effective investment in transparent, iterative, and inclusive approaches that can identify mutually acceptable solutions to the multiple collective action problems both ODA donors and recipients are bound to face.

2.6 Limitations of the prevailing principal-agent perspective in the 'aid-to-decentralisation chain'

The additional cross-scale and -level interactions and related scale challenges that ODA support to decentralisation entails as discussed above, call in question the principal agent-perspective implied in the mainstream decentralisation paradigm and its representation of the 'aid chain'. Paul (2006) reviews succinctly political economy perspectives on aid relationships as consisting of a 'chain of principal–agent relations' which involve multiple potential agency problems. An agency problem emerges when there is a divergence of interests between those who perform tasks – the agents -, and the principals on whose behalf the tasks are performed, and when information asymmetries prevail between both. The bilateral ODA relationship between a donor and a recipient government is easily subject to misalignment of incentives, such as moral hazard in the case of hidden actions by the agent - be it in the donor or recipient sphere-, or adverse selection due to, for instance, hidden information on the agent's capacity of implementation or degree of altruism. The aid delivery process is prone to such agency problems. It encompasses multiple principals, agents, objectives, and broken information feedback loops between donor decision makers, aid agencies, recipient national and local authorities, implementing agencies, and intended beneficiaries. It is also increasingly oriented towards complex institutional reforms that involve less clear, tangible and concise outputs (Paul 2006). For a more elaborate discussion of these political economy perspectives analysing ODA as a long chain of nested principal-agent relationships, see for instance also Ostrom,

Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson (2001), de Renzio, Booth, Rogerson and Curran (2005), Radelet (2006), Svensson (2006) or Barder (2009).

Booth (2012) takes issue with this principal agent-perspective implied in the mainstream decentralisation paradigm, which treats citizens and service users in the production and provision of local public goods and services as principals, and government officials, non-state actors and service providers as agents with an uncomplicated interest. Democratic decentralisation is, for instance, thought to be the demand-side solution to unwillingness of central governments at the supply-side to actually devolve decision-making powers and resources to lower tiers close to the local citizen. The problem analysis applied here, is that the provision of public goods involves principals - the client or service user-, and their agents - authorities and service providers. According to the subsidiarity principle -which entails that policies should be conceived and applied at the lowest possible government tier and as close to citizens as possible (Waeterloos and Renard 2013)-, the information asymmetry problems that generally affect principal-agent relationships, are then expected to be reduced through proximity between the principal and the agent. In Booth's (2012) view, however, neither political leaders nor ordinary citizens can be counted on as development principals, since they all face unresolved collective action problems in reconciling current interests and long-term development interests. It is more realistic to understand decentralisation and its governance limitations as the product of such multiple and diverse collective action problems. Principal-agent analysis is therefore relevant, but only if nested within the understanding of multiple and diverse collective action challenges, and not the other way around (Booth 2012).

Booth's take crops the above-described dented hopes for a standardised PEA donor tool to formulate best-fit solutions further. At the centre of this best-fit discussion, Booth (2011) places the present lack of attention to the content, dimensions and characteristics of ownership - one of the key concepts of the aid effectiveness agenda since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD 2005). As Armon (2007) notes from a donor perspective: *"While necessary for success, the essentially technocratic approach to aid enshrined at Paris does not appear sufficient. It tells us a lot about how we should work with partner governments, in principle and procedurally. It is perhaps less informative on who precisely we should work with in a particular context – not only in government, but also in broader political and civil society – to secure the accountability and responsiveness that is part of, and underpins, sustainable development reform"*. Rather than uncritically assuming the extent and depth of a country's ownership of its development policies to which donors will then align, Booth (2011) suggests that it is important to view ownership of development as an outcome of

multi-stakeholder interactions, to which external agents might make essential contributions. Such treatment of ownership-as-an-outcome of ODA requires to recognise the most likely drivers of development efforts in poor countries. Booth (2011) formulates it as follows:

> *"This is the kind of thing that the 'country ownership' question should be about. On current evidence, [the drivers of development] seem most likely to be found in a leadership with a long-term development vision and some kind of machinery for managing well the rent generation and utilisation […]. To be sure, the best examples are to be found at the micro and meso levels, where the past or present experience of many development organisations and national reformers illustrate relevant possibilities. […] the central technique of which has been brokering missing relationships and revealing hidden potentialities for more efficient and profitable […] interactions between different […] players. […] There is much to be done. However, adopting what has been argued here about the need to place country ownership of development efforts back at centre-stage, and to take a more politically informed approach to this question, would be a good place to start."*

In other words, current uses of the aid effectiveness concepts of aid alignment, donor harmonisation, management for results and mutual accountability, do not provide much guidance on how to design and implement more effective ODA to decentralisation, unless country ownership of (local) 'good fit' designs is brought back to the centre of discussion. Treating country-ownership of development as an outcome to be constructed, rather than an established or assumed condition, suggests a different conception of the role of development cooperation (Booth 2011). In this conception, there is less focus on financial disbursements and much more on assisting the right sorts of 'good fit' institutional change to resolve collective action blockages (see also Evans 2004). And since such blockages are, by definition, not easily soluble by those directly involved, there is a significant potential added value in involving external donor agents. For donor organisations, that means investing in facilitating, entrepreneuring with self-motivated leaders, or brokering towards solutions and incremental changes at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels (Cammack 2007; Booth 2011 and 2012; Faustino and Booth 2014). This supposes not only a better understanding of the local contexts and of donors' and recipients' political and implementation priorities and constraints, but also of the range and particularities of collective action problems one may encounter.

This point of view on resolving collective action blockages also challenges the traditional depiction of ODA to decentralisation as a long, hierarchical and mostly linear relation, the so-called 'aid chain'

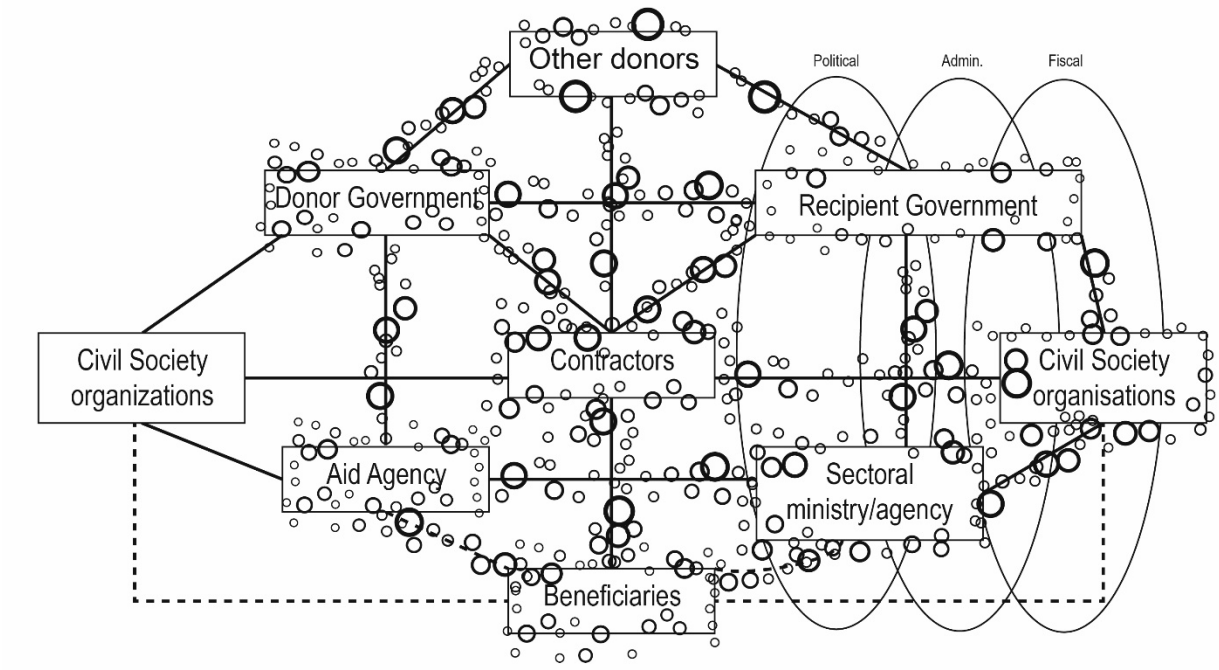
(Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001). The aid chain links a donor government to a recipient country via various intermediary actors and organisations. These intermediaries include for instance donor aid policymaking ministries, aid implementing agencies, recipient government ministries and agencies, non-governmental organisations, other donors, and private implementation contractors such as consultants. As Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson (2001) put it:

> *"In this representation, the internal workings of the donor government and agency appear remote from the problems beneficiaries face in the recipient country. By conceiving of development cooperation in this way, donors may infer (incorrectly) that the incentive structures of their internal aid-disbursing operations are far-distanced, and thus insulated and largely unrelated to problems of aid sustainability on the recipient side. While many of the links in aid do involve a principal-agent structure, other types of relationships and collective action problems are often involved. The chain of aid thus does not reveal fully the varied institutional contexts within which each of these multiple actors in development cooperation link, in practice, to each other"*.

In an attempt to provide an alternative, more interactional representation to the aid chain, Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson (2001), propose the so-called 'International Development Cooperation Octangle' (see Figure 5). This octangle aims to better convey the multiple interrelationships and various problems of collective action among and between the major actors. Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson (2001) identify eight main development actors: donor government, donor civil society organisations, other donors, donor aid agencies, aid contractors, recipient government, recipient sectoral ministries and agencies, and recipient civil society, who may all be involved in the attempt of improving the development status of the recipient country's beneficiaries. In one specific analysis, one may, however, only be able to examine actors in a particular node of the octangle and in relative isolation from the others, as most of the actors do not see the full octangle themselves. Yet in practice, the actions of all actors and their component parts influence each other over time; each actor may thus play a major role in determining whether the overall results of aid are effective. We follow this argument, but given the mesh of actors involved at different (and at more than eight) scales and levels, rather refer to it as an 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus' (Figure 5), emphasising the (in principle) interwovenness of numerous parts of the system. We represent this additional complexity visually by adding, in this case, the three distinct but interlinked functional domains of decentralisation – political, administrative and fiscal – in the recipient country at the right-hand side, and by highlighting by means of circles varying in size, the

number of actors and the extent of collective action problems that may prevail within and between the actors involved in bilateral ODA in the aid-to decentralisation plexus.

Figure 5: From 'International Development Cooperation Octangle' to 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus'



Source: Adapted from Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001

In brief, Booth (2012) rebuts the principal-agent perspective because of its limitation in fully mapping and connecting all nodes in the so-called aid chain, which is replete with multiple and diverse collective action problems. These problems cause various blockages which require 'good fit' local solutions rather than 'best practice' or 'best fit' ones. We will in the next section elaborate in more depth some of the particularities of collective action problems one may encounter in what we coin the 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus'.

2.7 Multiple and diverse collective action problems in the 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus', yet three generic intermediate factors

The study of collective action problems has mostly been associated with social dilemmas, where rational individual actors are trapped in collectively producing Pareto suboptimal results, whereby Pareto optimality is a situation where no individual can be better off without making at least one

individual worse off (Holzinger 2003; Sandler 2015). In Elinor Ostrom's words (2007), one of the most prominent scholars on the matter, "the problem of collective action remains how participants in social dilemmas can avoid the temptation of suboptimal equilibria and move closer to optimal outcomes to gain a cooperators' dividend". Because people who have contributed to the cost of the good will be bound to share the benefits with a number of free-riders, their willingness to contribute will be undermined. The good will tend to be underprovided and, in the case of a common-pool resource, may get over-used, resulting in a 'tragedy of the commons'. Ostrom and her school have shown that small-scale communities often have institutions that can control free-riding and prevent the destruction of such open-access resources (Ostrom 2007; Anderson and Ostrom 2008; Booth 2012). Yet, they also underscore that many natural resources are characterised by such complexity in terms of types of goods and services they provide, that, in fact, very sophisticated governance systems are required.

Oliver (1993) emphasises that the major model to explain collective action is concerned with whether many individuals within one collectivity, will be willing and able to coordinate their actions into a Pareto-optimised single joint action. But such social dilemmas between individual and collective rationality are not the only collective action problems. There may be, for instance, pure conflicts between the actors, zero-sum games, problems of coordination other than cooperation, problems in finding agreements, fierce inequality, or instability of the temporary collective outcome. Holzinger (2003) proposes therefore to widen the definition of collective action problems to "all difficulties that arise as a consequence of strategic interaction between individuals who aim jointly to achieve and distribute some gain through coordination or co-operation" (Holzinger 2003). She thus distinguishes five types of collective action problems, which represent combinations of problems of efficiency, coordination, distribution and stability:

- Mere distribution problems imply efficient and stable outcomes. Their only problem is that their Pareto-optimal outcomes result in inequality, which may lead to manifest conflict.

- Coordination problems refer to the blockage where actors may not be able to coordinate their strategies at the desirable equilibrium. There is a risk that the optimal equilibrium will not be achieved.

- Defection problems have a suboptimal equilibrium, in some cases combined with inequality in the Pareto-optimal outcome. Their most unpleasant feature is that even if the parties agree to play the cooperative strategies, they have an incentive to defect afterwards. Defection problems may also reveal a secondary distributional problem.

- Disagreement problems combine both the coordination and distribution aspect. They have several equilibria, each preferred by other actors. Even if the coordination aspect can be overcome by communication or other means, the parties find it difficult to attain agreement.

- Instability problems are posed by games that have no equilibrium in pure strategies. There will be no stable solution to these problems, because the actors try to discoordinate their strategies. Instability problems usually combine the instability and the distributional aspect.

Despite the other types of collective action problems that may linger at the heart of donor support to development processes, it are indeed the coordination problems of social dilemmas that are most commonly singled out (Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Hydén 2006; Booth 2012). Especially the new institutional economics literature, which emphasises the rising transaction costs for aid recipients from the use of multiple disbursement and monitoring arrangements, bears testimony to this (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Acharya, de Lima and Moore 2006; Verbeke and Waeterloos 2010). Winters (2012) applies for instance the perspective of transaction costs to coordination problems in the case of ODA to decentralisation in Indonesia. In providing external support to decentralisation, donors have to deal with multiple government agencies at various levels. This complex maze hinders donors' possible intents and attempts to coordinate and harmonise. However, donors do bear some responsibility herein. By continuing to rely on traditional alliances in the government because of prevailing bureaucratic incentives, donors enable the government to sustain such complexity and disjoint. Nor is it clear whether donors should push for improved government coordination if the issues over which different government agencies disagree are not simply technocratic, but meaningfully political. Winters (2012) wonders therefore whether the sector of decentralisation is not too politicised for effective donor support. Yet, it is in such complex context that ODA agencies most often intervene to support the mainstream decentralisation theory of change.

Booth's (2011 and 2012) perspective on effective aid as support to ownership-as-an-outcome, allows to frame the above-identified types of collective action problems that may feature in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. In contrast, mainstream principal-agent thinking tends to gloss over this multitude of localised collective action problems. As the discussion of scale challenges in decentralisation in the previous chapter illustrates, problems of unequal distribution of resources and responsibilities, coordination, and even of disagreement, occur widely between central and decentralised governance levels. Defection problems by withdrawal or non-compliance by (non-)state stakeholders, for instance in the case of non-inclusive or -responsive participatory

mechanisms, are also common (Thede 2009). Possible instability problems when actors explicitly refuse any longer-term agreement or coordination are raised, for instance, in countries with high inequalities where the state lacks the capacity to fulfil its basic functions (Jütting et al. 2004; Steiner 2005). The enabling factors previously identified for achieving pro-poor decentralisation, such as elite commitment, powers and resources delegated, coherent policies, information flow and participatory mechanisms, appear therefore crucial for the resolution of a range of potential local collective action blockages. It is therefore that Booth (2012) emphasises the importance of good fit institutional arrangements that assist local problem-solving, rather than best practice or best fit magic bullets or institutional monocropping, as problematised by Evans (2004). Such good fit institutional arrangements will often be hybrid bricolage arrangements, in which modern bureaucratic and professional standards are adapted to people's values and ways of thinking. In South Africa, for instance, du Toit (2012) expects to find a local heuristic in the poor's complex survival bricolages of formal and informal employment, cash transfers, reciprocal exchange, self-exploitation, knowledge and ability to negotiate opportunities. This heuristic may feed necessary innovations in the present faltering technical 'management' of poverty by government through a credo of social inclusion, technical service provision and integrated planning. Effective assistance to such good fit resolution of local collective action blockages, is only possible if the nature of the problem has been well understood and the donor has built up the flexibility, learning capacity and intellectual modesty to undertake such a task successfully (Booth 2012). He proposes therefore to focus on three generic intermediate factors that help to explain most local collective action blockages. These three factors are policy-driven institutional incoherence; weak top-down performance discipline; and an inhospitable environment for local problem-solving. Policy-driven institutional incoherencies or policy incoherencies cause unclarity in the rules-in-use in the local provision of public goods. They result from ill-defined mandates, overlapping jurisdictions, and contradictions between or incomplete implementation of policies (Booth 2012). A second factor is the lack of central-level commitment, which does not only transpire in a lack of resources availed, but also in a lack of hierarchical discipline. Decentralised performance is found to be constrained when rules are not clearly laid down or enforced, or essential tasks not executed and left without consequences. And finally, when no longer-standing institutional arrangements for successful problem-solving locally exist, the provision of local public goods tends to suffer. As much as Booth's (2012) three generic factors provide guidance as to which dimensions to focus on for more genuine local collective action problem-solving, they do not take away the fundamental institutional and operational constraints for donors to 'think and work politically' more transparently, inclusively and iteratively. In what follows, we will concentrate on one possible strategy to overcome collective

action problems - brokerage -, that receives renewed attention and promotion among scholars and donors (Booth 2012; Paulo and Klingebiel 2016; Sharma 2016; Hönke and Müller 2018).

2.8 Conclusion

The mainstream paradigm of aid-to-decentralisation of the past decades assumes that decentralisation leads to improvements in efficiency in local service delivery, governance and social and economic development. It has thus provided a rationale for ODA to support public sector decentralisation reforms in developing countries. However, such ODA support engenders, in principle, additional cross-scale and -level interactions and related scale challenges. ODA guidelines plead therefore for donors to adopt a range of varied, adapted and 'more politically aware approaches', which require a more profound analysis of the local context, a better coordination among the various (inter)national actors, and a longer-term commitment. The extent to which donors have, for instance, been able to commit to 'think and work politically' (TWP) in practice, by being more analytical about what is politically feasible and technically appropriate, displaying an ability to work more flexibly and adaptively, and to actively intervene in support of social forces of reform, has however fallen short thus far. This is not surprising, given the multitude of complex collective action problems encountered in the day-to-day ODA engagement. Unlike the mainstream principal-agent perspective, Booth's (2011 and 2012) proposal to analyse effective ODA as supporting ownership-as-an-outcome through the resolution of a mesh of (local) collective action blockages to which donors themselves contribute, allows to frame the highlighted complexity in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus better. But how then are external actors and their frameworks expected to distinguish between and deal with the variety and multiplicity of context-specific blockages and resolution mechanisms of local collective action? Which strategies, approaches, methodologies and tools can donor agencies use to contribute and support such variety and particularity of localised mechanisms of 'good fit' systematically? Growing attention is being drawn in the aid literature to the possible role of donors as brokers in varied and particular mechanisms of managing development (Paulo and Klingebiel 2016; Sharma 2016; Dasandi et al. 2019). In the next chapter, we will apply and elaborate the concept of brokerage to the aid-to-decentralisation plexus discussion from the point of view of resolution of a mesh of (local) collective action blockages, as proposed by Booth (2011 and 2012).

Chapter 3 The aid-to-decentralisation plexus through a social network analysis lens

3.1 Introduction

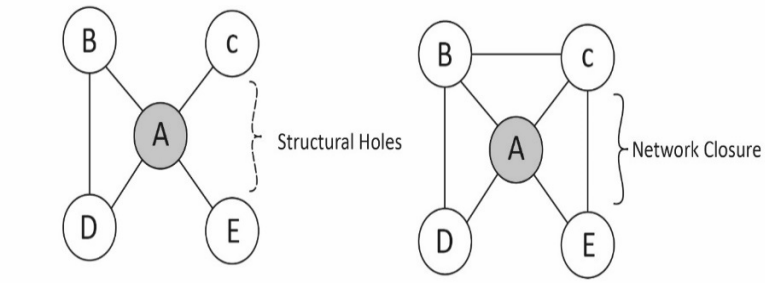
In this chapter, we attempt to take Booth's (2011 and 2012) proposal further to analyse more effective ODA as supporting ownership-as-an-outcome through the resolution of a mesh of local collective action problems and to which donors themselves contribute. Such collective action blockages can be expected to leave gaps in the aid-to decentralisation plexus. Building further on the facilitating, entrepreneurial or brokerage role donors may play in Booth's view (2011 and 2012; Faustina and Booth 2014), we will draw on social network analysis and explore the specific potential of donor brokerage conceptually in this chapter, and empirically in the following chapters.

3.2 Social network analysis and holes in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus

We have described the aid-to-decentralisation plexus as enmeshed by multiple and diverse collective action problems up- and downstream. Such collective action problems can - for instance because of weak coordination, disagreement, unequal distribution or defection - block the connection and flow of resources in the dynamic central-local relationship. These blockages may thus leave structural and institutional gaps or so-called 'spaces in between' in the aid-to decentralisation plexus (Sharma 2016). The theory of social networks refers to behaviour of third parties to overcome gaps or spaces between network units that are not directly linked, as brokerage (Marin and Wellman 2010). A social network is a set of units or nodes, connected by one or more relations. These nodes are most commonly persons or organizations, but in principle any units that can be connected to other units, can be studied as nodes. The current organisational literature on social networks and brokerage typically understands brokerage as involving a triad of three nodes, where a broker (*Ego*) has a tie to two other nodes (*Alters*) who are not tied to one another; hence the term 'open' triad (see Figure 6). In the case of so-called non-redundant contacts, the lack of a direct tie between units in a network is coined a 'structural hole' (Burt 1992). Those structural holes are network gaps between players which create entrepreneurial opportunities for information access and control. Burt (1992, 2000 and 2004) suggests that brokers who stand between unconnected others (*Alters*) can benefit not only from channelling information or resources between the *Alters*, but also from the novel information that such a disjoint structure affords, as well as from the control it offers the broker to leverage disconnected actors against each other. Burt (1992 and

2004) argues therefore that the social capital of brokerage lies in advantageous information access and control.

Figure 6: Structural network holes and network closure



Source: Rusdianto Berto and Sudjono Sunarwinadi 2019

People whose networks bridge structural holes between groups, are able to detect and develop rewarding opportunities across groups earlier and more broadly. Because of this alternative 'vision advantage', people who stand near the holes in a social structure are more predisposed to have 'good ideas' (Burt 1992, 2000 and 2004). Detailing brokerage further in terms of two leading network features, namely network closure and structural holes, Burt (2000) describes three different types of networks. A first type, clique networks, are small, dense, non-hierarchical networks, and usually associated with leisure activities. They are strong in support social capital, but weak in leverage social capital and managerial performance. Support capital is constituted of relations between people who are socially similar, and serves mainly the emotional stabilisation of individuals. The term leverage capital applies where social capital is intentionally used as an instrumental resource to achieve a certain end. The information and control benefits of structural holes that constitute leverage social capital, lie in two network directions away from a clique. One way to build social capital is to span structural holes in large, sparse, non-hierarchical networks that are rich in opportunities to broker connections across such holes. The alternative is to borrow social capital by linking with a central contact, around which a large, sparse hierarchical network is anchored. In this case, the outsider borrows from an insider the network through which connections are then brokered. In the latter case, although brokerage across structural holes is the source of added value, closure is critical to realising the value buried in the holes. In both cases, brokerage of connections between contacts for mere leverage may however be relatively time- and resource-bound. Since one of the main reasons to keep up relations that serve instrumental interests is the flow of scarce resources, once the same resources can be obtained for a lower commitment, the former relation may break up. The transfer and substitution of leverage capital seems therefore less

cumbersome than in the case of support capital (Burt 2000; Täube 2004). This is a distinction which may be useful for donors, when determining within the confines of their own political arena, the ultimate objectives of their support to decentralisation from a more technical efficiency and effectiveness (leverage capital) versus a more human-centred inclusive participation or governance (support capital) point of view.

Increasingly, the role of ODA donors and especially their implementing agencies is indeed being reframed from implementing or managing agents to supporting brokers or acting themselves as such (Paulo and Klingebiel 2016; Sharma 2016). Sharma (2016) argues for the importance of intermediaries due to the complexity of aid management in general, and of aid to decentralisation in particular, as follows:

> *"Development practice is a product of this complex transnational apparatus with an assortment of interests, expertise, technologies and disciplines, and flows of people, ideas and resources. This arrangement is not by design but must be produced and constructed through the everyday practices and discourses of development work. The meaning and effects of these networks depend on the institutional forms they take. […] The world of international development and foreign aid operate between global policies and ideas on the one hand, and local realities on the other. As a global enterprise, it mobilises universalising tools, instruments, expertise and professionals that cut across different political and cultural contexts while also responding to local socio-cultural and political specificities. To manage this, foreign aid and international development operates through intermediaries of different types: multi-lateral and international organisations, NGOs, research, training and educational institutions, central and local governments, consultants and private sector*."

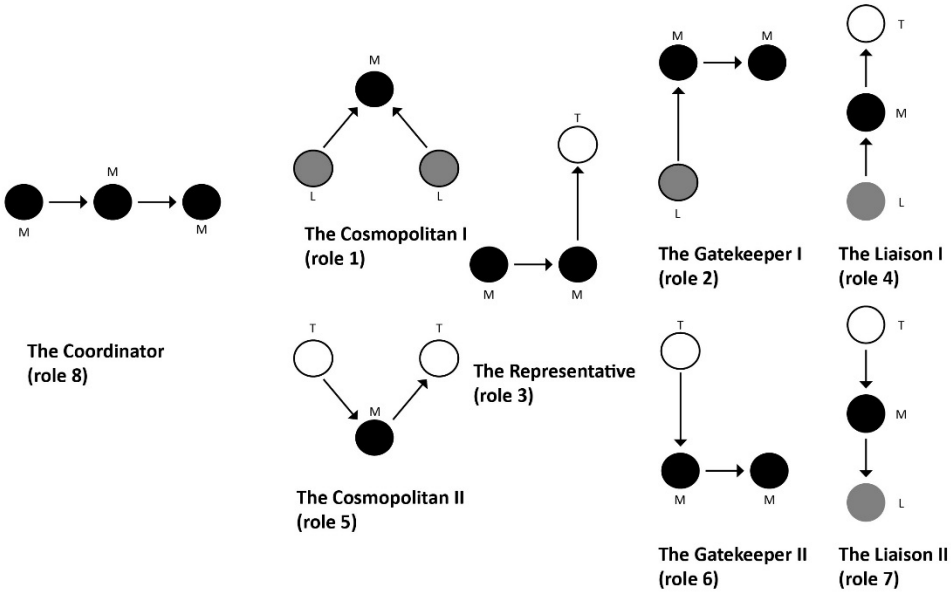
This sizes up as far less realistic the ambition of donors to be direct external agents of change, who in Caldwell's (2003) understanding are "responsible for initiating, sponsoring, directing, managing or implementing a specific change initiative, project or complete change programme". And this applies especially to donors' aid management agencies, acting on behalf of development policy makers as principals (Waeterloos and Renard 2013). Aid management agencies may in that sense be compared to middle managers in hierarchical organisations. Connecting the organisation's strategic and operational levels as middle manager requires more engagement than merely acting out senior orders; it requires mediation, negotiation, and interpretation in the spaces in between. Middle managers do in that sense not only implement a deliberate strategy, but they also need to gather and synthesise information, facilitate adaptability and champion innovative ideas. They are rather to

be considered as intermediaries than agents or implementers of change (Balogun 2003; Shi, Markoczy and Dess 2009).

3.3 A refined typology of brokerage

Shi, Markoczy and Dess (2009) refined a typology of middle manager-brokerage, originally designed by Gould and Fernandez' in 1989, which distinguishes five types of brokerage roles on the basis of affiliation and network structure. First, a middle manager can intermediate between two peers in a purely intra-group triad relation (Coordinator). Secondly, the middle manager may connect two parties who belong to the same subgroup which differs from that of the middle manager (Cosmopolitan). In the Representative broker role, a middle manager can delegate one of his or her peer managers to communicate with outsiders, for instance top managers. Fourth, the middle manager can act as a Gatekeeper for his or her peer managers (group) and pass on the information from higher- or lower-positioned managers. When none of the three members in a triad belong to the same group, the middle manager (M) acts as a Liaison between the lower- (L) and higher-level (H) managers. To capture the distinct dynamics involved in some of the brokerage types which intermediate between different subgroups, Shi, Markoczy and Dess (2009) develop subtypes. For instance, the Cosmopolitan or Gatekeeper's role can differ when dealing with lower-level as opposed to top managers. The different directions of information flow - top-down or bottom-up - may equally determine the quality of the brokerage. Therefore, subtypes I and II are distinguished in the Cosmopolitan, Gatekeeper and Liaison types (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Brokerage roles of middle managers

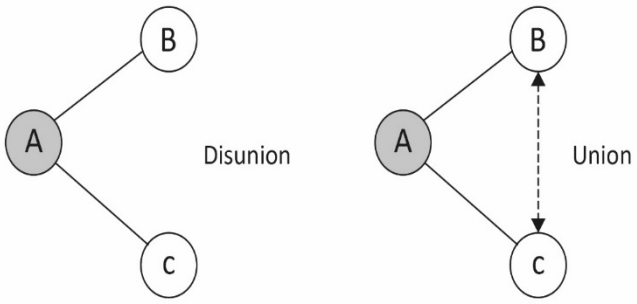


Note: dark refers to middle managers (M), grey to low-level (L) and white to top-level managers (T).

Source: Shi, Markoczy and Dess 2009

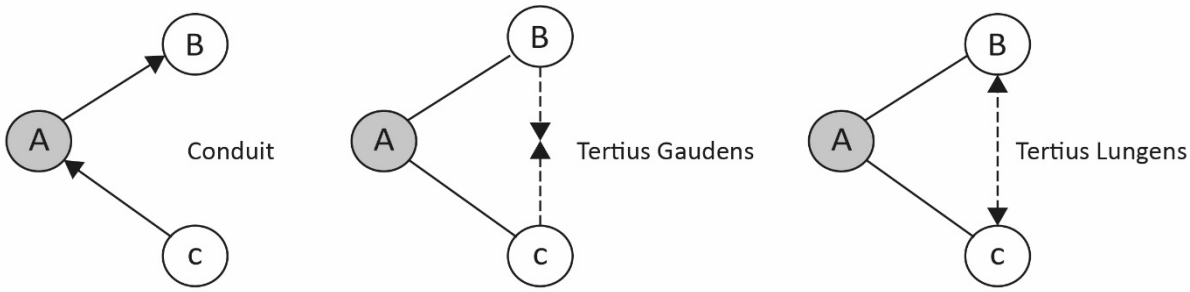
Furthermore, in Gould and Fernandez's original typology, no conceptual attention is paid to the intermediating effect of directly connecting the *Alters*. Broadly speaking, three mechanisms of brokerage can be distinguished: conduit or transfer brokerage, in which the broker (*Ego*) only conducts information or other resources in a one-way direction from one *Alter* to another without any further follow-up or feedback; matchmaking, union or *Tertius Iungens* brokerage, in which *Ego* introduces or makes possible a tie from one *Alter* to another; and coordination, disunion or *Tertius Gaudens* brokerage, in which *Ego* directs *Alters'* actions so as to resolve their interdependencies without direct contact (see Figure 8 and 9) (Obstfeld 2005).

Figure 8: Disunion (Tertius Gaudens) and Union (Tertius Iungens) brokerage



Source: Rusdianto Berto and Sudjono Sunarwinadi 2019

Figure 9: Conduit, *Tertius Gaudens* and *Tertius Iungens* brokerage



Source: Rusdianto Berto and Sudjono Sunarwinadi 2019

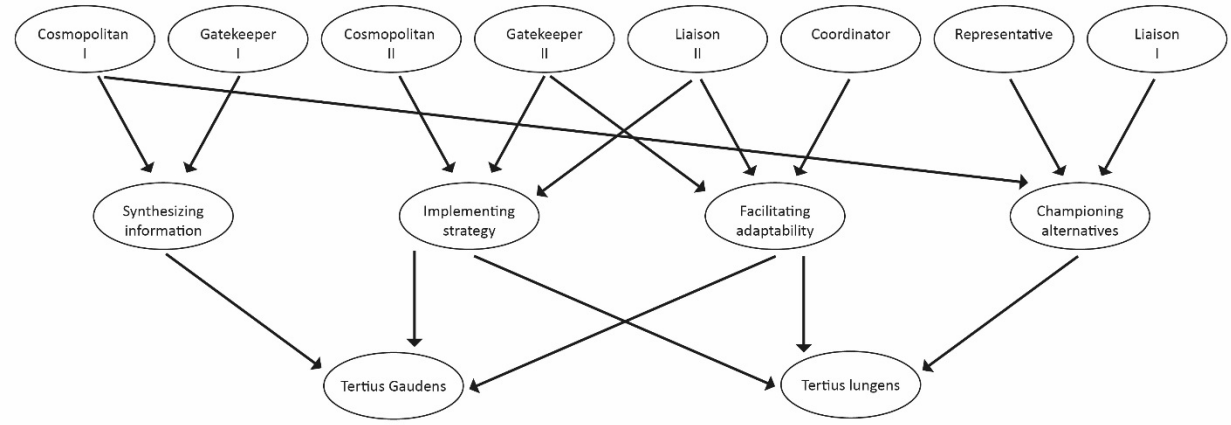
Brokerage may actually take four strategic forms: (1) coordinate between distant parties who have no immediate prospect for direct introduction or connection; (2) actively maintain and exploit the separation between parties; (3) introduce new or facilitate pre-existing ties between parties such that the coordinative role of the broker recedes in importance; and (4) introduce or facilitate interaction between parties while maintaining an essential coordinative role over time (Obstfeld 2005). In the first two strategies, separation is maintained. In the latter two, direct interaction between distant parties is envisaged or achieved. In a triad, the strategy of separation to the benefit of the broker reflects the *Tertius Gaudens* principle. Originally used by Simmel to categorise non-

partisan mediators[1], it has also been extended to cover actors actively manipulating and exploiting the distance between two parties to their own benefit. It is in general an entrepreneurial strategy of bridging through disunion. A T*ertius Iungens* or binding strategy on the other hand, emphasises creating or facilitating ties or union among the three parties in the triad (Obstfeld 2005). Brokers may be more interested in facilitating direct transactions between two disconnected alters than in continued mediation. This does not exclude that buffering rather than connecting, managing information rather than transferring, matching meanings rather than translating them, and maintaining interests rather than transforming them, may be equally effective strategies of brokering change, albeit by maintaining disunion and separation (Kellogg 2014). From their side however, disconnected alters may counter the broker's *Tertius Gaudens* move and enter into specific direct ties to block this attempted value appropriation. Therefore, the eventual benefit realised by a *Tertius Gaudens* strategy depends on whether the broker truly intends to or is able to bridge structural holes, as well as whether the alters are able to out-manoeuvre the broker by setting up a linkage themselves (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014).

The conceptual model eventually developed by Shi, Markoczy and Dess (2009) emphasises first the hierarchical group affiliation of the broker as a context variable, which shapes the intention and ability of brokers to span structural holes, and possibly the intentions of *Alters* to counter the broker. These hierarchy-based brokerage roles are subsequently linked to the typical strategic activities of middle management - implement deliberate strategy, gather and synthesise information, facilitate adaptability, and champion innovative ideas. Each strategic activity has distinctive features in information flow and control returns, calling for distinct binding or bridging strategies. Synthesising information and championing new ideas, for instance, require middle managers to communicate upward to top managers directly. Implementing top management's strategy and facilitating adaptability suppose a downward formal or informal information flow control by middle managers to subordinates. The model is thus further refined to explain how the strategic activities of different types of brokers eventually conduce to *Tertius Gaudens* or *Iungens* triads. Figure 10 brings the various brokerage roles and strategic activities together to map out distinct pathways towards strategic G*audens* or *Iungens* brokerage outcomes. The authors assert on the basis of their literature review that, in general, championing of alternatives and facilitating adaptability tend to imply *Iungens* rather than *Gaudens* strategies.

[1]The truly non-partisan third party, however, is represented by the 'tertium numen', which safeguards the collectivity's well-being and stability in a truly altruistic rather than self-interested manner. Often, like in the case of traditional leadership or courts, a religious dimension is included in fulfilling this function of intermediation for the collective good (Bailey 1978).

Figure 10: Brokerage roles, management strategies and outcomes



Source: Shi, Markoczy and Dess 2009

In a more recent co-authored contribution, Obstfeld distinguishes further between structural network features, the use of opportunities for brokerage and actual brokerage behaviour proper (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014). The first distinction, the existence of structural patterns of network closure and holes, where Burt and others locate brokerage, serves to point out that brokerage between non-connected nodes can occur in a wide variety of structural contexts, even in closer and more dense networks. This distinction also leads to further distinctions between opportunities, motivations and actual behaviour of brokerage. Even when a given structural pattern provides space for brokerage, the range of opportunities and the intent and intensity of brokering may vary. Opportunity refers to the relative availability of complementary actors and resources. Often, these opportunities are a recombination of resources that are not strictly and definitely determined by structure. The broker's intent, on the other hand, consists of short- or long-term, individual or collective objectives. However, it is the actual brokerage behaviour that leads to conduit, *Tertius Gaudens* or *Tertius Iungens* outcomes. In other words, social network structures affect the ways brokers do their brokering, but do not define it. To capture these social processes that occur within a social network but are not fully determined by it, Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014) propose an updated definition of brokerage. For that purpose, they start off from Marsden's 1982 definition of brokerage as a "mechanism by which intermediary actors facilitate transactions between other actors, who lack access or trust in one another". They propose to adapt this definition as "behavio[u]r by which an actor influences, manages, or facilitates interactions between

other actors". The definition is broader in generalising transactions to interactions, and does not limit brokerage to the complete absence of ties between two alters. Lastly, it adds the action of influencing and managing to denote a broader range of activities involved in brokerage, which, given the intrinsic political dimension of decentralisation, may in this context be forthright political. As the term transactions suggests an emphasis on exchanges, the term interactions allows the inclusion of less rationally motivated brokerage activities, such as mere information sharing by a third node between two alters (conduit brokerage), or introducing two little-connected alters to talk about a possible collaboration, efforts to disconnect two alters (*Tertius Gaudens*), or even activities involving conflict resolution. These are all activities not necessarily associated with transactions. Finally, transactions also suggest discrete events in time, whereas brokerage may take place continuously over a longer period of time.

It is for this reason that Spiro, Acton and Butts (2013) expand on brokerage from a dynamic perspective. The traditional view of brokerage is one of activities occurring in a static network structure, fixed over the time of interaction. Yet, sequential brokerage by *Ego* between for instance *Alter* A and B, followed by a brokerage *Alter* B and C, may eventually result in a brokerage by *Ego* between *Alter* A and C. Such dynamic evolution is missed in a static view of brokerage opportunities based on network structure at a fixed moment in time. Meehan and Plonski (2017) argue, for instance, that brokerage embodies more a temporary fix than a solid, long-term solution, because of its resolution of specific moments and spaces of interstitial network failure, its non-formal character, and its intrinsic power tensions. The brokerage fix is therefore unstable and generates new challenges and tensions that continuously require new types of fixes. Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014) also drop, on the other hand, the term intermediary, because it implies incorrectly that the two parties with whom the broker engages do not have any tie – not even a weak one - with each other. This simplified and broadened definition makes the distinction between structure and process of brokerage clearer. However, while helping in revamping the flow of information, knowledge, resources or services across gaps, brokers straddle a thin line between easing or worsening relationships. Brokers may for instance stimulate clientelism and worsen inequalities by unilaterally accumulating political, economic, social and cultural capital (Sharma 20016). This means that brokering can exacerbate instead of resolve local collective action problems blockages.

3.4 The re-emergence of brokers in development management theory

Brokers and brokerage have been analysed in different ways in academic scholarship (Meehan and Plonski 2017). Political science has to some extent adopted an actor-centred rationalist approach, where each actor is assumed to explicitly weigh the costs and benefits upon entering in a brokerage relation. This approach has been unsystematically used in the study of party politics, clientelism and patronage. Anthropological studies, on the other hand, have devoted much more work to elaborate a conceptual and empirical body of knowledge on brokerage. Early anthropological work on brokers in development management was concerned with modernisation and nation-building in the context of decolonialisation. It studied for instance how African chiefs or traditional healers engaged with and translated respectively 'modern' national-level politics and western medicine. It considered the broker thus as a necessary but temporary actor, who would disappear with the rise of modern rationality and development. Following the decline of modernisation theory from the late 1970s onwards, brokerage disappeared as a focal concept of anthropology. However, the broker reappeared in recent studies of development and development management. The renewed interest in brokerage emanated from four interlinked factors: 1) renewed critical engagement with the state and an increased interest in informal governance; 2) the decentralisation of aid amid the weakening legitimacy of the state as an agent for development; 3) increased deregulation and liberalisation under neoliberalism, generating new interest in how power is mobilised; and 4) concerns regarding the fragmentation of political authority in the post-Cold War era and the resurgence of non-state armed actors (Meehan and Plonski 2017).

An alternative actor-oriented approach, which Hönke and Müller (2018) call 'interactionalist', set out to understand the role of local partners, fixers and translators that international NGOs, bilateral donors and foundations increasingly use in the implementation of aid projects (Mosse and Lewis 2006). This approach sees brokers as intermediaries, operating at the interfaces of different world views and systems of knowledge, negotiating roles, relationships and representations (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Mosse and Lewis 2006). In their view, the broker must promote technical-scientific knowledge and present this locally as superior to popular knowledge, while simultaneously creating a balance between both types of knowledge. Thus, even as these intermediaries can be seen as representative of the people and communities where they work and whose voices they understand, they can be also seen as (sub)contractors who implement policies and programmes on behalf of external agents and donors (Watkins, Swidler and Hannan 2012). It is in this line that Paulo and Klingebiel (2016) advance a strategy of so-called 'orchestration' to address collective action problems in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Orchestration is in their

view a mode of governance by which one actor - the orchestrator- works through a second actor - the intermediary or broker-, to govern a third actor - the target. The orchestrators have no direct hierarchical or principal-agent relationships with the intermediaries. They only use soft facilitative measures to deal, through intermediaries, with collective action problems among the different local sectoral actors in the network. Replacing especially bilateral ODA in Middle Income Countries (MICs) with such an alternative type of cooperation would, according to the authors, enable a more comprehensive approach to sustainable development at the interface of domestic and global challenges. However, 'interactionalist' approaches are criticised for assuming relatively stable actor constellations and fixed development policies and practices. They suggest, in our opinion incorrectly, the existence of clear-cut systems instead of the much more messy and complex strategies, exchanges and translation processes that characterise trans- and international governance. Yet, there is a uniformity in governance models brokered across divergent contexts and practices, which cannot only be explained by how individual actors broker strategically (Hönke and Müller 2018).

It is therefore that another, so-called relational approach stresses the very creation and mediation of meaning and belonging through brokerage, instead of viewing brokers as strategic utility-maximising actors that build bridges between fixed social groups (Hönke and Müller 2018). Drawing on actor network theory, scholars in this tradition analyse how inter- and transnational projects generate and translate interests through assemblages in order to sustain these interpretations, thus converging towards institutional isomorphism. Assemblage is the flexible, contingent, and continuous pulling together of parts from different frameworks and ordering them. Mosse (2004) argues for instance that the coherence of a development programme is performed through political acts of interpretation and composition by heterogeneous actors. Brokers are then seen as connective agents who actively bring together the different elements of the development assemblages. The point of interest here is no longer the (un)successful diffusion and implementation of policy, but rather how norms, policies and practices are co-created and transformed (Mosse and Lewis 2006; Koster and van Leynseele 2018). Studying development assistance through such a lens can provide intricate insights into its operations and effectiveness as a complex set of local, national, international and cross-cultural interactions, involving a diverse range of actors such as the state, civil society, international institutions, activists and professionals (Mosse and Lewis 2006). This relational, so-called ethnography of development assistance - or 'aid-nography' approach (Knowles Morrison 2010)-, is however criticised for its emphasis on detailed modes of action rather than on structural questions of power and authority, as well as for limiting its focus on the lower or receiving end of the so-called aid chain (Hönke and Müller 2018). As discussed above, Booth's (2011 and 2012) alternative proposal to analyse the effectiveness of ODA in supporting owned, 'good fit'

solutions to resolve collective action blockages, apportions a significant potential added value to donor agencies in brokering as third party. This requires a better understanding of the local contexts, donors' and recipients' priorities, as well as the range and particularities of collective action problems to be encountered. Booth's proposed approach dovetails thus with a relational take on brokerage and how, in a complex set of local, national, international interactions, collective action problems can be overcome by co-creating norms, policies and practices and transforming them into enhanced ownership of development strategies.

It is for our further discussion on the possible role of donors as brokers, of interest to detail three analytically different yet often interconnected relational practices in brokerage: translation, coordination, and alignment (Hönke and Müller 2018). Translation is about how different perspectives and practices of knowing and ordering the world are mediated by brokers. Coordination, on the other hand, refers to the strategic effort by brokers to coordinate activities and actors in such way as to enhance their power and standing. Brokers can coordinate through hierarchical mechanisms, such as coercion, or through non-hierarchical mechanisms, such as negotiation or collaboration. The third possible practice, alignment, refers to the bridging of (conflicting) interests through which the actors are brought 'in line'. This requires coordination of perspectives and actions, and can therefore be seen as analytically separate from, yet empirically integrated with coordination. And, like the latter, it can be achieved through hierarchical or non-hierarchical mechanisms (Hönke and Müller 2018). In the practices of coordination and alignment, the selection of a boundary object can be a strategic act (Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard 2010). Boundary objects are artefacts that connect and stabilise different interests into temporary working relationships, without necessarily fusing consensus. Boundary objects permit an actor's individual understanding and aspiration to be reframed in the context of a wider (self-interested) collective undertaking. As the work progresses, these temporary understandings and agreements are subject to negotiation and re-negotiation, as new ideas generate and new accommodations are made during the different interactions. Such objects are often technologies, but also formal project proposals, sets of rules such as articles of association, or informational documents such as monitoring reports (Cash et al. 2006; Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard 2010).

3.5 Conclusion

In this last chapter of our first conceptual part, we have applied a social network analysis lens to Booth's (2012) approach to ODA as 'more politically aware' assistance to overcome multiple and

diverse collective action blockages in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. In social network analysis, structural holes between non- or lowly-connected actors are assumed to create opportunities for brokerage. The multiple and diverse collective action blockages in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus, can be understood to leave such holes in the central-local relationship across the political, fiscal and administrative scales. Booth (2011 and 2012; Faustina and Booth 2014) emphasises that donors may have a facilitating, entrepreneurial or brokerage role to play in these 'spaces in between'. With the conceptual understanding developed here and the (re-)emergence in the aid literature of the possible role of (donors as) brokers, we undertake to further explore and apply the concept of brokerage to such reframing of the role of ODA donors and their implementing agencies to be more particular. Although characterised by different meanings and uses, a common feature is that brokers have an ability to use opportunities to network across social divides. This allows them varying degrees of autonomy, agency and power to transfer, facilitate, filter and keep in check access to information, knowledge, resources and power. By adopting the broader definition of brokerage whereby one actor influences, manages, or facilitates interactions between other actors, a differentiation can be made between the network structure in which can be brokered, the specific opportunities grasped, and the actual brokerage outcomes. The intent with which brokers actually engage in brokerage explains the opportunities eventually taken, as well as the effort displayed in brokerage behaviour towards conduit, *Tertius Gaudens* or *Iungens*.

By applying the perspective of multiple collective action blockages through a lens of social network analysis, we conclude that, conceptually, ODA can justify its role as broker between non- or weakly-connect nodes in the dynamic relations of decentralisation. Decentralisation being a process of political change, implies that 'more politically aware' ODA approaches to brokerage are required. We are, however, still to determine what this brokerage may actually consist of. And how such an approach can be systematised? In the following empirical part of this dissertation, we will apply this perspective to problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration in agrarian reform in South Africa, which we identified in our previous research. In applying this perspective to these previously identified problems, we verify whether there is a potential role for brokerage to be played by donor agencies in these specific situations, and how this may be expected to look like. We will analyse the identified blockages as holes in South Africa's official agrarian reform endeavour comprising decentralisation, integrated rural development and land reform, and identify which needs and opportunities for brokerage and TWP may exist for ODA. As discussed above, Booth's take on effective ODA to decentralisation (2011 and 2012), aims to understand how, in a complex set of local, national, and international interactions, collective action problems can be overcome by co-creating norms, policies and practices, and transforming them into enhanced ownership of

development strategies. The formulation of brokerage opportunities in the following part, is inspired by the official ODA recommendations discussed in chapter 2. These official recommendations pertaining to governance, fiscal implementation, and management of decentralisation policies, comprise support options that may be technically, but also politically inclined (OECD 2019). The choice of donors between these support options, is not only influenced by the specific context in which such 'more politically aware' assistance may be warranted; it is also influenced by the various interests of 'principals' and 'agents' in their own upstream political arena (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Booth 2012; Winters 2012). The empirical scrutiny of the conceptual understanding developed here will, however, be confined to an *ex ante* assessment of likely and justifiable donor agency brokerage behaviour. This behaviour will be primordially assessed based on the officially recommended improvements in ODA to decentralisation, as no empirical material is available on other considerations or motives actually prevailing in such scenarios. The systematic *ex ante* assessment of various previously identified problematic areas in building an integrated and inclusive rural economy in South Africa through state-led agrarian reform, should allow us to conclude with possible recommendations for a more systematic and politically aware approach to this role of donors in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus.

PART 2:

REVIEWING PREVIOUS ANALYSES THROUGH A DONOR BROKERAGE LENS

Chapter 4 Donor brokerage and its potential in South Africa's agrarian reform programme

4.1 Introduction

In this second part, which forms the empirical centrepiece of the dissertation, we apply the above-developed conceptual perspective on donor brokerage to problems of policy coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration in agrarian reform in South Africa, which we identified in our previous research work. We will analyse in three of our previous studies, which cover especially the period 2011 to 2019, the highlighted blockages as structural or institutional holes in South Africa's official endeavour of agrarian reform through decentralisation, integrated rural development and land reform, and identify *ex ante* which opportunities for brokerage may exist for ODA donor agencies. The identification and formulation of such brokerage opportunities is based on the official recommendations on ODA to decentralisation from the OECD and EU, discussed in Chapter 2, and on the assumption that these will effectively inspire and motivate donors' orientation and articulation of assistance. Such *ex ante* assessment of possibilities to overcome problems in building an integrated and inclusive rural economy in South Africa through donor brokerage, aims to eventually provide potential pointers for a more systematic approach to such a role for donors in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus.

First, we provide a summary contextualisation of South Africa's official endeavour of agrarian reform through decentralisation, integrated rural development and land reform, with a focus on the period 2011 to 2019. This is then followed by an explanation of how our previous studies during that period form the empirical part of the dissertation at hand, and how each one of them will be reviewed through the lens of donor brokerage, as developed in Chapter 3. In the subsequent chapters, each of our previously written-up analyses of problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration will be reviewed through the methodology elaborated in this chapter. This is then followed by a conclusion on overall patterns in, and lessons following from, applying this perspective to the presented empirical material on collective action blockages in agrarian reform in South Africa.

4.2 South Africa in search of an integrated and inclusive rural economy

4.2.1 Efforts at integrating decentralisation, land reform and rural development

Contemporary South Africa cannot be discussed outside of the country's specific historical path of colonial dispossession and Apartheid segregation. Since the Natives Land Act of 1913 and up until the first post-Apartheid elections in 1994, black people were formally excluded from secure access to land. Fourteen million blacks gathered in the former Bantustans and reserves—occupying only 13 per cent of the country's area. The large majority of them engaged in small-scale or subsistence farming. Around 60,000 white farmers occupied 86 million hectares of privately owned land or seventy per cent of the country's total surface area. Most of the country's high potential arable land was in hands of white commercial farmers (Walker 2005). These commercial farms assured that in macro-economic terms, the country was largely food self-sufficient. This self-sufficiency was, however, characterised by agricultural surplus and export amidst food shortage, or what Kirsten and van Zyl (1998) describe as 'hunger and malnutrition next to the granary'. Post-Apartheid land reform policies begin with the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which saw land reform as 'the central and driving force of a programme of rural development' and set a specific target of redistributing 30 per cent of agricultural land by 1999 (GoSA 1994). The 1997 White Paper on South African Land Policy (GoSA 1997) elaborates, in addition to the redistribution pillar, a tenure reform and restitution pillar. Under the restitution pillar, rights in land are meant to be restored to people who can prove that they were dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913 due to racist laws or policies. Successful land claims can be settled with the return of (alternative) land, payment of cash or other forms of compensation. Tenure reform on the other hand has two distinct aspects: one deals with improving the security of tenure for those living on other people's land, primarily farm dwellers on commercial farms; another aims at providing legally secure tenure for people living on communal land, primarily in the former Bantustans. A national multi-stakeholder Land Summit was held in July 2005 in response to growing critiques on the slow and fragmented pace of land reform in South Africa. Government acknowledged that land transfer had been slow and that many agricultural settlement projects are of questionable quality and sustainability. These were blamed on deficiencies in policies as well as on the disjuncture between planning and implementation of land acquisition, transfer and support services to beneficiaries. The Summit took a stance in favour of re-affirming the redistribution target of 30% of white-owned agricultural land (by 2014); a well-resourced government land reform targeting disadvantaged beneficiaries; partnerships between government, business, labour and civil society with clear roles, responsibilities and mechanisms of

accountability; a comprehensive support package, as well as building the required institutions to provide support from local to national level (GoSA 2005).

With the persistent slow progress of land reform, official statistics have over the years accounted for both redistribution as well as restitution land transactions. Between 1994 and 2016, the redistribution pillar had clocked 4.8 million hectares, while the restitution pillar was responsible for the transfer or compensation of 3.4 million hectares at the end of 2016 (GoSA 2017; GoSA 2019). An analysis of official data subsequently published is far more difficult. Some information is not systematically published on government websites (e.g. Annual Reports 2018 and 2019 of Commission on Restitution of Land Rights). Other publications use incompatible units, such as for instance number of restitution claims, number of properties or actual hectarage, or imply the risk of double counting with previous statistics. For instance, in GoSA (2021), reference is made to newly produced lists of a number of properties of state land under claim - some settled, others not -, that were finally transferred to restitution beneficiaries. It is not clear which of these transfers were not yet or already included in the previous statistics on settled claims. Another example are the 107 thousand restitution hectares listed under the 2016-17 performance indicator for the distinct programme of land redistribution and reform (GoSA 2021b). Integrating these additional coarse data (GoSA 2021 and 2021b) into the overview at the end of 2016, amounts to an approximate update by the beginning of 2020 of slightly less than 5.2 million hectares counted under redistribution, and a maximum of 3.5 million hectares under restitution. This means that in official terms, only about 10 per cent of the 80 million hectares of previous 'white agricultural land' has been reallocated through the publicly funded land reform programmes, instead of the target of 30 per cent. Ownership of land in South Africa remains therefore highly skewed and concentrated. In 2009, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) was created as lead agency of faster agrarian transformation, defined as a 'rapid and fundamental change in the systems and patterns of ownership and control of land, livestock, cropping and community', with at its core 'repossession of lost land and restoring the centrality of indigenous culture' (GoSA 2010a). To give effect to this mandate, the DRDLR's Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009 sought to facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society (GoSA 2009). It was to deploy a three-pronged strategy of production and livelihoods support, land reform, and economic and social infrastructure development. Complexities and unique challenges of each rural space would be taken into account, and coordination and integration of service provision, which is the responsibility of various departments and tiers of government, would be maximised. Thus, vibrant and sustainable communities were envisaged that

would innovate, enhance traditional knowledge with new technologies, use natural resources productively and diversify their own livelihoods (GoSA 2010a and 2010b). South Africa's state-led programme thus not aims merely for land reform – shifts in the distribution of landed property rights -, but for agrarian reform, which refers to land and complementary socio-economic and political reforms such as rural development or decentralisation (Borras, Kay, and Akram-Lodhi 2007). In May 2010, the National Planning Commission (NPC) was installed to draft South Africa's first comprehensive national vision and development plan. It found that the country displays features of a low-growth, middle-income trapped economy, characterised by lack of competition, high unemployment, low savings and poor skills levels (GoSA 2011b). Failure to implement policies and absence of broad partnerships were seen to be the main reasons for the country's overall slow progress. Building on this diagnostic, the NPC formulated in 2012 the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP's ambition is to eliminate income poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The NDP pleads for an integrated and inclusive rural economy, in which communities participate more in the country's economic, social and political life. Land reform, job creation and agricultural production need to contribute to such an economy. The wide range of opportunities in rural areas require support strategies tailored to local conditions and improved coordination between the national, provincial and municipal government spheres of the country's decentralisation architecture (GoSA 2012b). It is especially the period since the preparatory analysis and formulation of the NDP in 2011 that will be the reference period for this dissertation (see further paragraph 4.4).

The South African Constitution of 1996 created a government structure with three distinct, interdependent and interrelated tiers: the national, provincial and local 'spheres' (GoSA 1996). Some functions of government fall exclusively within a single sphere, while others fall within the responsibility of more than one sphere. The national sphere of government is exclusively responsible for functions that affect the country's security and economic unity such as foreign affairs, defence, home affairs and land administration (GoSA 1996). In these domains, decentralisation is strictly limited to deconcentration. The national sphere also guides service delivery in the other spheres, for example broad education policies such as school curriculum or school admission age. In addition, national government has the task of monitoring and supporting the implementation of these policies by the more devolved provincial and municipal spheres, and to deal with issues arising in or between these lower tiers. The provincial sphere of government has the primary responsibility for public service delivery. These include for example health services and education, but also agriculture, water and environmental management. The sphere of municipal (Metro, District or Local) government is responsible for the delivery of basic services, such as water, electricity, and sanitation. The way in

which local development planning should find expression was set out in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The instrument of five-yearly Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) was introduced, which are supposed to consult and integrate various (non-)state actors and development interventions towards coordinated planning, budgeting and service delivery in a municipality. The Act is explicit on the obligation for the local community to be consulted on its development needs and to participate in the drafting of the IDP as are all relevant organs of state, including traditional authorities. The support, information sharing, engagement and coordination with provinces and national departments is assumed because of the provisions in the Constitution and legislation such as the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No. 13) of 2005 (SALGA 2007). In the realm of rural development and land reform, this complex intergovernmental relations system has resulted in a fragmentation of responsibilities and priorities, and hindered institutional interplay, coordination and accountability (Hall, Isaacs and Saruchera 2007; Siddle and Koelble 2012; GOSA 2011 and 2019). DRDLR was until June 2019, when it was renamed into Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), a national line department with a deconcentrated provincial and district-level presence. Other more devolved government spheres involved in land reform and rural development are for instance provincial departments of agriculture, economic development, or environmental and water resources, as well as District and the subordinate Local Municipalities (DM and LM). However, insufficient clarity about powers and functions of local government has led to municipalities being saddled with unfunded mandates in areas such as roads, water treatment and other infrastructure. And the local ability to deliver these services effectively varies, affecting especially the poorest and historically most marginalised areas (GoSA 2011; Siddle and Koelble 2012). In the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme for instance - the precursor of the CRDP which was specifically dedicated to improved coordination and integration -, municipal, provincial and national authorities continued to fail in aligning their planning and implementation. Despite a lack of technical capacity at municipal level, responsible provincial or national sector departments did for instance not share information or participate in municipal planning processes. Together with discrepancies in planning and budgeting cycles between the different government spheres, such non-cooperative disposition jeopardises the efficacy of the intergovernmental set-up for rural development (PSC 2009; Akpan 2011). Siddle and Koelble (2012) plead therefore for a revision of the ambitious intergovernmental framework, a simplified task allocation in function of actual local government capacity, and possibly the recentralisation of certain functions. The CRDP and especially the NDP explicitly express their hope in the build-up of a 'capable and developmental state' to improve government's performance and increase public confidence. This is a state which actively intervenes for benefits to accrue across society and builds consensus among various

sections of society around long-term national objectives (GoSA 2012b). Key characteristics of the envisaged capable and developmental state are sound and stable policies, leadership, skilled human resources, appropriate institutions, policy adherence and accountability.

4.2.2. Political economy of agrarian reform

The NDP emphasises that the state needs to regain its public confidence by reducing the gap between discourse and results on the ground (GoSA 2011b). The domain of agrarian reform is a case in point, the more since it is a contested conceptual and political arena globally, and even more so in the case of the economic scale and the racial-political sensitivity of land (re)distribution in South Africa (Adams 2000). Already in the early 2000s, a World Bank Working Paper pointed out that while there is a consensus that the high unequal land distribution in South Africa needs to be resolved, the debates continue unabated on the economic predominance of large over small farms, and on optimal land redistribution implementation mechanisms (van den Brink, Thomas, Binswanger, Bruce and Byamugisha 2006). These controversies spill over into the political and technical choice of beneficiaries (for instance subsistence- versus commercially oriented; land rights- versus land needs-based) and of preferred approaches to land acquisition (for instance compulsory versus market-assisted). Therefore, the World Bank Working Paper suggests that all stakeholders should 'agree to disagree ex ante on the optimal approach'. Rather than endlessly debating the pro's and con's of each particular approach, it advocates to create a policy arena in which the different stakeholders can demonstrate the relative performance of their particular models 'in competition with each other'. According to the authors "this makes sense not just from a technical, but also from a political perspective. […] Major land redistribution can be implemented peacefully: history need not repeat itself ad nauseam." (van den Brink, Thomas, Binswanger, Bruce and Byamugisha 2006). An elaborate review of the multiple academic perspectives on the complex political economy of agrarian reforms worldwide, and in South Africa in particular, falls out of the scope of this dissertation. Interested readers are referred to, for instance, Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2002), Borras (2003), Bernstein, (2004), Senders and Johnston (2004), Waeterloos and Rutherford (2004), Ntsebeza and Hall (2007), Bandeira and Sumpsi (2009), Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010 and 2010b), Borras and Franco (2010), Ferguson (2013), Hebinck and Cousins (2013), Cousins (2015), du Toit (2019) or Kirsten and Sihlobo (2021). We will briefly present our understanding of the political economy of agrarian reform in South Africa during the period under review in this dissertation, which is largely informed by the extensive work of researchers of the University of Western Cape's PLAAS, and concisely captured in Hall (2015), du Toit (2019), and especially Cousins (2015).

Cousins (2015) points out that the changes in the agrarian structure that have occurred since 1994, are not in the direction of the reduction of poverty and inequality as originally and formally envisaged by policy makers. Thus far, public land reform initiatives have only marginally altered South Africa's agrarian structure, with a relatively minor positive impact on the livelihoods of beneficiaries. There is some non-official evidence that only about 50 per cent of beneficiaries experienced some extent of improved livelihood; however, very few are engaged in highly successful production. While on the one hand, broader-based land reform has proceeded slowly and uncertainly, on the other hand a further concentration of agricultural production among a small, highly productive core of mostly white capitalist corporations has taken place. There are estimated to be less than 35,000 commercial farm units left, and the proportion of total turnover produced by the top 20 per cent is likely to be as high as 80 per cent (Cousins 2015). These farms have replied to severe competitive pressures in the agricultural sector through increasingly intensive management of farms as (agri-)businesses, specialisation into lucrative niche markets, mechanisation and technological innovation. At the other end of the spectrum, in the former bantustans, now known as communal areas, the agrarian structure has remained somewhat static. The great majority of households who make use of land for cropping, around 2.5 million, do so as main or extra food supply, mostly at a small scale in homestead gardens. Probably around a million of communal area households own larger livestock on the rangeland commons, but ownership is highly skewed, especially as far as cattle is concerned. A minority, around 250,000, sell their agricultural produce, predominantly through informal marketing arrangements. There are also a small number of 'emerging' black farmers located on private land (of which some has been transferred through land reform) and in communal areas who are primordially oriented towards (formal) market production. In the absence of survey data, Cousins (2015) estimates this category at a maximum of 10,000 farmers. South Africa's differentiated and skewed agrarian structure can then, according to Cousins, be tentatively summarised as follows (Table 2) :

Table 2: Agrarian structure of South Africa (2014)

Farmers	Numbers	Key features
Top 20 per cent of large-scale commercial farmers on private land (predominantly white)	7,000	Sophisticated, specialised, capital-intensive, producing for export or agro-processing and large retailers; produce perhaps as much as 80% of total sector's turnover
Medium- to large-scale commercial farmers on private land; almost all white	9,000	Some succeed, some struggle, some are unable to earn a living from farming alone
Small- to medium-scale commercial farmers on private land; mostly white, some black	19,000	Many cannot survive from farming alone; includes hobby farmers
Small- scale black capitalist farmers in communal areas and in land reform contexts	5,000 – 10,000	Many earn additional income from off-farm activities
Market-oriented black smallholder farmers in communal areas and land reform contexts, supplying tight value chains (e.g. under contract)	5,000 – 10,000	Many grow fresh produce under irrigation, others are livestock producers, and a few engage in dryland cropping
Market-oriented black smallholder farmers in communal areas and land reform contexts, supplying loose value chains (e.g. informal markets)	200,000-250,000	Many grow fresh produce under irrigation, and others are livestock producers. Few depend wholly on farming
Subsistence-oriented smallholder farmers (especially in communal areas) growing food for themselves, and selling occasionally	2-2.5 million	Most crop production takes place in homestead gardens; occasional livestock sales by some

Source: Cousins 2015

It follows from this depiction of a highly differentiated agrarian structure, that a thorough understanding and cognisance of underlying socio-economic dynamics and political interests is essential for the design and implementation of more effective policies and interventions. This has thus far not been entirely the case in South Africa's official land reform programme (Cousins 2015;

Hall 2015; du Toit 2019). There remains a profound disconnect between political discourse and the socio-economic aspects of agrarian reform policies and their implementation. This is for instance demonstrated by the persistent tiny public finance allocation, trending at less than one per cent of the national budget annually, as well as by the lack of a range of differentiated good fit-support strategies and programmes for the social and economic development of the different categories of beneficiaries (Cousins 2015). More generally, these shortcomings reflect a persisting limited capacity of the state in terms of vision, fiscal space, leadership, skills, systems, and procedures. Although policies express the ambition of land access for the previously disadvantaged black majority, their implementation proceeds explicitly with the selective promotion of commercial agricultural production instead of differentiated approaches to poverty reduction and socio-economic development of the heterogenous target group (Cousins 2015; Hall 2015). This actual bias toward commercial agricultural production diverges from and contradicts other (land) rights-based and socio-cultural policies such as the ones of restitution. Scoones et al. (2018) hint that the observed inconsistencies and contradictions in South Africa's agrarian policy design and implementation may create space for exclusion, elite capture, or even authoritarian populism. Authoritarian populism is seen as a process in which democratic institutions are used to centralise power and limit dissent on behalf of a purportedly disadvantaged and homogeneous 'majority' (see Waeterloos (2020) for a more elaborate framing and discussion).

A few legislative and policy initiatives developed during the period under review in this dissertation (2011-2019), can illustrate the concerns raised for particular traits of and evolutions in the political economy of South Africa's agrarian reform. The proposed Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill of 2017 purports to strive toward ensuring just and equitable distribution of agricultural land to Africans. It intends to establish a Land Commission that will manage a register of all private and public agricultural land, with information on land size and use, and owners' race, gender, and nationality. Foreign nationals will no longer be allowed to purchase agricultural land and can only engage in long-term leases. Since the 2006 Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), it is the state which buys and leases out land to beneficiaries. The subsequent 2013 and 2019 State Land Lease and Disposal Policy determines the conditions under which state and redistributed land can be accessed through a 30-year renewable lease by various categories of landless, subsistence-cum-marketing, medium-scale commercial black farmers and constrained large-scale or well established commercial black farmers. These categories - especially the latter three market-oriented ones - refer to the 2013 Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP) that has become the main vehicle for support to land reform beneficiaries. The RADP intends to support especially these three categories of emerging black farmers through financial assistance and the provision of training

and/or mentoring through strategic partnerships with commercial farming enterprises. In addition, the Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill of 2017 introduces ceilings in every district for private or leased agricultural land, to be determined by the state on the basis of land capability, current production output and turnover, farm viability or capital requirements. While intended to deliver just and equitable distribution of agricultural land, the unchecked use of information on gender, nationality, or race as well as of criteria to prescribe RADP support and land ceilings, may turn into powerful tools for exclusion, rent seeking and elite capture. This is confirmed by recent research on persistent clientelism, corruption and elite capture in land reform, involving state officials, better-off farmers and traditional leaders (Hall and Kepe 2017; Mtero, Gumede, and Ramantsima 2019). Another example lies in the complex domain of security of tenure in the previous homelands. The 2004 Communal Land Rights Act (CLRA) foresaw that traditional councils would represent the community as owner in land administration. This reinforced disputed chiefly power over communal land dwellers, some of whom had obtained title deeds in the past, and others who were organised in Communal Property Associations (CPA)s or trusts. This would enable traditional leaders to override family-controlled rights and participatory decision-making processes, possibly making way for elite capture through land sales and marginalisation of widowed and unmarried women. The CLRA was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2010, which found that the legislative process had been abridged and inadequate. The Communal Land Tenure Bill of 2017 was supposed to address these concerns, and is presently closed for public consultation while awaiting further governmental action. However, the consultation process has again been assessed by some as a mere tick-box exercise (Ramantsima 2022). The draft bill provides for the requirement of a majority consent before communal land is sold; for communities to choose an entity that will administer their land (traditional council, CPA or any other) and which may run under supervision of the then DRDLR; and for additional accountability structures such as a household forums or Communal Land Boards. Both are to consist of at least fifty percent women. However, the balance between individual land rights, chiefly power and state authority to determine access and use of land remains fragile and contestable. In the end, it is the Minister who decides on types of ownership, land use rights and institutions of governance in each and every communal area, and the community which sets the conditions under which individual land ownership rights are granted (Claassens 2015).

Reconfiguring the above-described skewed agrarian structure requires, therefore, a better understanding of its highly differentiated nature, underlying socio-economic dynamics and political interests that run against broader reform, as well as a more effective levelling of the class- and race-biased networks and institutions that shape access to land, finance, inputs, technology, expert

knowledge, water rights and markets. We tend to concur with Cousins (2015) that, in very broad terms, land redistribution and subdivision policies should especially target to transfer land from those mostly white small- to medium or medium- to large-scale commercial farmers on private land, who are running highly indebted farming operations and/or at suboptimal land use levels. The highly capitalised top 20 per cent that produce as high as 80 per cent of total turnover, could be left alone for a couple of decades, stabilising production for a growing urban population and export. Their contribution to agrarian reform could consist of providing training to land reform beneficiaries as well as improved working and living conditions for farm workers. The most obvious candidate beneficiaries of land redistribution - and the required financial, institutional and technical support -, are the 200,000 to 250,000 black smallholder farmers who, against all the odds, already produce crops and livestock for markets. These farmers have a clear potential to contribute to an increased and more labour intensive agricultural production and reinvestment into farming, or what Cousins (2015) calls 'accumulation from below'. At the same time, food and land tenure security for households and individuals in the communal areas should be equally prioritised, since these areas are of primordial importance for social reproduction of the black rural population. In brief, Cousins' model is premised on the recognition of the potential high productivity of smallholder farmers, but acknowledges in turn the differentiated and dynamic character of this broad category in terms of class, farming systems, skills,… This implies that there will eventually also be winners and losers among these proposed priority land reform beneficiaries, and not only among the present land owning classes. Such a model is economically and technically feasible, but requires a firm and coherent political shift away from the present *de facto* preferential orientation towards economic, social, and political rural elites – both modern and traditional (Cousins 2015; Hall 2015).

In conclusion, this brief review of the political economy of present and future agrarian reform in South Africa - intricately linked to a complex process of decentralisation as discussed in the paragraph above-, underscores the many different and differing dimensions, perspectives and interests that prevail among the various stakeholders, and the extent to which they have (not) been addressed in the present reform policies and programme implementation. The most relevant stakeholders for our further analyses in the realm of South Africa's agrarian reform through decentralisation, integrated rural development and land reform, can be generically described as the different categories of farmers tentatively defined by Cousins (2015) and their interest groups, as well as interfacing differential categories of rural dwellers (men, women, youth, pensioners, …), land reform beneficiaries (individual or collective; restitution, redistribution or tenure reform; various grant and support modalities), local private and civil society sector organisations, traditional leaders, and local and central government officials. These differential categories of stakeholders represent a

complex range of multiple interests that may be converging, colluding, diverging, or competing within the ambit of government's attempt at building an integrated and inclusive rural economy in partnership with all sectors of society and through improved coordination between the national, provincial and municipal government spheres (GoSA 2009 and 2012b). du Toit (2019) concludes, therefore, that an analysis of South Africa's political economy of agrarian reform involves much more than paying attention to different technical implementation instruments or competing proposals for South Africa's agrarian structure. In the arena of agrarian reform, stakeholders actually draw on very different visions *per se* of politics and South Africa's polity at large (du Toit 2019). How then can ODA donors position themselves in such an encumbered arena, replete with potential collective action problems, and where these social, economic and political complexities are often ignored, if not spurned, in the design and especially implementation of public policy?

4.2.3. Agrarian reform and Thinking and Working Politically (TWP)

It follows from the above that ODA to agrarian reform in South Africa can but take into account the social, economic and political complexity of this arena, if it intends to provide a real added value (Waeterloos and Cockburn 2017). Drawing on an early overview of various country studies, Adams (2000) points out that from the beginning, ODA to land reform in South Africa has been political and often contentious. This not only because ex-colonial donors such as the Netherlands or the United Kingdom - siding with other ODA donors from the EU-, promoted market-based land reform as an alternative to state-led nationalisation and expropriation, as for instance referred to in earlier ANC policies (Adams 2000). In his cross-country overview, which includes South Africa, Adams (2000) also brings out a general cyclical element in redistributive land reform policies. An initially strong political commitment to land redistribution is followed by greater caution as the opportunity costs and the organisational complexities become apparent. This may lead to a switch of emphasis to economic goals of agricultural production and productivity rather than the eradication of landlessness and poverty. The debates between proponents of large scale redistribution of land for poverty reduction versus those who advocate a more selective approach to raise agricultural production for economic growth, tend to align to this cycle. Adams (2000) relates the policy cycle to changes in the balance of influence of the landless lobby on the one hand, and that of landowners on the other. According to him, it are in general the landed elites that tend to obtain ascendancy over the medium to longer term. While these are clearly policy issues for the national government to decide, donors find it politically difficult to fund programmes that do not aim predominantly for poverty reduction. Other common issues in the review which point to the politically loaded character of ODA to land and

agrarian reform, are especially rights-related. Adams finds a noticeable reluctance across the countries reviewed to really engage in tenure reform. According to him, governments find it politically expedient to focus on land redistribution, especially where a small white majority still retains the bulk of the productive land. However, tenure insecurity predominantly affects poor people and especially women in rural areas (Adams 2000). In brief, ODA support to agrarian reform is intrinsically enmeshed in a political, social and economic reality, composed of multiple and different actors, interests and perspectives, and replete with potential collective action problems. It follows, as argued above, that to improve the effectiveness of such support, donors need to more systematically and openly 'Think and Work Politically' (TWP). As discussed in Chapter 2, TWP implies that donors are more analytical about what is politically feasible and technically appropriate, as well as about which response and support interventions (to whom) can bring about which envisaged change. An ability to work more flexibly and adaptively, and to actively intervene in support of social forces of reform is deemed critical (Teskey 2021).

However, the rifts found in South Africa between design of agrarian reform policies that promote the inclusion of multiple (non-)governmental stakeholders and the integration of various scales and levels of governance and the implementation thereof, illustrate, in our view, not only the need to take into account and engage with the social, economic and political complexity of this particular arena. The complexity of multiple actors, scales and levels also illustrates, as discussed in Chapter 2, the need to go beyond the confines of faltering principal-agent relations, and rather adopt one of multiple and diverse collective action problems. In our research contributions, included as empirical material in this dissertation (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016; Waeterloos and Cockburn 2017; Waeterloos 2020 and 2021), as well as in other seminar contributions and blogs (e.g. Waeterloos 2013, 2014a and b, 2015a and b, 2017; Waeterloos and Janssens 2014), we have indeed identified and analysed various challenges to policy coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration in the official policies and management of inclusive and integrated state-led land agrarian reform. In what follows, we will explore whether the above-elaborated brokerage perspective helps to further our understanding of development management issues related to these challenges in South Africa's state-led reform programme and the underlying collective action blockages. We revisit three of our original research contributions, which will first be briefly discussed by outlining the main research questions and findings. The research articles are included in annexure for those readers who prefer to access the full write-up. The order in which the studies are presented is informed by the specificity of the cases studied. Starting from a study of general issues of macro-level policy coherence in agrarian reform, the other two studies then cover in addition specific problems

embedded in the state-led promotion of integration, inclusion and collaboration in the design and implementation of the agrarian reform programme.

As hinted at in the introduction to this dissertation, applying a social network analysis lens to Booth's (2012) approach to ODA as assistance to broker in the local solutions to multiple collective action blockages in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus as elaborated in Chapter 2 and 3, revealed itself eventually as the most likely heuristic to engage further with our previous research and practice of aid management. By adopting the broader definition of brokerage, we deducted conceptually that ODA donors might justify their role as broker between non- or weakly-connected nodes in the dynamic relations of decentralisation. However, Booth (2011 and 2012) concludes that such brokerage can only be effective, if donors understand the nature of the problem well and are flexible, modest, and able to learn. We will therefore, from now on, zoom in on such potential and ability by ODA donors to facilitate localised change and resolution of collective action problems, by reviewing and reframing our previous research work on South Africa's encumbered agrarian reform programme through a brokerage lens. We have pointed out that, given the political economy of agrarian reform in South Africa, donors are bound to TWP more systematically and openly to improve the effectiveness of their ODA. We will in this empirical part of the dissertation, where relevant, also illustrate explicitly how donors may thus take up the TWP baton.

4.3 Three research contributions on challenges to coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration in South Africa's state-led agrarian reform

In a first article, Waeterloos and Janssens (2016) position South Africa's agrarian question within the debate between rights- and needs-based approaches to land reform and rural socio-economic transformation. The article highlights policy incoherencies in the envisaged - but (temporarily) aborted - new round of lodging of restitution to land rights claims of 2014, and signals points of attention to address blockages in reconciliation and inequalities in a more complementary and effective manner. The general concern raised is whether and under which circumstances the renewed emphasis on land rights-based restorative justice through the restitution programme will complement rather than compete with the land needs-based redistributive justice perspective of land redistribution and social and infrastructural rural development promoted since 2009. Contradictions loom especially where new claims may again cast a shadow of temporary uncertainty of land rights over the productive use and development of operating enterprises, including already redistributed ones. A careful assessment of such possible contradictions is required to make a firm

choice- where necessary - between rights and needs-based approaches to land reform and rural development. The significant but complex programme of restoring rights in land -sometimes dispossessed up to 100 years ago- must not jeopardize programmes of inclusive social and economic development based on needs for access to land of the past 20 odd years.

The authors propose that restitution agents should apply a very selective approach to restorative justice, and focus on the most pressing cases that require a fresh shot at reclaiming their land. The restitution programme should also strive toward more complementarity and coherence with the redistributive programmes of land reform and rural development. However, the actual capacity of the public administration to facilitate and manage these many challenges and ambitions effectively, is an area of serious concern. The same applies to sourcing finance for such a multi-pronged transformative exercise. Waeterloos and Janssens (2016) conclude therefore that the stalled reopening of the restitution programme deserves more strategic support from (inter)national stakeholders to further policy complementarity and coherence. A range of recommendations are formulated to that effect, with a specific focus on issues of coherence, inclusion and coordination in agrarian reform.

In a second empirical contribution, we interrogate South Africa's agrarian reform programme on it possibly displaying authoritarian populist characteristics (Waeterloos 2020). Such concerns are not surprising, given that the official land reform and rural development programmes set out on a trajectory of restoration of black majority's land rights from the historical exclusion and domination by a landed white elite. In our reading, concerns for authoritarian populism as a conscious political strategy do, for now, not square with the policies officially envisaging inclusive and participatory development through a state-led managerial approach. We describe South Africa's post-Apartheid public management approach as one characterised by 'majoritarian managerialism', as it is based on majoritarianism - the mandate given through and on behalf of an electoral majority -, and managerialism - technocratic interventions for and on behalf of the people. We used Booth's (2012) concept of policy-driven institutional incoherencies in the local provision of public goods, to frame the growing evidence of exclusion, corruption, and elite bias and capture. We traced such incoherencies in South Africa's agrarian reform in the domains of disjoint policy development, ineffective majoritarian managerialism in the implementation, and uncoordinated decentralisation. Two case studies from within local government provide an illustration of drivers of such incoherencies in the interstices of agrarian policy development, public sector management and decentralisation. The underlying local collective action problems demonstrate that in its centralised and majoritarian managerialist approach to agrarian reform, the state has continued to neglect investing in policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration. We understand

coordination in a public sector interorganisational context as “the instruments and mechanisms that aim to enhance the voluntary or forced alignment of tasks and efforts of organizations within the public sector” (Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest 2010). These mechanisms are used to create more coherence and fewer redundancies, lacunae and contradictions within and between policies, implementation or management. Coordination within and among public sector organisations thus covers a continuum from forced to voluntary alignment of tasks and efforts. Collaboration is, in turn, understood as a subtype of coordination at the voluntary pole of the continuum, in which autonomous actors interact and negotiate (in)formally and jointly create rules and structures which involve shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions (Thompson and Perry 2006). We conclude that Booth’s (2012) three generic factors of a faltering local provision of public goods - policy-driven institutional incoherence; weak top-down performance discipline; and an inhospitable environment for local problem-solving-, help to explain the weak performance of South Africa’s official programme of agrarian reform. Policy makers must avoid the revealed incoherencies in rules-in-use by effectively streamlining, aligning and harmonising policy and implementation designs. They must also assure central-level commitment by availing resources, effective monitoring and hierarchical discipline. And finally, when creating structures and institutions, these are better grafted on previous institutional arrangements that have a history of local problem-solving (Waeterloos 2020).

In Waeterloos (2021), the third and last empirical contribution, we zoom in on the introduction between 2015 and 2019 of District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) as an innovation in South Africa’s agrarian reform programme. As local multi-stakeholder platforms, DLRCs were intended to improve local participation in land administration and management (GoSA 2015). They were to identify farms for acquisition by government and candidates for farm allocation, and advise on strategic support needs and land rights conflicts. However, from the beginning, DLRCs were not fully equipped with the required information, operational resources, skills, institutional clarity, accountability mechanisms or supervision (HSRC 2017). The experiences with this specific attempt to entrench more participatory decision-making at the decentralised level, provide pointers for the discussion on the concept and implementation of Fit-for-Purpose land administration in general. Rather than strictly abiding by advanced technical standards, a Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) land administration system aims to manage current land issues within a specific country or region through a flexible, inclusive, participatory, affordable, reliable, realistic and scalable approach (Enemark, Clifford Bell, Lemmen and McLaren 2014). Waeterloos’ (2021) analysis focuses especially on the aspects of envisaged collaboration and collaborative governance in the FFP and its scaling-up. As the main innovative element of the DLRC initiative lies in promoting the collaboration of state and non-state actors towards joint proposals for land administration and management, we apply the

concept of collaborative governance. Collaborative governance refers to the active involvement of (non-)state stakeholders in consensus-oriented decision-making processes (Ansell and Gash 2007), or more precisely, autonomous actors interacting and negotiating (in)formally, and jointly creating rules and structures which involve shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions (Thomson and Perry 2006). We adapt, to that effect, a systems of innovation (SI) failure framework developed by Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing (2005). The adapted SI framework of collaborative governance aims to provide a more structured approach towards the assessment of collaborative governance as an innovation from a multi-dimensional and systemic perspective.

The framework covers SI features related to administration, legal and policy frameworks, norms and values, interactions within or beyond the own circle or governance level, brokering leadership, past beneficial interactions, capabilities to defend and pursue the own as well as common interests, exercise of power and influence, and ability to reciprocate or trust. This framework is applied to DLRCs in three districts in South Africa. As such, the elaborated SI framework tries to discover which systemic failures of collaboration prevail according to members of DLRCs, to what extent, and what these members see as the most feasible opportunities to resolve such collective action failures, possibly with external assistance. The application of the SI framework in the three DLRCs reveals some common, but also some very specific patterns in facilitating the introduction of collaborative land administration and management. Overall, opportunities for collaboration as an innovation to work are assessed fairly high, with an average score across the three DLRCs of 62 percent out of a maximum of 100 percent for a successful introduction of collaboration, and across the four subsystems of administration, governance, networking and capabilities. The opportunities are commonly discerned to be lowest in the subsystem of administration (almost 48 percent) and highest in the subsystem of governance (68 percent). The capabilities and networking dimensions score in between with respectively almost 64 and 67 percent. The analysis of differences between actual and preferred assessment scores, reveals which discrepancies need to be addressed most urgently according to DLRC members. The financial resource discrepancy is overall the least satisfactory, clocking a difference between actual and preferred scores of 73 percent. High discrepancies of almost 50 percent can be observed for the number and quality of human resources, as well as for the flow of information to district level. Least discrepancy is found in members fulfilling their duties and putting in additional efforts, making decisions for the common interest, the role of leadership, and members being able to defend their interests. These assessments of present opportunities and failures in collaboration seem to reflect, from within, a technically appropriate and politically feasible opportunity for donors to contribute to local solutions, by providing support in the domain of financial and operational resources, rather than the institutional, motivational or

relational dimensions of the promotion of collaboration. Across the three DLRCs surveyed, respondents confirm that the most important areas that require external support, are financial and human resources for the DLRCs. These assessments of present collaboration opportunities and failures from a SI perspective in DLRCs, do, in conclusion, lead to relevant pointers for the discussion on participation and collaborative governance in FFP in general. The analysis of DLRCs warns that when promoting FFP as an innovation, and participation and collaboration in particular, the systemic complexities emanating from the non-linear innovation processes in which actors interact with many others in a specific societal set-up and with their own idiosyncratic capabilities, must not be underestimated. The case of the precipitous launching of DLRCs without solid technical, operational, institutional or methodological support, demonstrates that FFP does not only need to be a well-supported and -resourced intervention. FFP also needs to adopt from the beginning a systemic perspective, in which the various technical (e.g. flexible data capturing, scalability, reliability, time- and resource efficiency) and social dimensions (e.g. tenure regimes, participation, decentralized collaborative governance) are explicitly treated as interlinked elements of one system (Waeterloos 2021). In short, this third research contribution points out critical blockages and underlying collective action problems in the areas of policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration.

4.4 Methodology of applying the brokerage perspective

As introduced above, we will, in what follows, explore whether the above-elaborated brokerage perspective helps to further our understanding of development management issues related to the previously identified blockages in South Africa's state-led agrarian reform programme. We understand brokerage as behaviour by which a donor may influence, manage, or facilitate interactions between other poorly connected actors. We scrutinise *ex ante* which likely and justifiable opportunities for brokerage exist for ODA donor agencies in assisting in the resolution of previously identified shortfalls and concerns in South Africa's official programme of agrarian reform. We will do so by applying the following methodology. In revisiting our three research contributions, we will dedicate a separate chapter to each of the reported challenges to policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration. These three research contributions are based on empirical work especially covering the period 2011 to 2019, coinciding with policymaking and implementation moments of and buttressed by the NDP, such as for instance the experimentation with District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs), as well as with the professional activities of the PhD researcher in agrarian reform in South Africa. The collective action problems identified as underlying

these challenges are reviewed and qualified as collective action problems stemming from or likely leading to uneven distribution between the central and local level, deficient coordination, defection by (non-)state stakeholders, disagreement, or instability where actors intentionally dis-coordinate their strategies. These collective action problems are, as elaborated above, understood to block the intended flow of resources and information in the decentralisation plexus, thus leaving holes between nodes, that offer opportunities for donors to assist in the resolution by various local actors and institutions involved.

In each of the documented collective action blockages, we identify and formulate *ex ante* likely and justifiable brokerage behaviour by donor agencies. These *ex ante* assessments are informed and guided by the official recommendations for ODA, discussed in Chapter 2. The official recommendations used pertain especially to the OECD (2019) recommendations - which qualify the OECD (2004) and EU (2016) recommendations in more detail and in 'more politically aware' terms -, regrouped into the categories of support to governance, fiscal and decentralisation management. As discussed in Chapter 2, governance support includes clarifying the responsibilities assigned to different government levels; strengthening innovative and experimental governance; promoting citizens' engagement; allowing asymmetric decentralisation arrangements; consistently improving transparency; enhancing data collection; and strengthening performance monitoring. Fiscal support, on the other hand, refers to ensuring that all responsibilities are sufficiently resourced; subnational fiscal autonomy and fiscal equalisation systems are strengthened; and national regional development policies reduce territorial resource allocation disparities. Finally, the implementation and management of decentralisation policies requires support to subnational capacity building, adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government, and cross-jurisdictional cooperation. Each identified potential brokerage opportunity is further assessed and qualified in terms of Fritzen Scott's (2007) ideal-types of 'more politically aware' strategies of ODA support to decentralisation, discussed in Chapter 2. The first ideal-type modality of donor support, partnering, reflects the potential of working with government and other counterparts within a generally facilitative and stable environment, and where a positive and high convergence between the local and donor agendas prevails. Given the various problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration identified in our previous work on South Africa's official policies of agrarian reform, such a partnering approach may only be likely in some cases. Fritzen Scott's (2007) antipode donor assistance modality of so-called damage control, is, on the other hand, in our view not likely applicable either. The modality of damage control is the only strategy at hand when social, economic or political change is drastically rapid and negative, and the overall policy environment unfavourable for country-owned development. This is in our analysis not the case for South Africa's agrarian

reform programme between 2011 and 2019, as more elaborately discussed against the background of concerns for authoritarian populism in Waeterloos (2020). This is not to say that there are no, following Booth (2012), serious policy-induced incoherency problems in South Africa's endeavour of state-led agrarian reform. As highlighted above, we did indeed trace such problems back to practices of disjoint policy development, ineffective majoritarian managerialist implementation, and uncoordinated decentralisation (see for more detail Waeterloos (2020) and Annex 2). The extent to which these blockages are then seen as part of an enabling or disabling governance environment and leading to incremental or rapid changes, will determine the eventual characterisation of donor assistance as either 'surfing' or 'coping/scheming' (Fritzen Scott 2007). Where the governance environment is generally favourable and rapid changes are promoted, donors encounter significant opportunities to push for their priorities, which are, however, not always easy to grasp. Rather than being able to control the pace of change and carefully select their response, donors will in this environment need to attempt to 'surf' the waves of change as they occur. This requires donors to remain alert and position themselves flexibly to take optimal advantage of the opportunities, and influence the direction changes are taking. In a non-receptive yet stable, underperforming governance context, forthright advocacy for systemic change is highly unlikely to be effective. Donors may then need to strategically select which specific changes and avenues they can pursue. They may thus 'cope' with the prevailing contextual adversity in order to get at least some essential services delivered, by 'scheming' to plant the seeds of more effective localised systems and capacities, even if these will only become sustainable once substantial reforms take place (Fritzen Scott 2007).

In order to thus assess, *ex ante*, the most plausible brokerage roles, strategic activities and strategic intent donors may display in South Africa's encumbered agrarian reform programme, we will be guided by Shi, Markoczy and Dess' (2009) typology. As discussed in Chapter 3 and Figure 10 above, this typology originally distinguishes five different brokerage roles for aid management agents on the basis of affiliation (top, medium, or low level managers), and the holes between them in the network structure. These characteristics may determine whether for instance the role of Coordinator, Cosmopolitan, or Liaison is most appropriate for an external agent. Similarly, in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus, nodes can be distinguished based on affiliation in institutional mandates. Four distinct nodes can thus be retained in our study of the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. These comprise the node of the donor - donor *Ego* and *Alters* central government; local government (deconcentrated/devolved); or local (semi-)organised civil society that participates in local consultation and collaboration platforms, such as Municipal Integrated Development Plans or District Land Reform Committees. In line with these invited spaces for collaboration, of which more

details follow in the chapters below, representatives of local private sector, NGOs, trade and farmer unions, …, are for this study all grouped under the common denominator 'civil society'. Although generally reserved to denote organised collective activities that are distinct from the household, economic production, and state spheres (Kopecký and Mudde 2003), two considerations warrant the agglomeration of the different non-state actors in the local consultation and collaboration platforms. A first consideration is that the distinction between these spheres tends to be more normative than analytical. There are in practice often many overlaps between the spheres; this is demonstrated by recurring links between the private economic sector, (ruling) political parties, and civil society in terms of ideology, governance and/or finances. The concept of civil society should therefore rather act as a heuristic than a normative one (Kopecký and Mudde 2003). A second consideration is that treating the different non-state representatives in spite of their heterogeneous attributes and interests perfunctorily as one single composite node, is the most unambiguous way to conform to the formal requirements of the triad model of brokerage. The collective action blockages identified in our previous studies of the official promotion of inclusive and integrated agrarian reform in South Africa, are understood to reflect holes in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. We assess in this empirical part of the dissertation, for each identified hole, which specific opportunities for brokerage by donors surface, which roles donors who are inclined toward TWP may justifiably play in assisting in the resolution of these problems, through which strategic activities this may happen, and in which brokerage outcomes this is likely to result. The *ex ante* assessment of likeliness and justifiability is guided by the official recommendations for ODA and their 'more politically aware' dimensions, and is also informed by the assessed strategic politically aware option of especially surfing or coping/scheming, and where possible, partnering. As South Africa's official agrarian reform programme purports to build an inclusive and integrated rural economy, conduit brokerage does not present itself as an effective strategy of alignment. Conduit brokerage comprises a mere one-way transfer of information from one *Alter* to another, without any further follow-up or feedback of the connection established (Obstfeld 2005). Strategically, effective donor brokerage to assist overcoming collective action blockages in the cases under review, appears to be geared toward either binding *Tertius Iungens* or bridging G*audens* brokerage.

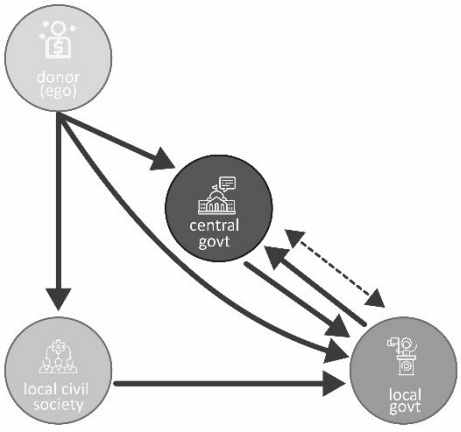
It must be repeated, though, that this review of empirical studies through a donor brokerage lens is constrained in the following aspects. First, the possible brokerage scenarios identified are merely *ex ante* assessments of what brokerage could and logically would look like. While building on previous empirical research, such identified brokerage behaviour is not (yet) observed as such. Secondly, these *ex ante* assessments are also bridled by the mandate of a bilateral ODA donor agency, that

supposes working through, or at least with, South Africa's partner government structures and institutions in the official agrarian reform programme. These restrictions are embodied in applying the logic of most likely political- or operational-strategic ODA assistance scenarios, based especially on OECD (2019) recommendations, as discussed in Chapter 2. Thirdly, the *ex ante* assessments in the three incorporated write-ups, are also shaped by restrictions posed by the prevailing open triad model, as described in Chapter 3. The open triad model accommodates in each representation of brokerage only a flow of resources between three out of the four above-identified relevant nodes: donor; central government; local government; and local 'civil society' (here broadly defined as, in addition to NGOs, including private sector commercial farmer and commodity organisations, community-based organisations, trade unions, …). Fourthly, it has been argued above that, since decentralisation and agrarian reform in particular represent political processes of change, effective ODA donor interventions in these perilous arenas need to incline to 'more politically aware' assistance. If opting to strive for a country-ownership of development among a variety of societal actors as a political outcome, ODA needs to help and steer towards 'good fit' institutional changes to resolve local collective action blockages (Booth 2012). This supposes not only a better understanding of the local context specificities, political priorities and implementation constraints at the recipient partner side, but, by extension, also of those upstream in the domestic political arena of donors (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Booth 2012; Winters 2012; Teskey 2021). In the latter, intra-donor political positioning may emanate from specific historical, geographical, economic, political, social, cultural, or even operational development management preferences, interests or concerns, and will all bear on what kind of analysis, responses, and adaptive long-term engagement are deemed feasible. An example are the different interests at play between aid policymaking and aid implementation agents (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Booth 2012), or the often difficult relationship previously colonising and colonised countries in providing assistance to programmes geared towards more equitable land reform (Adams 2000). Historical, economic and social interests of donor countries, pertaining for instance to claims for the previous coloniser to right historical wrongs or to safeguard foreign direct investment, will impact on the degrees of freedom for donors to TWP in the resolution of local collective action blockages. Unfortunately, our conceptual focus of triad brokerage in a context of decentralisation, and the empirical material available in this dissertation, do not allow to extend the exploration into political dynamics at play at the donor side. Undeniably, these dynamics have an impact on which kind of ODA support to decentralisation will most likely be given preference. In the absence of an empirical basis on actual donors' (political) support preferences, the attention paid to ODA brokerage will be limited to the difficulties and opportunities for donor agencies to deal 'more politically aware' with

downstream local contexts, as promoted by the official ODA recommendations (OECD 2004 and 2019). The specific collective action problem situations will inform the most likely, justifiable and feasible brokerage behaviour scenario between the actors, based on these ODA recommendations and their general references to plausible TWP. Finally, it needs to be noted that this empirical review is also limited by the static, once-off snapshot assessment of the holes created in the decentralisation network by collective action blockages. The restrictions of the open triad model and its static articulation will be further problematised in the conclusion of this empirical part, and the overall conclusion of the dissertation.

The generic model of brokerage retained for the *ex ante* assessments of previous empirical studies, can then be visually represented as follows (see Figure 11). The open triad representation covers four different predominant nodes, of which only three will be involved in each single brokerage analysis: donor; central government; local government and local (composite) civil society. Each affiliation has its separate colour shading and icon. The possible flow of information, knowledge, expertise, financial or operational resources, which constitutes brokerage between the nodes, and its direction, are represented by the arrows. Only when a binding, union-promoting *Tertius Iungens* outcome is intended, is it represented by a dotted line.

Figure 11: Generic model of potential brokerage in agrarian reform in South Africa



To summarise, this second part comprises the empirical centrepiece of the dissertation. Each of the four following chapters consists of a review, through the above-developed lens of donor brokerage, of previous analyses of problems of policy coherence, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration in

agrarian reform in South Africa. It must be reminded that the difference between coordination and collaboration is that the latter is a specific form of the former. Coordination in a public sector interorganisational context refers to instruments and mechanisms that aim to enhance the voluntary or forced alignment of tasks and efforts (Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest 2010). Collaboration then pertains to the active and voluntary alignment between actors, involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interaction (Thompson and Perry 2006). We revisit the most relevant snags in policy coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration as stemming from or likely leading to collective action blockages that leave holes between nodes, and thus possibly create opportunities for donors to assist in brokering their local resolution. Guided by Shi, Markoczy and Dess' (2009) refined typology of brokerage behaviour based on management's roles, strategic assistance activities and intended brokerage outcomes, the most likely and justifiable brokerage behaviour by donors is identified *ex ante*. The *ex ante* assessment is informed and guided by the official recommendations for ODA, and is – where relevant – also qualified in terms of partnering, surfing or coping/scheming. We then conclude these four empirical chapters of the dissertation by identifying a few systematic pointers for a better understanding and positioning of the role of donors as brokers in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus and the implications of and for TWP.

Chapter 5 Macro-policy incoherencies

5.1 Introduction

This first chapter applies the donor brokerage lens to specific concerns for macro-level policy incoherencies in agrarian reform in South Africa, which were highlighted in two of our three previously published research articles, included in this manuscript in annex (see Annex 1 and 2).

In Waeterloos and Janssens (2016), such likely incoherencies are brought to the fore in the new round of restitution to land rights claims of 2014. One of the recommendations to improve complementarity and coherence of the new restitution policies and strategies with other official land reform programmes such as the ones of redistribution, is to prioritise new claims with the highest added value in terms of restorative justice. Such prioritisation of claims should also align with the drivers of the rural economy and sustainable human settlements as identified in the NDP. Claims that decongest neighbouring overpopulated areas (e.g. vicinity to communal areas, towns, and rural growth points) and/or have no immediate negative impact on high (potential) agricultural production enterprises should receive priority. A second recommendation relates to an improved integration of criteria of land needs-based land reform and rural development programmes into the land rights-based restitution programme in communally governed group claims. An example may be the provision of selective enterprise support to young and aspiring individual members of the communal land claim, and not only limited to agricultural production, but also covering start-up support to rural services such as marketing, transport, or finance.

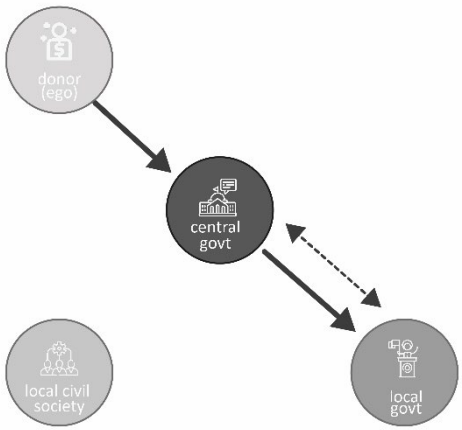
In the second empirical contribution (Waeterloos 2020), one of the case studies deals with the views local government actors hold on the clarity and coherence of state policies and strategies of agrarian transformation. Addressing the reported lack of prescribed joint decision-making between the then DRDLR and municipalities, is found to require far more clarity and coherence in policies and legislation. Whether and how the three highlighted recommendations to address policy incoherencies may benefit from external brokerage by a donor, will be discussed in what follows.

5.2 Prioritise new restitution claims with the highest added value for restorative justice and align to the drivers of the rural economy and sustainable human settlements

A first recommendation in Waeterloos and Janssens (2016) is to prioritise new claims with the highest added value in terms of restorative justice, rather than 'numbers' in terms of hectares, claims or individuals, as has been the case up to now. This implies adhering to a strict interpretation of the criteria espoused to warrant the reopening, which refer to previously-overlooked 'Betterment Schemes' and areas where corruption or lack of communication to potential claimants was obvious. The present lack of prioritisation is bound to refer to two types of collective action problems as distinguished by Holzinger (2003). As long as no priorities are formally agreed and adhered to, coordination between the various official land reform programmes and implementing agents (e.g. the Restitution Commission and the then Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR)) will remain a constraining factor for the efficient and effective harmonisation and roll-out of the state-led agrarian reform programme. The need to adapt policy coherence and institutional coordination, is also taken up in the recommendation to align the prioritisation of claims with the drivers of the rural economy and sustainable human settlements, as identified in South Africa's National Development Plan of 2012 (GoSA 2012b). This collective action blockage may, on the other hand, be rather explained by disagreement among the policy implementers on whether or how exactly to go along with such a formal list of priorities. This may happen for instance, as highlighted in Waeterloos and Janssens (2016), in the case of alternative claims, or in the case of competition with more commercially-oriented beneficiaries from other land reform initiatives (see for instance Hall and Kepe 2017).

Two principles in the OECD's (2004 and 2019) guidance to donors in the domain of decentralisation stand out in this particular case: support to the commitment of central government to the policies and implementation of decentralisation; and to adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government and cross-jurisdictional cooperation. To that effect, addressing the gap created by policy incoherencies resulting from the introduction of new restitution policies, requires according to Waeterloos and Janssens (2016), a formal prioritisation of new claims on the basis of their high merit to restorative justice. 'Facilitating the adaptability' of the present policy instruments appears to be a strategic management activity that donors can justifiably assist with (Shi, Markoczy and Dess 2009). In Fritzen Scott's (2007) typology, donors may thus 'surf' on the wave of change created by the introduction of new policies. When such strategy of promoting and supporting prioritisation is done through central level Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) to the provincial

Regional Land Claims Commissioner's Offices, donor *Ego* connects two non-affiliated *Alters* and thus strengthens their ties to resolve the policy-induced incoherencies. The intended outcome of this Liaison brokerage role is likely to be *Tertius Iungens*, as it implies a strengthening of the information flows within the formal intergovernmental relations framework between central and local level. It is represented in the visual representation below by a dotted two-headed arrow. We will call this type of brokerage *Liaison Iungens*. This brokerage is in line with the officially recommended interventions for ODA donors to support the commitment of central government to the implementation of decentralisation and to adequate coordination mechanisms. In this case, the brokerage runs from the donor node (d) and binds the central (c) and local government nodes (l), resulting in what we will call *Liaison Iungens dcl* in full.



Liaison Iungens dcl

When summarised in terms of the core criteria considered, the synopsis of this particular *ex ante* assessment looks as follows:

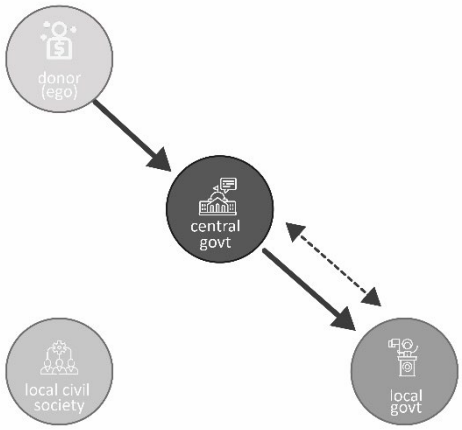
***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

The *ex ante* scenario of ODA donor brokerage etched out here, underscores the feasibility of TWP, even in the context of ODA. Donor support to the adaptation of policy instruments through the specification and alignment of priority restitution claims by the central CRLR to the provincial Regional Land Claims Commissioner's Offices, is technically appropriate and politically feasible. This active response to the new evolution in restitution policies, can benefit from reviews such as Waeterloos and Janssens (2016), or from other more detailed research and case studies. Such donor intervention requires a solid and nuanced understanding of the political economy of the restitution programme and its key reform agents at central and local government level, as intimated in Waeterloos and Janssens (2016). This deeper understanding of the political economy and engaging with identified reform agents resound the tenets of TWP (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Teskey 2021). An effective brokerage implies, furthermore, a need for flexibility and adaptation in the design and implementation of (further) support, in function of how the prioritisation and alignment emanating from this brokerage actually pans out. In this particular *Liaison Iungens* scenario, which articulates the most imminently assessed brokerage, the third TWP tenet of adaptation cannot be fully illustrated, as flexibility may eventually require direct support to other nodes in the triad. We will come back later to this limitation of the brokerage model. Suffice to say for now, that the above scenario demonstrates that ODA can contribute to a reform in local service delivery to restitution beneficiaries, by plugging the institutional holes between central and local government. But for this to be effective, ODA agencies need to be well enough informed to determine which policies and which reform agents in which node they can best engage with in a specific context. We will also need to come back later to this particular limitation of the brokerage model, where nodes such as donor and central or local government are actually aggregates of different agents and interests.

5.3 Improve integration of needs-based land reform and rural development criteria into rights-based restitution group claims

The need to integrate socio-economic needs-based land reform and rural development criteria into land rights-based restitution group claims, consists for instance of selective and gradual enterprise support to poor young and aspiring individual rural producers, rather than a blanket treatment of all members of Communal Property Associations' group land claims (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016). While land redistribution and farm development support programmes such as the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP) had provisions for such individualised support of poor

claimants, a de facto elite-bias turned attention especially towards better-off established commercial farms and models (Hall 2015; Mutero, Gumede and Ramantsima 2019). Such policy-induced incoherencies between restitution and redistribution programmes may thus create problems of coordination or disagreement within the public sector on the rules-in-use as far as the objectives and modalities of support to land reform beneficiaries is concerned. The strategic management interventions of a donor can thus consist of facilitating the adaptability of post-settlement support strategies, for them to focus again on poorer claimants. Liaising between the central level of land reform policies and the deconcentrated level of policy implementation will serve a *Iungens* strategy, in order to support subnational capacity building, coordination across levels of government, and cross-jurisdictional cooperation to turn around the prevailing elite bias (OECD 2019). The most imminent donor role will therefore be one of *Liaison Iungens*.



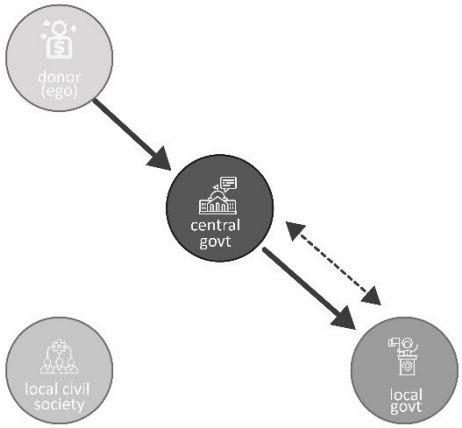
Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

Thus facilitating the adaptation of support strategies to local restitution beneficiaries by integrating criteria that favour individual and poorer claimants, is, in our understanding, an example of feasible TWP by an ODA donor. The effective promotion of such a selective bias requires, again, an advanced understanding of the different interests in the political economy of agrarian reform to feed an informed responsiveness to specific reform central and local actors and policies. An effective brokerage requires, in other words, being thoughtful and aware of what is technically appropriate - i.e. pro-poor criteria -, as well as what is politically most feasible - i.e. acting upon existing reform policies and by linking central and local government actors (Teskey 2021). It also requires, over the longer term, an openness to iterative monitoring, learning and flexibility to adapt support in function of the evolution of the social and economic status of beneficiaries. The latter concern of TWP is, unfortunately, not accommodated in the once-off triad representation, nor does the empirical material here at hand contain any data on this.

5.4 Enhanced clarity of policy and legislation

The concern, expressed by local government officials, of a lack of clarity of the policies and strategies pertaining to integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development at large, are an obvious risk to the envisaged coordination of actions by various stakeholders on the ground (Waeterloos 2020). The most imminent brokerage donors can engage in, falls within the ambit of the OECD's (2004 and 2019) recommendations to support governance by clarifying the responsibilities assigned to different government levels, or to support management of decentralisation policies through adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government. By gathering and synthesising as coherent a body of policy information as possible from the national policy level and channel it to the local level, a justifiable role of Liaison is surfacing as a partnering strategy in implementing policy. Where the strategy is to offer as clear and consistent an overview of policies at present and to contribute to making it more coherent and consistent, such a partnering strategy is more about facilitating adaptability. These brokerages result in bridging the hole between national and local level and binding them together through improved policy availability and analysis (*Liaison Iungens*). Obviously, for such a brokerage to be effective, it needs to be based on a nuanced understanding of the policy context and of the possible differing interests between the central and local level of government, and to be able to adapt and differentiate its support in function of the specificities of each local context (Teskey 2021).



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Synthesising Information /Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

5.6 Conclusion

In this first empirical chapter, we reviewed through the lens of donor brokerage, three instances of macro-level policy incoherencies in South Africa's agrarian reform programme, identified in previous analyses (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016; Waeterloos 2020). Guided by Shi, Markoczy and Dess' (2009) typology, we systematically identified the most likely and justifiable ODA donor brokerage, represented it visually, and summarised it in terms of the core criteria considered in each *ex ante* assessment. This systematic yet coarse exploration of the brokerage perspective in South Africa's land restitution and redistribution programme, does point out a range of potential ODA donor assistance strategies. Distinctions can be made based on the diversity of collective action problems encountered (in these cases coordination or disagreement), managerial strategies that aid management agencies may deploy (in these cases synthesising information or facilitating

adaptability), objectives of brokerage likely to be pursued (in these three cases *Tertius Iungens*), and brokerage roles (Liaison) that donors can enact. This diversity of technically appropriate donor brokerage strategies, although determined only *ex ante* and not on the basis of actually observed behaviour, is encouraging. It suggests that more options are open to donors to assist in addressing the many barriers in South Africa's agrarian reform programme than a mere binary of uncritical alignment and conformity versus principled rejection. Such binary actually runs against the promotion of 'more politically aware approaches' to ODA. We have indeed been able to highlight various TWP analysis, context and design dimensions, which can and need to be observed in the different instances of technically appropriate and politically feasible brokerage by ODA donors. We will therefore continue and explore the diversity of likely donor brokerage strategies in three other previously identified areas of concern for the envisaged inclusive and integrated character of agrarian reform, based on our survey work between 2013 and 2019. This should then allow us to draw more general conclusions on the application of the donor brokerage perspective in South Africa's agrarian reform programme and its TWP dimensions.

Chapter 6 Constrained inclusivity due to lack of information and of an enabling environment for participation

6.1 Introduction

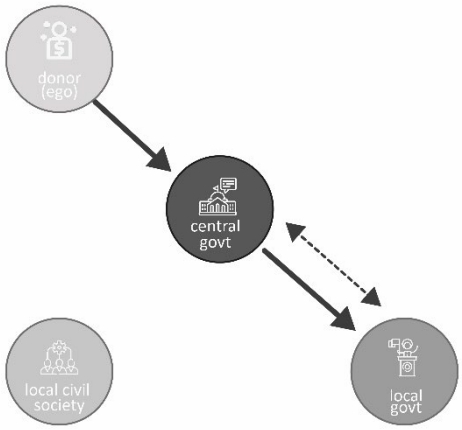
In this second empirical chapter, we focus on those instances in our previous analyses where we concluded that the specific aspirations of an inclusive and integrated rural economy through agrarian reform, are jeopardised by shortfalls in the implementation of the policy provisions for wide ranging inclusion. We have identified these shortfalls especially in the dissemination of relevant information and mechanisms of accountability. Due to the purported ambition to involve a wide variety of stakeholders in the agrarian reform process, we have analysed these shortfalls as stemming from and/or leading to (further) collective action blockages. In what follows, we discuss the identified blockages in promoting inclusivity, and identify likely and 'more politically aware' ODA brokerage strategies to contribute to their resolution.

6.2 More realistic and transparent information on the complexities and duration of settling restitution claims

The inadequate provision of realistic information to aspiring claimants on the complexity and protracted pace in settling restitution claims, was highlighted in Waeterloos and Janssens (2016). This may lead to a collective action problem of coordination**,** whereby claimants, interest groups and the public in general may no longer understand, believe, trust or show an interest in the formal institutional set-up for return of land rights to deserving beneficiaries. Such reaction may eventually result in corruption, elite capture and exclusion. It is therefore noted by Waeterloos and Janssens (2016), that in line with the official ODA recommendations (2019) for support to transparency, performance monitoring and citizens' engagement, ODA may assist in clearing up possible disinformation, distrust and disinterest in the governance of restitution. In initiating such strategic support to implementing the official strategy, the donor can take up two different roles, depending on which structural opportunity he/she will grasp.

One is to assist with a campaign at central CRLR government level to fill such information gaps at the local level of the Regional Restitution Commission or other local government offices. This strategic activity of improving the implementation of strategy in a Liaison role, will most likely consist of a

Tertius Iungens approach, as the donor tries to strengthen subnational capacity building and coordination mechanisms across levels of government (OECD 2019). This ODA support to promoting a union or bond between central and local government, is most congruent with a partnering modality in Fritzen Scott's (2007) terms. The most imminent *ex ante* assessment of brokerage in the light of the above-listed criteria applied is, as in the previous case, again *Liaison Iungens dcl*.

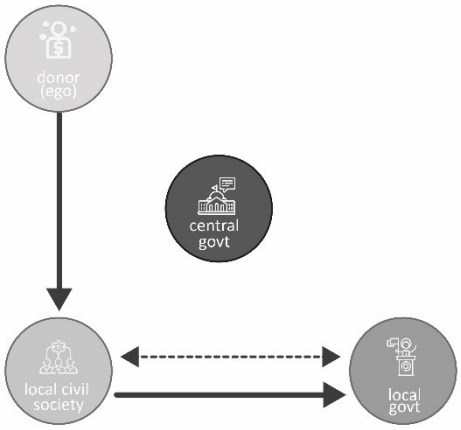


Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

A donor can, however, fulfil a similar role of liaising between two differently affiliated *Alters*, by facilitating the gathering and synthesising of information between local Restitution Commission units and local claimants directly via organised civil society channels. We will discuss this kind of brokerage as a clear demonstration of TWP. Following the ODA recommendations to promote citizens' engagement and improve transparency, such governance support may in a first iteration – which this static *ex ante* analysis uses - adopt either a *Tertius Iungens* or a *Gaudens* approach. This choice will depend for instance on the receptiveness of the local government level to deal directly with informed claimants, or its ability to avoid the break-down of feedback loops. In the case of

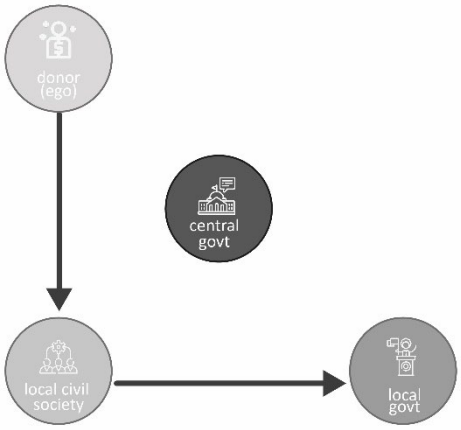
receptiveness of the local government, partnering seems an appropriate label for the likely strategy of *Tertius Iungens*. In this case, the brokerage runs from donor to civil society (s) to local government, and binds the latter two ('dsl').



Liaison Iungens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Gathering and synthesising of information
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

However, in the case of lack of receptiveness or inability to nourish feedback loops with local claimants - a defection problem-, a surfing strategy looks a more realistic option for a donor. This is represented in the figure below, as a *Tertius Gaudens* brokerage. Direct external support to civil society actors active with restitution communities, may strengthen them to engage more opportunistically and on their own terms with local government to achieve a more effective lodging of claims. In this case of *Liaison Gaudens*, the brokerage runs from donor to civil society (s) to local government, without binding between the latter two ('dsl').



Liaison Gaudens dsl

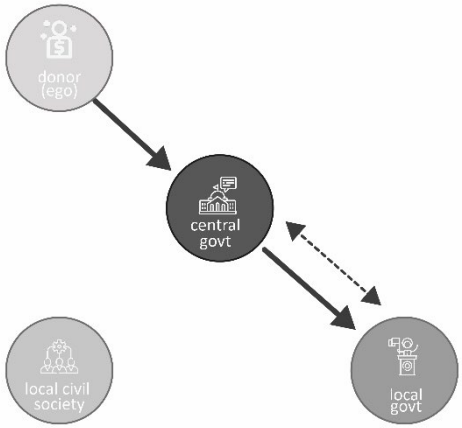
***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Defection
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Gathering and synthesising of information
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

The choice for a *Liaison Iungens* or *Gaudens* brokerage will need to be based on an informed assessment of the capacity and/or willingness of local government to supply realistic and transparent information to (aspiring) claimants, and the various capacities and interests prevailing among the different civil society actors in the local land restitution arena. TWP principles of political economy perspective, engagement with relevant reform issues and agents, and flexible design apply specifically in this scenario. A brokering donor needs to assess what is both technically appropriate and politically feasible when, as in choosing for instance between supply versus demand of relevant information on government policies and implementation strategies, and adapt their support intervention by adding key reform (non-)governmental actors or changing sequencing (Teskey 2021).

6.3 Bolster the provision of relevant information to DLRCs

As an example of policy-induced collective action blockages in South Africa's official agrarian reform programme, Waeterloos (2020) discusses in more detail the now defunct government experiment of decentralised multi-stakeholder land administration and management through District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs). As highlighted above, DLRCs were set up at the end of 2015 across all rural districts as multi-stakeholder platforms to increase local participation and collaboration in land governance and management. In general, members of DLRCs were local representatives of line ministries, District Municipal officials or Councillors, agricultural interest groups, non-governmental organisations, unions, and in some cases traditional leaders. A 2017 review of ten DLRCs in four provinces found that such decentralised platforms were created centrally without however being equipped with the required information, operational resources, skills, institutional clarity, accountability mechanisms or hands-on central government supervision (HSRC 2017). Urgent action was therefore recommended for the then DRDLR - since June 2019 merged into the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)-, to first improve its provision of relevant information to DLRCs.

Similar to the collective action problem of coordination discussed above pertaining to improving the clarity of macro-level policies and strategies, donors are advised to help and clarify the responsibilities assigned to different government levels and support adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government (OECD 2019). In the role of Liaison between the central and local government level – to which the DLRCs as an invited space created at local level under the responsibility of a deconcentrated government department DRDLR belong in our view -, donors can easily be seen to initiate and finance the gathering, synthesising, packaging and distribution of official central-level information on DLRCs as a participatory mechanism to the local level. This with the intent to bridge the hole between national and local level in a partnering approach (*Liaison Iungens*). As pointed out in the previous chapter on policy coherence, such donor brokerage can only be effective when based on core TWP principles, such as a nuanced understanding of the local actors and policy context, of the differing interests between the central level government and local DLRCs, and when able to adapt over time to the evolving specificities of each local situation (Teskey 2021).



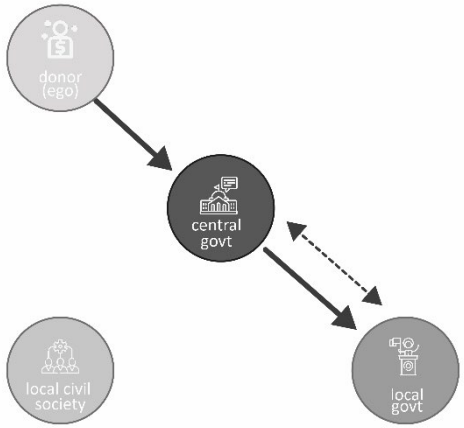
Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

6.4 Address shortcomings in visibility and accountability of the DLRCs

Especially strengthening skills of inclusive participation among the members of the DLRCs were proposed by the researchers as a first step towards boosting the DLRCs' visibility and accountability at local level (HSRC 2017). The reported weak visibility of DLRCs at local level may, at first sight, reflect distribution or coordination problems. Where methodological, operational (e.g. sitting allowances), procedural or human resources are lacking for DLRC members to be visible and active participants and collaborators in the new structures, donors may assist central government in facilitating the adaptability of these innovative experimental local structures of governance, promote citizens' engagement, and consistently improve transparency, data collection and performance monitoring (OECD 2019). This will constitute taking up a Liaison role to contribute to a

stronger union between the central and local level for such resources to be offered through the supervisory DRLDR (*Tertius Iungens*). This will in our view reflect a partnering approach, as it fully aligns to the official policies (Fritzen Scott 2007).

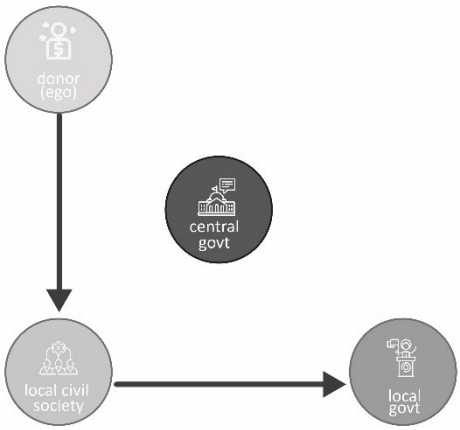


Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

However, in the case of distribution and even more so in the not unlikely case of disagreement problems around land acquisition and beneficiary selection, a Liaison strategy especially geared towards strengthening civil society's role in DLRC accountability can be the sole first point of entry of donors to surf on the presented opportunities for participation by non-governmental stakeholders. This equally technically appropriate and politically feasible facilitation of institutional adaptability of the DLRCs will, in our *ex ante* assessment, in the first phase imply a disunion brokerage which keeps the boundaries between civil society and local government (*Tertius Gaudens*) (see figure below). Only a dynamic view can shine a light on the evolution of this brokerage towards resolution or rather deterioration of disagreement into instability problems. Such dynamic view is, as hinted at above, unfortunately beyond the scope of this exploration of the elaborated perspective on donor brokerage in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. The main TWP requirements that apply in the *Liaison Gaudens* scenario are for donors to have an informed understanding of the political economy

of agrarian reform and the relations between central and local government on the one hand, and non-governmental actors on the other; to respond in a way that is in the given context most technically appropriate and politically feasible; and to engage actively by providing support to governmental or non-governmental actors respectively to shore up the implementation of the DLRC strategy or the institutional adaptation of DLRCs towards more effective accountability (Teskey 2021).

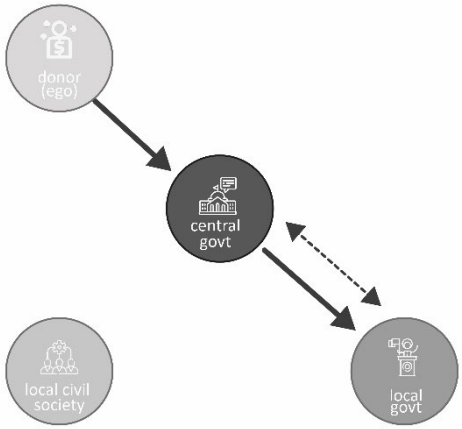


Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution/Disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

6.5 Adequate financial resources for local travel, accommodation and stipends

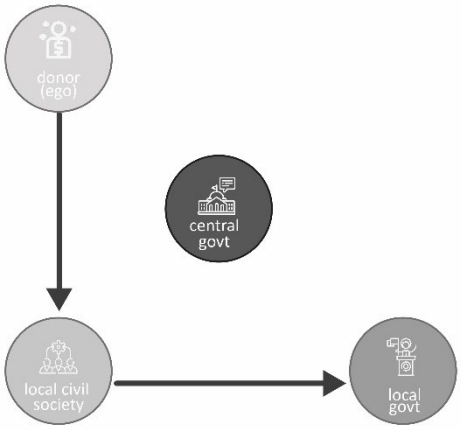
The need expressed in DLRCs for external assistance in making financial resources available for members' travel, accommodation and stipends, is reported in Waeterloos (2021). This need points, as discussed above, not only to a principal-agent problem of under-resourced central-local relationships. We have argued that, in general, South Africa's endeavour of inclusive and integrated agrarian reform involves simultaneously various public sector and other (non-)governmental actors at different scales and levels. Since DLRCs were composed of various governmental and non-governmental actors and deemed to be functionally supported by the then national DRDLR, the documented under-resourcing reflects a collective action problem of distribution of resources, that blocks the representation of stakeholders that are less endowed (see also Waeterloos 2020). Donors can then, in our *ex ante* assessment, find a first solid argument to assist in resolving such distribution problem through DRDLR's support function to DLRCs in the OECD's (2019) recommendation to ensure that all responsibilities are sufficiently funded and that subnational capacity is built. Such Liaison brokerage intends, in first instance, to facilitate the implementation of official strategy and bridge the operational resource gap between central and local government levels through a *Tertius Iungens*- behaviour (see figure below). This partnering or surfing modality – depending on how one assesses the DLRC's underfunding as temporary or structurally disabling (Scott Fritzen 2007)-, is however no assurance for donors against a Samaritan Dilemma-lock in. This may occur when the partner government benefits from a continued under-resourcing, as donors are seen to endure in trying to resolve such funding gaps (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001).



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implement strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

In order to shore up the envisaged local participation in DLRCs for its potential information and social cohesion advantages, donors may deploy another strategy. The OECD (2019) recommends to strengthen innovative and experimental governance in decentralisation, promote citizens' engagement, improve transparency, enhance data collection and strengthen performance monitoring. Donors may therefore mediate financially in the failing resource flow from central to local DLRC level, and assure the contribution of weaker civil society organisations to DLRC's decision-making processes by covering the operational expenditure of their representatives. Local small-scale farmer or community-based organisations can, for instance, in contrast to government officials or representatives of larger commodity organisations, often not rely on alternative sources to cover such expenditures. This mediation can, in first instance, take the form of a *Tertius Gaudens* brokerage strategy, whereby donors channel resources to one node (weaker civil society organisation) for it to be able to provide inputs in the other node (DLRC) (see figure below). Such direct operational support to certain civil society organisations to become, in their own right, fully active members of the multi-stakeholder DLRC platforms, goes further than facilitating the implementation of the official strategy; it actually invests in scheming to adapt the DLRC model. The very same TWP principles of a more analytical and active approach towards the inclusion of members of civil society as in the *Liaison Gaudens* brokerage option in the previous paragraph, apply here.



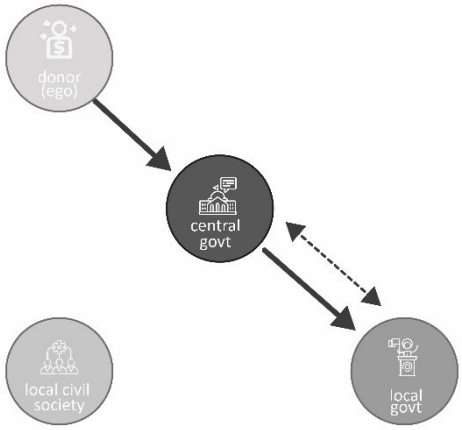
Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

6.6 Adequate physical resources and infrastructure for DLRCs

The need for external assistance with DLRCs' physical resources (such as office and meeting space) and IT-infrastructure revealed in Waeterloos (2021), and especially expressed in Sarah Baartman and Chris Hani DLRCs, refers similarly to a collective action problem of distribution within the decentralisation set-up. It seems therefore that a valid *ex ante* point of entry for a donor is to assist central government to commit to its proposed inclusion promoting decentralisation policies, by improving the availability of such operational resources to the new DLRCs through DRDLR. The intent of this type of partnering or surfing brokerage is to bridge the operational resource gap between central and local DRDLR government levels through a *Liaison Iungens*- behaviour, which (even) from

a TWP point of view, can only be initiated at the central level of DRDLR, given it being a deconcentrated national department.



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, we reviewed our previous findings on the underperformance of the agrarian reform programme in enabling, in the period 2011-2019, inclusion and participation of various actors and stakeholders, especially due to a dearth of informational, logistical and operational provisions. We reviewed and assessed our findings as stemming from and/or leading to collective action problems (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016; Waeterloos 2020 and 2021), and identified *ex ante* how ODA donors may most likely and justifiably contribute as brokers to their resolution. By applying the typology and methodology proposed in Chapter 3 and 4, a fairly diverse range of potential ODA donor brokerage roles, strategies, outcomes and modalities are being recommended. Distinctions can be made on the basis of diversity of collective action problems encountered (distribution,

coordination), managerial strategies (gathering and synthesising information, implementing strategy, or facilitating adaptability), and objectives and roles of brokerage most likely pursued (*Liaison Iungens or Gaudens)*. Various brokerage scenarios imply heeding the ambitions of TWP, such as a nuanced understanding of the policy context and of the different interests at play to better determine what is both technically appropriate and politically feasible; being able to adapt over time to the specificities of each particular situation; and to provide active support to those (non-)governmental actors that contribute to reform for the public good (Teskey 2021). However, the limitations of a static, once-off *ex ante* assessment in the methodology used, reveal themselves especially in the domain of *Liaison Gaudens* brokerage between local civil society and local government. Clearly, in a domain with diverging interests and multiple actors where a donor needs and wishes to apply a 'more politically aware approach', a longer term strategy of iterated and adaptive brokerage must be considered which goes beyond the confined once-off snapshot of three nodes in the network.

Chapter 7 Fledgling coordination in implementation

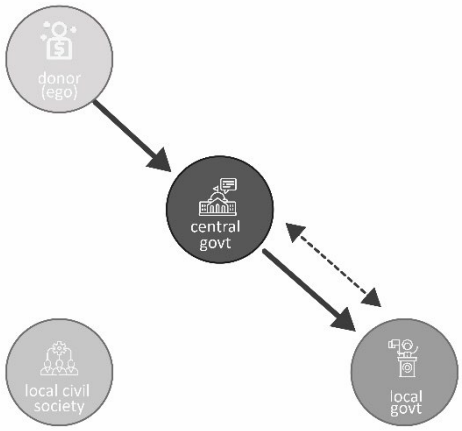
7.1 Introduction

In South Africa's officially espoused participatory approach to inclusive and integrated rural development and land reform, public sector actors are tasked to coordinate with other (non-)governmental actors at central and local level to improve the area-based design, management and delivery of services (GoSA 2009, 2011 and 2012b). Our three research articles under review here, confirm that such a task poses serious challenges to both policy makers and implementers (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016; Waeterloos 2020 and 2021). We will continue to explore the potential roles ODA donors may play in brokering solutions to the identified persisting challenges and shortfalls in realising the envisaged coordination.

7.2 Increase the Restitution Commission's local implementation and facilitation capacity

In order to ensure the screening, settling and finalising of land restitution claims within a clearly established and communicated time frame, it is important to beef up the provincial Regional Land Claims Commissioner's Offices' capacity, especially for multi-actor planning and conflict mediation (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016). The task of resolving restitution claims is complex and time and resource consuming, as it is prone to disagreement and conflicts between stakeholders. The restitution programme has however been characterised by a problematic distribution of resources, typically articulated in underfunding and lack of effective mechanisms of coordination with other support agencies. This may be considered as a principal-agent problem of under-resourced central-local relationships between the central Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) and the Regional Land Claims Commissioner's Offices. From a principal-agent perspective, donors trying to address such systemic under-resourcing may easily lock themselves in into a Samaritan's Dilemma. Stakeholders in investigating and settling restitution claims consist of different and competing claimants, landowners, municipalities, line ministries, non-governmental and community based organisations, often with vastly conflicting interests. It is not surprising, therefore, that the process of restitution has proven to be rife with collective action problems (see for instance Hall 2015; GoSA 2019; Ngcukaitobi 2021). Such complexity warrants, in general, the adoption of a 'more politically aware' attitude by a donor. And for such brokerage to be effective, it needs to be aware of and

attentive to the different stakeholders and their interests, and support reform actively and flexibly in a way that is both technically appropriate and politically feasible (Teskey 2021). Where fledgling coordination at the local level is due to centrally-caused problems in the distribution of skills, resources and mechanisms of coordination, donors can provide financial, human or operational resources support to central and local level government. This is in line with the OECD's (2019) recommendation to ensure that all responsibilities are sufficiently funded, and that subnational capacity is built. Such strategic activity tends more toward facilitating adaptability to improve actual implementation of policies, and will, in our assessment, most likely be part of a *Tertius Iungens* endeavour by the donor (d) in a Liaison role between central (c) and local government (l).

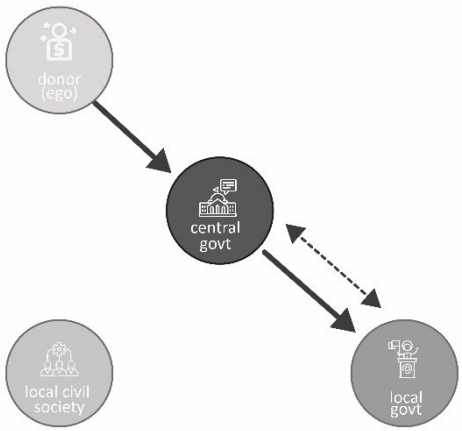


Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

7.3 Assure human and operational resources at provincial DRDLR and municipal level to implement

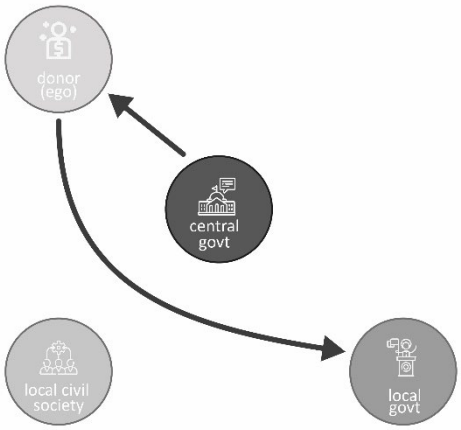
In Waeterloos (2020), respondents from within government point out a lack of human and operational resources at provincial DRDLR or municipal level to implement the official policies of agrarian reform. As amply argued above, South Africa's endeavour of integrated rural development aims to simultaneously involve various public sector and other (non-)governmental actors at different scales and levels. From this broadened perspective, the under-resourcing of local government entails therefore a collective action problem of distribution of resources to promote coordination, that may block the participation of different stakeholders and representation of diverging interests (Waeterloos 2020). Donors can try to facilitate the resolution of this blockage by providing financial, human or operational resources to assist with the implementation of the official agrarian reform strategy. In order to ensure the OECD's (2019) recommendations for donors to contribute to sufficient funding of all responsibilities and building of subnational capacity, support can be channelled through two avenues. One strategic activity of supporting the implementation of policy is by providing such resources to the central government DRDLR level and strengthening the central-decentralised intergovernmental relations. This role of Liaison donor brokerage between differently affiliated government nodes will result in donor *Ego* (d) facilitating *Tertius Iungens* relations between central (c) and local level (l) (see figure below). Dependent on whether donors approach this as a rapid, temporary fiduciary fix or as a more incremental fiscal policy change, this assistance can be characterised as a surfing or partnering assistance modality (Fritzen Scott 2007).



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

It needs to be reiterated that, due to the deconcentrated set-up of the then DRDLR and the affiliated Restitution Commission, donors cannot directly fund provincial and district level DRDLR or Restitution agencies, or for that matter multi-stakeholder District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs), as these were assisted and supervised by the then DRDLR. Technically appropriate as it may be, it is not politically feasible. A full devolution of land reform and rural development responsibilities, or a structural and institutional grounding of DLRCs within municipalities, might change the political feasibility of brokerage opportunities in terms of affiliation, role, strategy and intent. Under South Africa's Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005, other line ministries, such as for instance agriculture, have a more devolved provincial autonomy. They may offer interesting alternatives brokerage opportunities to donors. The study of these alternatives stretches, however, beyond the scope of this present research, which focuses only on the then DRDLR as the overall coordinating government department in South Africa's agrarian reform programme in the period under review (2011-2019). Within the scope of this research, we can, however, illustrate another possible, but in our *ex ante* assessment less likely brokerage role. Such brokerage of Liaison may for instance be fulfilled when donors are asked by DRDLR or the central ministry overseeing local government (then Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) to directly support municipalities as third-tier government entities. This Liaison role, whereby donor channels the flow from central government via donor (*Ego*) to local government, will most likely form a partnering strategy and result in a *Tertius Gaudens* brokerage outcome, as, under the present intergovernmental relations strategies, no direct links are necessarily established between the two governmental *alters*. The option for either of both scenarios demonstrates that donors, to be effective, need to rely on political economy perspectives to be able to respond to the domestic and local environment in a flexible and adaptive way (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Teskey 2021).



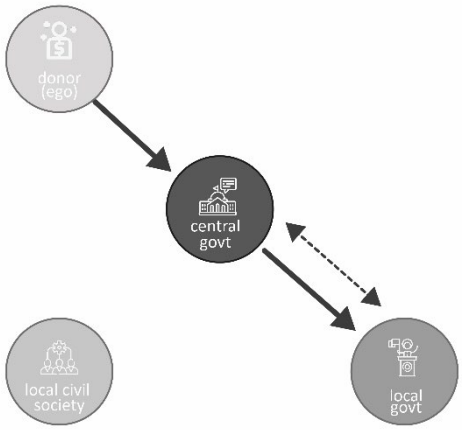
Liaison Gaudens cdl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

7.4 Upscale effectiveness of DRDLR's economic and social projects

The reported weak capability of DRDLR to implement integrated and coordinated projects of rural development and land reform successfully, may have different underlying causes. This overall weak capability was assessed in Waeterloos (2020) by local government actors through a combination of different characteristics: whether provincially-based DRDLR staff are allowed and able to plan and implement such projects; whether there are sufficient human resources (number and skills) in the municipality and in the provincial and/or district DRDLR offices; if individuals who take initiative of coordination are positively sanctioned by their colleagues or their supervisors; whether there is an operational system to store and manage, and share information; and whether information about other stakeholders and the DRDLR's own performance is actively taken into account (Waeterloos 2017 and 2020). Due to the survey design's inspiration from the EU's Comprehensive Assessment

Framework (CAF) for public sector organisations (EIPA 2013; Waeterloos 2017 and 2020), these aspects of DRDLR's capability relate especially to distribution and coordination problems. However, although not part of the study's information collection set-up, possible disagreement problems cannot be excluded. Donor assistance to address the thus studied capability gap in decentralised implementation of a coordinated and integrated programme of agrarian reform, will therefore be most politically feasible and technically appropriate when channelling financial, operational, informational and human resources through central level to implement strategy at the local level in a brokerage of union (*Tertius Iungens*). These strategic interventions to improve the implementation of strategy will especially find justification in the recommendation to ODA donors to strengthen subnational capacity building and subnational fiscal autonomy in order to enhance accountability (OECD 2019).

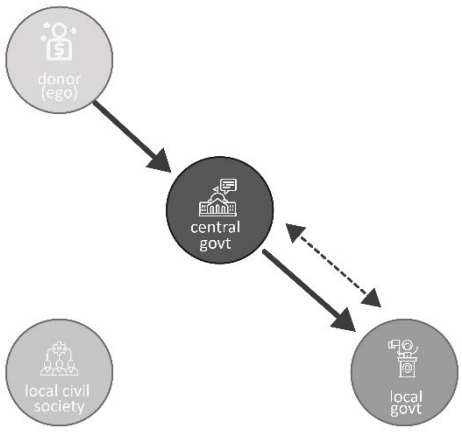


Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination/Disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

7.5 A skilled permanent secretariat for the DLRCs

The need expressed by DLRC members in Waeterloos (2021) for support to human resources to establish a skilled permanent secretariat solely dedicated to DLRCs, is also linked to the central distribution of financial or human resources to the local level DLRCs. Such a skilled permanent secretariat is meant to replace and upgrade the lacklustre support meted out by DRDLR to the members and decision-making mechanisms of DLRCs (Waeterloos 2021). Donors can assist on the basis of the same OECD (2019) arguments that in effective decentralisation, all responsibilities need to be sufficiently funded and subnational capacity has to be built. Assisting in availing such resources tends more towards a scheming strategy by the donor, seeking to assure an adaptation of the actual set-up by securing an autonomous and improved skills profile of the secretariat. Providing support to install a secretariat where there is none such yet, is a *Liaison Iungens* brokerage behaviour that aims to bridge the human resource gap between central DRDLR and local DLRC governance level. This may take the form of a mediation in mere financial support, or may actually entail technical support in improving the quality of the selection procedure or provision of training. Technical support demonstrates a full TWP stance by the donor, as it selectively supports governmental change agents for an improved coordination, an active intervention that needs to be informed by additional analysis and understanding of the local context and actors to be effective.



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, previously studied inadequacies in the official ambition of implementing a coordinated integrated agrarian reform programme, have been reviewed through the lens of donor brokerage. The most likely and justifiable donor brokerage is formulated *ex ante*, based on the role and managerial strategy flowing from the official ODA recommendations in support of decentralisation. The fair degree of diversity of collective action problems, nodes, strategic management activities, and brokerage outcomes donors can provide assistance to, is again corroborated here. In this empirical material, in addition to distribution and coordination problems, even problems of disagreement may, in principle, be addressed by 'more politically aware' ODA donors. The latter by assisting in the clarification of policies and responsibilities, as well as in the resourcing of supervisory or mediatory instruments and staff. Managerial strategies may refer to gathering and synthesising information, implementing strategy, or facilitating adaptability, and objectives and roles of brokerage most likely pursued may be either *Liaison Iungens* or *Gaudens*. The application of the donor brokerage perspective to the continued fledgling coordination in implementing the official agrarian reform programme, confirms the previous observations that a 'more politically aware' ODA is needed and feasible. An ODA disposition towards brokerage and TWP, can help donors to approach the encumbered and complex state-led agrarian reform programme in South Africa rather from the dynamic and inclusive perspective of assistance to ownership-as-an-outcome (Booth 2011).

Chapter 8 Shortfalls in realising opportunities of collaboration

8.1 Introduction

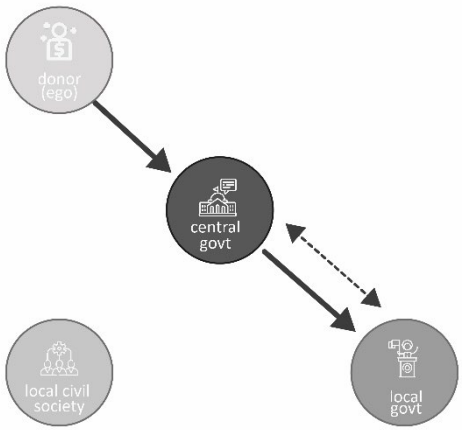
Collaboration has, globally, been an important innovation trend in the public sector over the past decades (Lægreid, Randma-Liiv, Rykkja and Sarapuu 2013). As described above, collaboration is understood as a subtype of coordination, when autonomous actors interact and negotiate (in)formally, and jointly create rules and structures which involve shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions (Thompson and Perry 2006). For clarity's sake, Emerson, Nabachi and Balogh (2012) add that this is to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished by the actors individually. Achieving shared and interdependent collaboration implies a dynamic synergetic process characterized by multiple viewpoints, contradictions and unintended outcomes. The promotion in South Africa's agrarian reform programme of collaboration with all sectors of society, and especially collaborative governance, proves indeed to be highly complex and context-dependent (GoSA 2010a and 2012b). In Waeterloos (2020 and 2021), we have identified and analysed a number of areas in which collaboration in these so-called invited spaces falls short of the ambitions elicited (Cornwall and Gaventa 2000). In this chapter, we review these collaboration problems systematically, and formulate the most likely and justifiable donor brokerages flowing from the official ODA recommendations in support of decentralisation, and the implications for and of TWP.

8.2 Collaboration by municipal management and staff

The lack of actual collaboration by municipal management and staff in implementing DRDLR's agrarian reform programme at the local level, reported in Waeterloos (2020), may be caused by (and may in turn lead to) distribution, coordination or even defection problems among these key stakeholders. As discussed in Chapter 4, until 2019, DRDLR was a national line department with a deconcentrated provincial and district-level presence. Other more devolved government spheres involved in agrarian reform are for instance provincial departments responsible for agriculture or water, District and their subordinate Local Municipalities (DM and LM) and their staff working in these very domains, as well as the respective central ministries responsible for oversight of the devolved domains. The instrument of municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), introduced to integrate various (non-)state actors' interests and coordinate service delivery in the municipal space,

has not been able to beef up institutional interplay, coordination and accountability, leaving the stage open for multiple collective action problems.

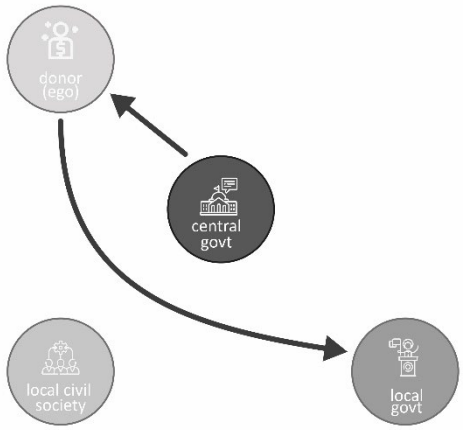
Where operational or human resources are said to be lacking for municipal actors – Local or overarching District Municipalities - to actively participate in the official attempts at integrating and coordinating the agrarian reform programme in the municipal space and its IDP, donors may assist and strengthen local governments through two avenues to ensure that responsibilities are sufficiently funded and subnational capacity is built. This partnering assistance to the implementation of strategy may, on the one hand, consist of taking up a Liaison role to contribute to a stronger (principal-agent) union between the central and local level when such resources are offered through the relevant supervisory central line ministry (e.g. DRLDR or ministry responsible for local government) (*Tertius Iungens*).



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

Another Liaison brokerage may result in a *Tertius Gaudens* outcome, when for instance donors are asked by the central ministry overseeing local government to directly support a better engagement by municipalities in the agrarian reform programme through their IDPs.

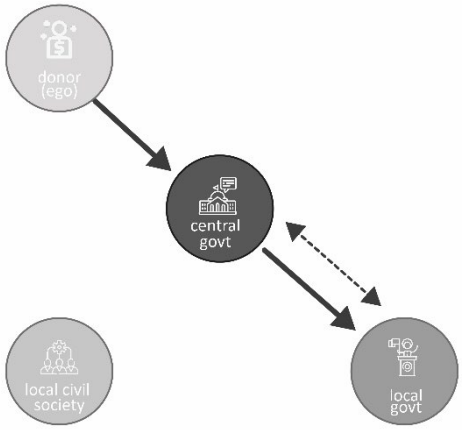


Liaison Gaudens cdl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

However, when defection by municipal actors is the cause of the collective action problem, a dedicated programme of strengthening decentralised leadership and performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) may be sourced and implemented with help from donors. In the latter case, the supervisory tasks of higher government tiers in South Africa's intergovernmental relations framework only allow a partnering strategy towards adapting and improving the feedback flow between the central and local level through the IDP mechanism. Such Liaison donor brokerage between differently affiliated government nodes will result in donor *Ego* (d) facilitating *Tertius Iungens* relations between central (c) and local level (l) (see figure below). The three different scenarios sketched here, illustrate that for donors to be effective brokers, they need to have a more sophisticated awareness of the different prevailing concerns and interests at central and local level,

the policies, strategies and rules in use, as well as be flexible and able to adapt to different causal factors and actors of change (Teskey 2021).



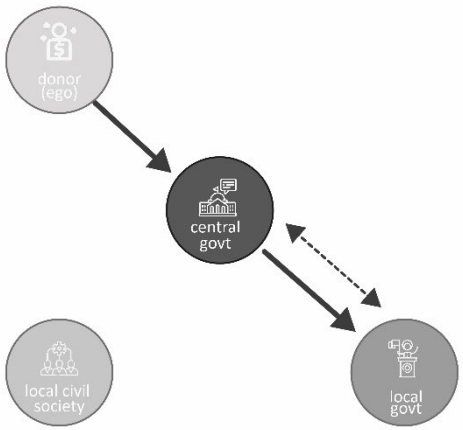
Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Defection
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

8.3 Participation of DRDLR staff in municipal IDPs

In turn, DRDLR staff are reported to seldom attend or contribute to the five-yearly multi-actor Integrated Development Planning (IDP) cycle of rural municipalities, a collaboration that is foreseen in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005 (Waeterloos 2020). This may point to distribution, coordination or defection problems. If it is a matter of lack of operational or human resources to participate in the IDP planning and review meetings and discussions, donors can motivate their assistance to provincial and local DRDLR officers to ensure that subnational capacity building, coordination, cross-jurisdictional cooperation, and all line responsibilities are sufficiently funded, that performance monitoring is strengthened, and that territorial disparities are reduced (OECD 2004 and 2019). This partnering modality to implement the collaboration strategies of

decentralisation, land reform and rural development especially at their intersection, is akin to the operational or human resources assistance discussion in Chapters 6 and 7. Donors can justifiably provide financial, operational, informational or human resources to the central-decentralised intergovernmental relations. Such role of Liaison donor brokerage between differently affiliated government nodes will result in a *Tertius Iungens* relation between central and local level. However, to counter problems due to defection by DRDLR staff, institutional support may be provided to improve hierarchical supervision and performance assessment of provincial DRDLR staff by the central level. Such TWP adaptation of the present intergovernmental feedback loop can only be a partnering and binding strategy of *Tertius Iungens* brokerage.



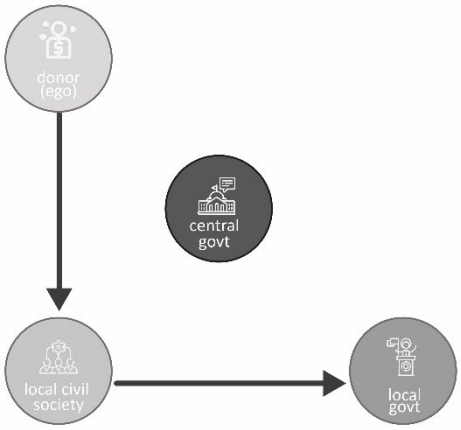
Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problem	Distribution/Coordination/Defection
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Implementing strategy/Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

8.4 Collaboration by other stakeholders

The disclosed lack of active collaboration by non-governmental stakeholders (in the broad sense, including private sector, NGOs, trade unions,…) in the implementation of DRDLR's agrarian reform programme may be linked to distribution problems, when due to for instance a lack of financial, infrastructural (e.g. road network) or informational resources, segments of local society find it difficult to participate (Waeterloos 2020). Others may not wish to participate due to disagreements with the proposed policies, or even because they pursue a counter-strategy of instability and discoordination (Holzinger 2003). In a contested domain such as agrarian reform, these obstructive strategies are not difficult to apprehend and have been actually observed in our research on DLRCs (see Waeterloos 2021). Hence, an affinity with TWP is a prerequisite for any effective donor support to take place.

Donors may assist in resolving the collective action problem of distribution or (persistent) disagreement in the encumbered agrarian reform programme, by surfing the opportunities officially invited spaces for participation in state-led agrarian reform offer, and adapt them to cater for broader and deeper participation by civil society. The most immediate port of call for such brokerage for improved governance lies in the node of civil society, through which the strengthening of innovative and experimental governance and of citizens' engagement for improved monitoring and accountability can be promoted (OECD 2019). Such brokerage will then, in our *ex ante* assessment, be a Liaison strategy geared toward maintaining temporarily a disunion between civil society and local government agents (*Tertius Gaudens*), until a more levelled playing field is secured for sustainable participation of and collaboration by non-governmental stakeholders with divergent capabilities. To contribute to a 'good fit' local resolution, such brokerage must be anchored in a more solid analysis of what is politically possible and technically required in the particular context, and which specific civil society reform agents need to be actively supported (Teskey 2021). Moreover, the static, snapshot view of the analysis tool used here, cannot predict much in terms of how dynamics may evolve towards a union or even a resolution of instability problems. Only a dynamic view can provide more insight in this, and in the kind of flexible, adaptive stance this requires on the part of ODA donors.



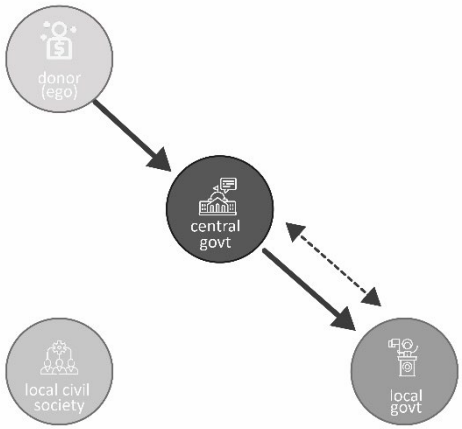
Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Distribution/Disagreement/Instability
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

8.5 Pursuit of common as well as own group's interests

The application of the System of Innovation (SI) framework in DLRCs reveals common, but also some very specific patterns in facilitating the introduction of collaborative land administration and management (Waeterloos 2021). Overall, opportunities for collaboration as an innovation to work are assessed fairly high in the three DLRCs, with an average score of 62 out of a maximum of 100 percent for a successful introduction. Certain DLRCs raise very specific support needs, which deserve further attention from a donor brokerage angle. In Sarah Baartman DLRC, for instance, members express a need for external assistance to improve their capabilities to defend and pursue the common as well as their own groups' interests (Waeterloos 2021). This present failing capability may hint at the existence of collective coordination or disagreement problems. Donors can try to contribute to the local resolution of these problems by scheming to adapt the institutional set-up of

decision-making within the DLRC. Through skills support, innovative and experimental governance and citizens' engagement may be strengthened (OECD 2019). In the case of DLRCs, this may require either a *Tertius Iungens* or a *Gaudens* strategy. If local DRDLR government officials are targeted for skills transfer and support in order to strengthen their assistance to DLRC members' pursuing their own as well as the common interest, donors would have to take up a Liaison role between central and local government (*Tertius Iungens*).

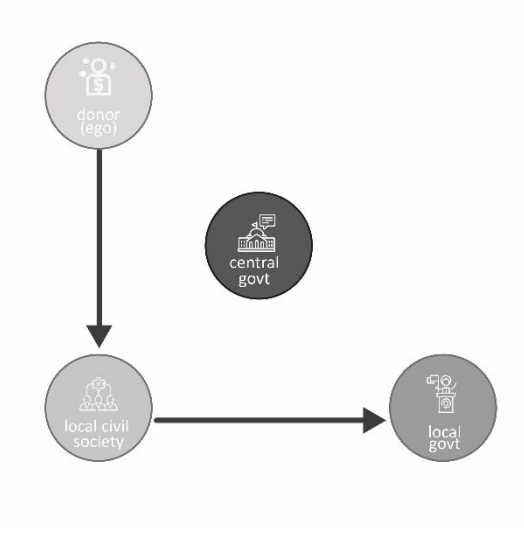


Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/Disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

However, akin to resource distribution problems discussed above, donor assistance may initially be more effective in strengthening innovative and experimental governance, promote citizens' engagement and improve processes of monitoring and accountability by directly beefing up the skills of the weaker civil society members to adapt, from within, the inadequate invited space for participation and collaboration (OECD 2019). The most imminent scheming brokerage will then be a Liaison strategy geared toward initial disunion between civil society and local government agents (*Tertius Gaudens*). Only with an openness towards TWP and based on further political economy

analyses, can donors make the informed choice for a feasible brokerage strategy best fitting the specific context and weaker actors.



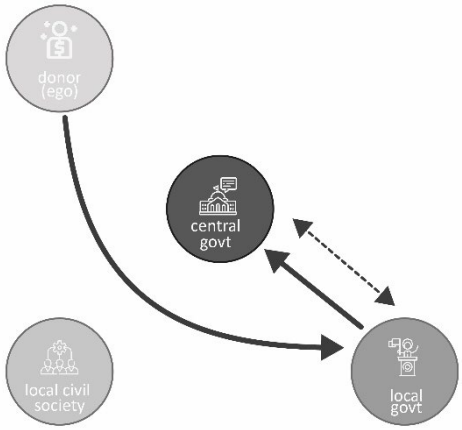
Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/Disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

8.6 Collaboration by local DLRC stakeholders in the elaboration of policies

The lack of avenues for DLRC stakeholders to provide input into central-level policy and legislative development, is identified by themselves as an area that may require external assistance (Waeterloos 2021). This reveals a disabled, broken feedback loop from local to central level. This is, as amply discussed in Part 1, a typical coordination problem in decentralisation, but may also hint at a more fundamental disagreement problem, should this blockage be motivated by a profound refusal at central level to act upon local level inputs. ODA donors can base their interest in scheming

to mend this feedback loop on the OECD's (2004 and 2019) recommendations to improve transparency, data collection and adequate coordination mechanisms across levels of government, as well as the importance of clarifying responsibilities assigned to different government levels. The most immediate strategy is to provide additional resources to enable the gathering, synthesising and flow of the relevant information as an input into the legal and policy environment. This may consist of sponsoring of formulation and decision-making workshops among the (weaker) members of the DLRC, hiring in expertise to generate local evidence-based information, or invest in IT infrastructure, training, or methodologies of report writing and record keeping to assure a longer-term information input strategy. This brokerage of input from (weaker) DLRC members to the central level policy formulation process, can only be effective through a Liaison *Tertius Iungens* strategy, since the objective is to strengthen the feedback between local and central government institutions. Given the observed weak central-local governmental relations, this is an illustration of a scheming strategy whereby a donor invests in the quality of governance by adapting and using the decentralisation architecture to link up with the higher levels. Again, to be effective, this requires a further understanding of the local political economy, the appropriate and feasible policy inputs and relevant change actors, and a longer-term commitment of adaptive support.

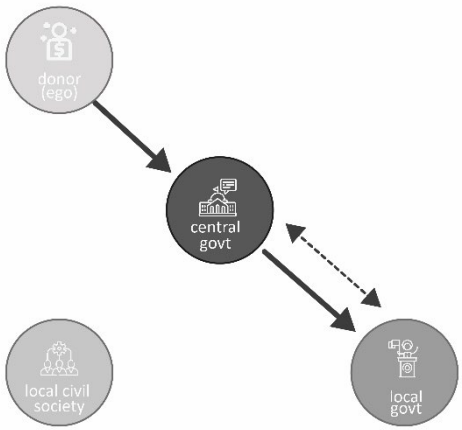


Liaison Iungens dlc

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/Disagreement
Hole and affiliation	Between local and central government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

8.7 Interaction between central and local level stakeholders

Sarah Baartman and Joe Gqabi DLRCs express the need to resolve a situation of failing interaction and communication on government policies and strategies between the central and local level (Waeterloos 2021). This is another example of coordination problems, similar to the discussion above around the input from the local into the central governance level. To assist in the resolution of such coordination problems, donors may mediate in gathering, synthesising and disseminating relevant information more effectively. This can be done through a donor *Liaison Iungen*s strategy, by strengthening such flow of information from central to local government, or the other way around. Because of the deconcentrated set-up of provincial DRDLR units as a support and supervisory department for the DLRCs, the most technically appropriate and politically feasible point of entry for donor brokerage will be through the central DRDLR government level. While displaying more sensitive TWP features such as aiming for good fit resolutions among competing interests and relying on political economy perspectives on reform and change, a donor may actually expect not to encounter too much resistance from the partner government. This is because, thanks to its alignment to the official DLRC strategy, such brokerage rather surfs than schemes.



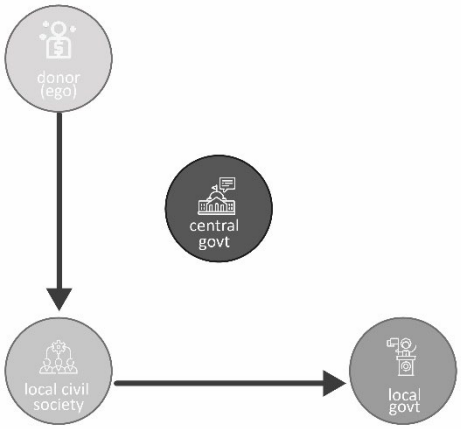
Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Synthesising information
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

8.8 More equal power relations

At face value, it seems too daunting an undertaking for an ODA agency to try and broker a solution toward better power relations in a DLRC, the need for which was for instance revealed in Joe Gqabi DLRC (Waeterloos 2021). However, disagreement based on distorted power relations can lead to instability problems such as elite capture and domination, which, as discussed in the first two chapters of this dissertation, are risks inherent to decentralisation. Hence the OECD's (2004 and 2019) advice to ODA donors to aid with creating systems of incentives for innovative and experimental governance, promoting citizens' engagement, transparency and public and local accountability. Addressing imbalances in power relations in a multi-actor DLRC, implies adapting its structural composition and institutional set-up, even up to modifying the constitutional rules of representation or decision-making to champion alternatives. Brokering such adaptation or

transformation of the official DLRC institutions, will most likely need to be initiated by and through relevant civil society DLRC members and the constituencies directly supporting them. This form of scheming by donors to liaise between three different affiliations is therefore expected to solely concentrate on this particular node in the network, and not target representatives of government or the more powerful private sector and non-governmental organisations. These will only be at the receiving end of advocacy for institutional change such brokerage with *Tertius Gaudens* intent supports, as illustrated below. Especially in this context-specific case of uneven power relations in DLRCs, effective brokerage depends firmly on applying the three TWP core principles of (further) political economy analyses, responsiveness to context by supporting the most relevant change agents within civil society, and flexibility and adaptability in the kind and period of assistance (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Teskey 2021).

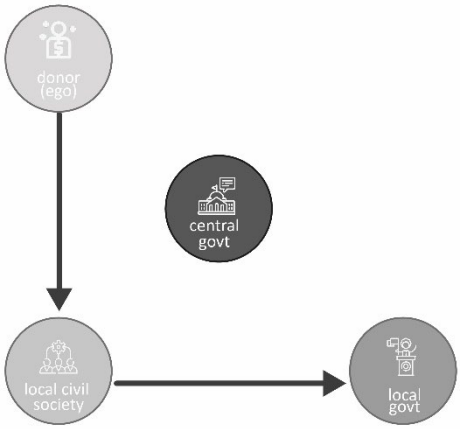


Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Disagreement/Instability
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability/Championing alternatives
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

8.9 Leadership

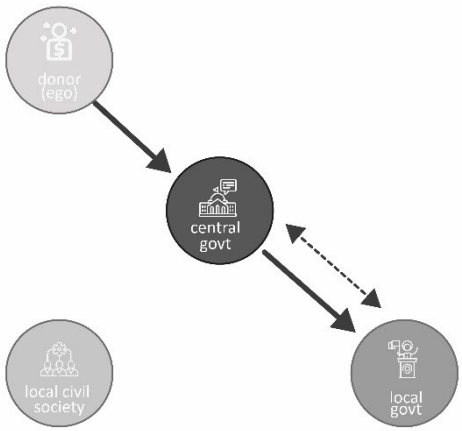
Finally, it is safe to assume that the lack of leadership reported by some DLRCs members entails, in the long run, a risk of coordination, disagreement, or even instability problems at the local level, if not sufficient guidance can be given to the DLRCs (Waeterloos 2021). To provide support from outside to enhance leadership is, again, a very delicate undertaking for a donor. Yet, in our *ex ante* view, two plausible brokerage trajectories can be found within the set-up of DLRC's invited yet disabled spaces for participation and collaboration by different stakeholders. This donor brokerage can be motivated by the OECD's emphasis on subnational capacity building and creating systems of incentives for good governance, transparency, citizen engagement and performance monitoring (OECD 2004 and 2019). This means a scheming on the part of the donor to adapt or even provide alternatives for the day-to-day strategic and operational management of the DLRC, for it to move towards its intended inclusive collaboration between various area-based stakeholders. Such an endeavour can only be successful if it acts on the ground rules of TWP and uses a political economy perspective to respond aptly and in a flexible and adaptive way to the local leadership situation in which relevant DLRC change agents are identified for support (Akmeemana, Booth, Brown, et al. 2015; Teskey 2021). As mentioned, two types of Liaison brokerage can be distinguished in our view. The first, most likely type of brokerage is for the donor to strengthen the demand-side of civil society DLRC members, through practical training to familiarise themselves with and lobby for formal leadership standards and the monitoring thereof within the DLRCs (*Tertius Gaudens*).



Liaison Gaudens dsl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/Disagreement/Instability
Hole and affiliation	Between local civil society and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability/Championing alternatives
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Gaudens*

A second option is to avail similar training or operational resources to central government to push for an improvement of formal leadership standards and their adherence among government officials and DLRC members. This approach to change can take the form of formal training sessions, M&E mechanisms in DLRCs, and more effective governmental performance evaluation mechanisms (*Tertius Iungens*). Because resistance can be expected to such improved M&E linked to divergent central and local interests, a TWP inclined ODA agency can position itself publicly better as surfing along the proposed DLRC policies, than as a schemer trying to facilitate institutional change locally in the limelight.



Liaison Iungens dcl

***Ex ante* assessment synopsis**	
Collective action problems	Coordination/Disagreement/Instability
Hole and affiliation	Between central and local government
Strategic management activity	Facilitating adaptability
Donor role	Liaison
Donor Brokerage outcome	*Tertius Iungens*

8.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, previously revealed shortfalls in the official ambition to promote the collaboration of relevant societal actors in building an integrated and inclusive rural economy, have been revisited from a likely, justifiable donor brokerage perspective. The diversity of collective action problems, nodes, strategic management activities, and brokerage outcomes donors can provide assistance to, is further backed up here. In the domain of defective collaboration in the agrarian reform programme, even problems of instability may, in principle, be responded to by donors. ODA agencies can, as highlighted in this chapter, justifiably provide support to adapting the institutional environment or even championing alternatives towards improved interest representation by weaker DLRC members, more equal power relations, and better leadership, either by publicly scheming or surfing along the proposed official policies and strategies. The application of the donor brokerage perspective in improving collaboration in South Africa's agrarian reform programme, confirms the previous observations that 'a more politically aware' ODA is required, likely to be effective, and provides ways of donor positioning beyond uncritical conformity versus principled rejection of the underperforming, encumbered state-led endeavour.

Chapter 9 Conclusion: patterns of potential donor brokerage in South Africa's agrarian reform programme

9.1 A diverse range of potential donor brokerage behaviours

In this second, empirical part of the dissertation, we reviewed our previous analyses of problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration in South Africa's agrarian reform process systematically to perform an *ex ante* assessment of possible donor brokerage behaviour. Since agrarian reform implies political processes of change, it follows that ODA donor interventions in this perilous arena need to be 'more politically aware' to yield effective outcomes systematically. The mandate of a bilateral ODA donor supposes working through, or at least with, partner government structures and institutions. This does not, however, refrain the OECD (2004 and especially 2019) to recommend for assistance to decentralisation not only technical, but also political interventions relating for instance to a widening and deepening of governance. In the more comprehensive TWP tradition, this implies the use of a political economy perspective; a nuanced understanding and responsiveness to the local (policy) context and actors; and a long term, flexible and adaptative approach of assistance (Teskey 2021). Guided by Shi, Markoczy and Dess' (2009) typology, we systematically identified the most likely and justifiable donor agency brokerage under the OECD recommendations, represented it visually, and summarised it in terms of core criteria considered in each *ex ante* assessment. Where deemed relevant, Fritzen Scott's (2007) four ideal-types of 'more politically aware' strategies of donor assistance to decentralisation were also explicitated. By applying the typology and methodology proposed in Chapter 4, a fairly diverse range of potential effective brokerage roles, strategies, outcomes and modalities can be recommended for an ODA donor agency that finds itself impressed or inclined toward TWP in the contested arena of state-led agrarian reform in South Africa. Distinctions can be made on the basis of diversity of collective action problems encountered (distribution, coordination, disagreement, defection or instability), managerial strategies (gathering and synthesising information, implementing strategy, facilitating adaptability, and championing alternatives), and objectives and roles of brokerage (*Liaison Iungens or Gaudens)* most likely pursued between the differently affiliated actors (donor, central government, local government, and local civil society).

This systematic *ex ante* exploration of the brokerage perspective points out a range of potential ODA donor assistance strategies. We find a number of roles and types of donor brokerage that are most likely for donors who decide to provide assistance to South Africa's encumbered endeavour of

agrarian reform through decentralisation, rural development and land reform. Table 3 provides an indicative summary of all identified triad brokerage scenarios (type of brokerage) in this empirical part (Part 2) of the dissertation and their prevalence (frequency), distinguished by type of local collective action problem and recommended aid agencies' strategic activities. The nodes retained in the analysis are simplified as: donor *Ego*, central government, local government actors (provincial or district DRDLR; DLRC; District and Local Municipalities), and actors of local private sector, NGOs, trade and farmer unions, all grouped under the denominator 'civil society'. The nodes involved in the brokerage are depicted in a grey shade, and the flow of resources follows the alphabetic order, ranging from A to C.

While Table 3 reflects only a coarse overview of possible *ex ante* opportunities, and not of donor preferences or brokerage actually observed, it does provide a first informed indication of justifiable, appropriate and feasible opportunities, roles and outcomes a disposition by donors to TWP and broker might be composed of and result in. Given the focus of our three included studies on lack of policy coherencies, inclusion, coordination, and collaboration in South Africa's official endeavour of tackling the slow progress in land reform through a new integrated agrarian reform programme, it is not surprising to find that most of the underlying collective action problems in our review, centre around coordination (frequency of 24) and distribution of resources (frequency of 16). It is important to reemphasise the potential blockages due to other factors such as disagreements among stakeholders (14), which may in fact persist as defection (5) or instability (6) problems. In these *ex ante* assessments, the predominant strategic activities aid agencies are likely to engage in, are facilitating the adaptability of the institutional set-up where the collective action blockage is situated (32). This underscores that brokerage can imply an active, change-oriented role of an ODA donor in improving partners' policies and programmes beyond the binary of mere uncritical partnering or damage control/withdrawal when faced with less stable or favourable partnership conditions (Fritzen Scott 2007). When a 'more politically aware' donor deems the partner country's programme an important development strategy -such as an 'inclusive and integrated rural economy' that the South African agrarian reform programme purports to pursue-, but finds it does not fall within the best practice or best fit category, our review illustrates that important surfing, coping and scheming behaviour can be engaged in, to try to improve the effectiveness and ownership of such development strategies 'as an outcome' (Booth 2011). It is important to highlight that such management activity of facilitating adaptability can be complemented with other strategic measures. These are for example support to implementing good fit elements or aspects of the official agrarian reform strategy (23 times identified in Table 3), help with improving the availability and communication of information (5), and even support to the championing of (new) alternatives

(5). This is a far broader range of activities than the above-depicted binary often laid out to donors in 'less than good' practice-conditions. Moreover, and not unimportant for official and bilateral development cooperation relations, in most cases, the TWP brokerage intends to gear towards a binding of the nodes in the agrarian reform network (*Liaison Iungens*) (39 times identified in Table 3) rather than aiming for disunion (*Liaison Gaudens*) (26).

Table 3: Identified potential triad brokerage scenarios by collective action problem and aid managers' strategic activities

Donor *Ego*	Central Government	Local Government	Local Civil Society	Collective Action Problem	Aid Managers' Strategic Activities	Type of Brokerage	Frequency
A	B	C		Distribution	Implement strategy	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	8
A	B	C		Distribution	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	2
A	B	C		Coordination	Synthesise information	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	2
A	B	C		Coordination	Implement strategy	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	8
A	B	C		Coordination	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	6
A	B	C		Disagreement	Synthesise information	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	1
A	B	C		Disagreement	Implement strategy	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	1
A	B	C		Disagreement	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	4
A	B	C		Defection	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	3
A	B	C		Instability	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dcl)	1
A		C	B	Distribution	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	3
A		C	B	Coordination	Synthesise information	*Liaison Iungens* (dsl)	1
A		C	B	Coordination	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	2
A		C	B	Coordination	Champion alternatives	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	1
A		C	B	Disagreement	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	5
A		C	B	Disagreement	Champion alternatives	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	2
A		C	B	Defection	Synthesise information	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	1
A		C	B	Instability	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	3
A		C	B	Instability	Champion alternatives	*Liaison Gaudens* (dsl)	2
B	A	C		Distribution	Implement strategy	*Liaison Gaudens* (cdl)	3
B	A	C		Coordination	Implement strategy	*Liaison Gaudens* (cdl)	3
B	A	C		Defection	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Gaudens* (cdl)	1
A	C	B		Coordination	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dlc)	1
A	C	B		Disagreement	Facilitate adaptability	*Liaison Iungens* (dlc)	1

In summary, we find in the above-qualified *ex ante* assessments only one role that a single ODA donor can take up. That is the role of Liaison brokering between three differently affiliated nodes. In the majority of scenarios, this will imply a strategy of enabling a union between the two other nodes (*Tertius Iungens*), or what we call a *Liaison Iungens* approach. Especially when local civil society is involved as a node, the Liaison brokerage can be undertaken with the intent to bridge but maintain the boundaries (*Tertius Gaudens*) between the poorly connected governmental and non-governmental actors, until such a moment that the capacity of relevant members of civil society has been built up so as to not be easily thwarted by governmental resources or institutions.

9.2 Limitations of the elaborated donor brokerage perspective

While the donor brokerage perspective elaborated here suggests that more options are open to TWP inclined donors to assist in addressing the many barriers in South Africa's agrarian reform programme, it also exposes conceptual and methodological limitations. The review of our previous studies has been affected by the confines posed by the simplified triad representation of brokering, which limits the brokerage arena in collective action problems to three nodes only. The mandate of a bilateral ODA donor agency, which supposes working through or at least with South Africa's partner government structures and institutions, limits the identifiable relevant nodes in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus each time to three out of four nodes - donor, local government, central government or civil society (in itself a composite of actors of local private sector, NGOs, trade and farmer unions, …). As a consequence, this limitation also constricts the assumed motivation for brokerage to the official ODA recommendations for decentralisation, as used here (OECD 2004 and 2019). We pointed out in Chapter 4 that these ODA recommendations and more comprehensively those of TWP, not only suppose a better understanding of the local context specificities, political priorities and implementation constraints at the recipient partner side, but, by extension, also of those upstream in the domestic political arena of donors (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Anderson 2001; Booth 2012; Winters 2012; Teskey 2021). Donors may have different political strategy, scenario, and actor preferences in supporting the official pursuit of an integrated and inclusive rural economy. They may for instance be inclined toward support to civil society or local government rather than central government actors, or emphasise market rather than land access. Unfortunately, the model of triad brokerage and our available empirical material, do not allow to extend the exploration into the latter political dynamics at donor side. In this dissertation, the focus is limited to how ODA donor implementing agencies may broker in resolving local downstream

collective action blockages and align to the needs and concerns of TWP, in light of ODA recommendations (OECD 2004 and 2019 especially). These recommendations provide a range of options donors can justifiably consider from the perspective of aid effectiveness in the politically sensitive domain of agrarian reform. In the different possible context-specific brokerage paths deemed appropriate and feasible, donors' political stance and preferences may implicitly underly the choice between for instance a Liaison role which steers towards disunion between civil society and local government rather than one of union between central and local government, as in the support to an improved pursuit of common and own interests (see paragraph 8.5). The inclusion of upstream donors' political, institutional or operational preferences may refine the analysis proposed here, but falls out of the conceptual and empirical scope of the present dissertation.

These limitations and simplifications also highlight the coarseness of the criterion of affiliation to determine the nodes involved in the actual brokerage. While national and local governments, civil society or ODA donors may each be structurally grouped into one network category of affiliation, they may know considerable internal differentiation and incoherencies, and aggravate collective action blockages due to their own problems in achieving coordination, harmonisation and complementarity (Waeterloos and Renard 2013; Tyler Dickovicks 2014). The analyses discussed in this empirical part also reveal the limitations of a static *ex ante* assessment, which applies a once-off logic of most likely political- or operational-strategic behaviour to a particular hole, rather than relying on actually observed behaviour and its subsequent effects on network density and connectedness. A dynamic view on downstream or repeated brokerage effects may shed a more realistic light on some day-to-day practices in development assistance to decentralisation, and definitely aligns better to the recommendations for long-term commitment and engagement (OECD 2019; Teskey 2021). If a donor wishes to apply an approach of TWP, a longer-term strategy of (iterated) brokerage and flexible, adaptive support must be considered, which goes beyond the confined once-off snapshot of three nodes in the network. Especially in the case of disagreement, defection or instability problems or *Tertius Gaudens* strategies, such a dynamic approach to the analysis of brokerage may provide important lessons for resolution of blockages over time, and dispel the idea of brokerage as only a temporary fix (Spiro, Acton and Butts 2013; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014; Meehan and Plonski 2017). Unfortunately, neither the triad model nor the empirical material at hand allow such a dynamic approach. Lastly, we need to reemphasise that by engaging in this dissertation with the question what brokerage role ODA donors may play in the resolution of local collective action problems, we do not and cannot imply that other external non-ODA actors in the plexus are not able to engage in brokerage strategies. The literature review in Chapter 3 bears ample testimony to instances of brokerage by such agents at local and national level. However, the

focus of this study is on the potential of brokering at the local level by 'more politically aware' bilateral ODA donors' implementing agencies as external parties.

9.3 Implications for a 'more politically aware' donor positioning

Despite the fact that this review of previously identified problems relies on a generalisation of the diversity of collective action problems encountered and actors involved, and on a simplification of managerial strategies that aid agencies may deploy, objectives of brokerage assumingly pursued, and brokerage roles that donors can enact, these *ex ante* analyses of potential donor brokerage allow to go beyond merely repeating the impressive complexities, conditionalities and particularities in ODA to the encumbered agrarian reform programme. Or to paraphrase Teskey (2015), they point out that ODA may indeed move 'beyond the hand-wringing that all development is political'. The reviews convey a more varied and diverse picture of potential support by an ODA donor who finds itself impressed or inclined toward TWP in the contested arena of state-led agrarian reform. By revisiting the previously identified blockages in terms of mostly policy-induced collective action holes which may be brokered by third party-actors, we have been able to provide a few systematic pointers for a better understanding and positioning of the role of donors in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. Our analysis corroborates Booth's (2012) rebuttal of principal-agent monocropping, and illustrates that *a priori* no single node at the recipient side (e.g. central government, local government or civil society) is best fit for resolving the identified collective action problem. Depending on the collective action blockage identified, it is in some cases as a bilateral donor most technically appropriate and politically feasible, at least in a first move, to opt for direct support to certain segments of civil society rather than central or local government actors. This can in principle be quite openly justified, as in the South African agrarian reform governance architecture during the period under review, invited spaces for participation are formally provided. Brokering better access and quality participation in these formal invited spaces are, as demonstrated above, in some cases the best points of entry at hand for a bilateral ODA donor. What confirms this finding of alternative positions for donors other than the promotion of institutional isomorphic 'best practices', uncritical alignment to unstable or ineffective partner policies and systems, temporary damage control or full withdrawal, is a variety of strategic activities that aid managers can deploy in their brokerage behaviour. These range from gathering and synthesising information, implementation of strategy, facilitating adaptability, and even championing alternatives, with a predominance in our review of supporting institutional and operational adaptations. This brokerage behaviour may thus buttress surfing or coping/scheming approaches in less-than-best-fit

decentralisation and agrarian reform environments as the one in South Africa. And donors may in this context do this quite openly, justifying their intent and behaviours on the basis of a range of OECD, EU and other recommendations for donor support to local decentralisation policies and implementation.

In brief, notwithstanding the complexity and messiness engrained in adopting a perspective of brokering in multiple collective action problem situations, our assessments illustrate that donors can play a role in decentralisation beyond the prescripts of resolving principal-agent problems from a viewpoint of best practices or best fits of economic development and good governance. And this alternative good fit role does not necessarily rely on an uncritical engagement with less than ideal or -palatable partner policies or implementation mechanisms, which would donors only leave a choice between cooptation on the one hand or damage control, institutional bypass and eventual exit on the other (Fritzen Scott 2007; Chasukwa and Banik 2019). On the contrary. We find in our *ex ante* assessment of brokerage opportunities and strategies, that donors can actually play a very active role and assist in addressing the various identified blockages, by surfing, coping or scheming towards better fitting yet locally embedded solutions. In the case of South Africa's official endeavour of agrarian reform, these opportunities, strategies and outcome orientations are in first instance informed by the required alignment to the official strategies of an inclusive transformation of the rural economy and society, and necessary corrections of policy-induced incoherencies therein. Donors working within this framework of brokerage instead of one of principal-agent relations, can engage justifiably and 'more politically aware' with a wider range of actors and of collective action problems than the traditional ones of coordination and distribution. Important (potential) blockages such as disagreements among stakeholders, instability and even defection problems, can thus be included in official assistance programmes.

Such assistance confirms the need for a deeper understanding of the complex and multi-facetted local context, actors and political economy, and a flexible, adaptive attitude in implementation. We have demonstrated that this does not necessarily require an extensive investment in a deep body of particularistic and unique localised knowledge. It does, however, reveal the important role of donor agencies' strategic settings, methodologies and staff capacity. They need to allow and be able to tune in into local specificities and particularities, on which the opportunity and success of brokerage depends. This can only be realised through an acknowledgement that this range of TWP activities belong to the donor's enabling role and can make a difference. The System of Innovation (SI) framework we adapted and elaborated in the context of DLRCs (Waeterloos 2021), provides for instance a more structured approach towards the assessment by stakeholders of (a want of) collaboration, external brokerage opportunities, and strategic management activities. It is easily

adaptable to specific conditions and further detailed information needs, and most importantly, information can be fairly easily collected, processed, analysed, interpreted and fed back. While clearly prone to improvement, the ease of understanding, administering and iterative feeding back to various internal and external actors involved, addresses some of the concerns of a systematic TWP approach towards a better understanding and engaging with local and multiple collective action blockages and actors. The adaptation of a SI framework to the complexities of decentralised land administration and management platforms as in the case of DLRCs, illustrates that such a political economy exercise can (further) provide localised and systematic information for brokerage. TWP effectively requires, however, also a more open and pragmatic assessment by the donor of the degree of ownership of partners' policies, and a flexible disposition by both towards different and complex applications of official development assistance resources - such as partnering, surfing, coping or scheming. And this with the explicit mutual understanding that such pragmatic assistance may be required iteratively and over an extended time period.

Our explorative assessment of areas for external support in DLRCs reveals, on the other hand, that some of the potential brokerage support identified by the DLRC members are not necessarily compatible with traditional principal-agent donor priorities. An example is the request by DLRC members to finance the operational and human resources of the district-based land governance platforms (Waeterloos 2021). In the principal-agent approach, it may be easier to justify funding capacity strengthening of DLRCs through training, than by subsidising salaries or allowances. These are in principle part of the public sector overheads, for which the partner government is thought to be responsible as principal. The expressed need of strengthening DLRCs by financing 'warm bodies' is easier to tackle from a TWP perspective on well-informed, context-specific and adaptive responses to resolving local collective action blockages that jeopardise inclusion and collaboration. Such shift in approach is obviously linked to the willingness of donors to manage risks; investment in skills is less cooptational and politically risky, than investment in the machinery of a slow and contested agrarian reform programme (Waeterloos 2020). In that sense, the wider range of TWP options available to donors by adopting the brokerage framework may be an asset, as for instance demonstrated in the temporary funding by a donor of additional technical government staff to assist with the urgent dissemination and implementation of the 2013 Spatial Planning and Land Use management (SPLUM) legislation (Waeterloos and Cockburn 2017). By adopting the brokerage perspective, such *Liaison Iungens* brokerage by the donor between the central and local level implementation can then be openly justified as an external active yet temporary surfing or scheming donor intervention to improve the coherence of partner's policies. This is a more comfortable position for the donor to defend, than to be considered as funding a fully fungible partnering alignment to a partner's under-

resourced strategy of agrarian reform through a principal-agent lens, which is prone to a Samaritan's Dilemma. In summary, the application of a donor brokerage perspective to the complexities of agrarian reform as experienced and studied in our own professional capacity, provides in our view some useful framings, orientations and outstanding research themes in the complex management of 'more politically aware' official development assistance. These will be discussed in the last part, the overall conclusion of this dissertation.

PART 3 CONCLUSION:

Can donor brokerage break the mould?

10. Does the perspective of donor brokerage in collective action blockages hold?

We have started off this dissertation with our own coarse research question as development manager, relating to the role ODA donor agencies may play in more effectively assisting contested, complex and underperforming public programmes of decentralisation, rural development and land reform such as the one in South Africa. We found in the academic literature on decentralisation many assumptions, normative biases and caveats. As Booth (2012) and Tidemand (2010) indicate, such qualified and conditional pointers by academic researchers are not always what a manager looks for in his/her quest for informed and solid advice. The lack of clear-cut orientations in how ODA donors can provide more effective assistance to decentralisation, rural development and land reform, is not due to a lack of paradigmatic prevalence or academic interest in the topic. On the contrary, the conceptual and empirical complexity of decentralisation in the public sector is demonstrated by a wide range of studies. This makes that the concept encompasses different, even competing interpretations, priorities and claims. We conclude from our literature review that decentralisation is not only a complex moving target conceptually. It is also a dynamic empirical phenomenon, involving various actors at different scales and levels, and subject to multiple constraining and facilitative conditionalities. It is therefore critical, in our view, to consider decentralisation as a complex, ongoing dynamic process which gears for a delicate balance between and coordination of local- and central-led governance (Smoke 2003). The emphasis in research on decentralisation must lie on studying this central-local dynamic and accompanying multi-level governance relations, rather than focussing on one tier of government or sector only. The mainstream paradigm of the past decades for ODA support to decentralisation in developing countries, links decentralisation to a more effective, efficient and democratic production and distribution of public goods and services. ODA support to decentralisation is depicted as a linear chain that connects a donor government to a recipient country via various intermediary actors and organisations in diverse principal-agent relationships. However, this mainstream view glosses over the many well-documented intricacies and complexities in donors' support to decentralisation. ODA to decentralisation as a complex, ongoing dynamic process between local- and central-led governance, involves a mesh of governmental and non-governmental, international, national, local organisational and individual actors. A range of recommendations have therefore, over the years, insisted that ODA donors should improve their analysis of the local context, coordination, and commitment to longer-term support. This ambition to be 'more politically aware' is commendable, but TWP requires in practical terms far more broadening and deepening of the localised understanding and of assistance approaches than has been the case thus far. Yet, aspirations and

hopes for best fit instead of best practice solutions through such a better understanding of local contexts, are hindered by its (implicit) adherence to a simplistic principal-agent perspective, which assumes that institutional interplay between the various actors will eventually take place. We follow Booth's rebuttal of the predominance of this perspective in favour of a more realistic, pragmatic, but more difficult one, which views the arena of ODA to decentralisation as replete with multiple and diverse collective action problems, which require 'good fit' local solutions to be sustainable (Booth 2012). We therefore opt to refer to this mesh of interlinked actors as the 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus'. Such diverse collective action problems have been highlighted in previous analyses of South Africa's agrarian reform programme, with its well-documented ideological controversies, policy incoherencies and short-term ineffectiveness in implementation. Given the highlighted complexity, and not in the least in an encumbered area such as agrarian reform, how are external actors then expected to distinguish between and deal with the variety and multiplicity of context-specific collective action blockages and resolution mechanisms? Which approaches and tools can donor agencies use to contribute and support such variety and particularity of localised mechanisms of 'good fit' systematically? Little concrete guidance is entrenched in donors' increasing acknowledgement to become 'more politically aware', and more evidence on how to TWP effectively is due.

Portraying the aid-to-decentralisation plexus as characterised by multiple and diverse blockages in the central-local flow of resources and governance due to a range of collective action problems, allows us to combine Booth's (2012) perspective with the one of brokerage in social network theory. In this inductive combining of theoretical perspectives, we consider these collective action blockages to create holes – structurally or institutionally - in the central-local relationship across the political, fiscal and administrative scales. Such blockages require, in the end, 'good fit' local solutions to be sustainably resolved. And these solutions are often not found in agents merely actually implementing principal's strategies and instructions, but rather in mediating various actors' interests towards timeous effective collective action. It is in taking on the brokerage opportunities such holes between non- or lowly-connected actors in the plexus present, that donors may theoretically have a role to play as third parties. By adopting the broader definition of brokerage whereby one actor influences, manages, or facilitates interactions between other actors, a differentiation can be made between the network structure in which can be brokered, the specific opportunities grasped, as well as the actual brokerage outcomes aimed for (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014). While in the political economy of aid literature, attention is increasingly paid to reframing the role of ODA donors

from implementing or managing agents to brokers, such reframing requires further theoretical and empirical elaboration (Paulo and Klingebiel 2016; Sharma 2016).

We have in this dissertation focused on scrutinising whether the proposed combined perspective of multiple collective action blockages and brokerage can provide indications on how ODA donor agencies may, in practice, engage more systematically and effectively as brokers in supporting the local resolution of collective action blockages in South Africa's agrarian reform programme. Since decentralisation in general, and agrarian reform in particular, represent political processes of change, for ODA donor interventions to be effective in these perilous arenas, they need to incline to TWP. We have applied the proposed perspective to three of our previous research contributions that raise concerns about the agrarian reform programme's aspired policy coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration between 2011 and 2019. The application of this combined perspective has taken the form of an *ex ante* assessment of likely and justifiable brokerage behaviour, from the point of view of ODA donors willing to assist in the resolution of collective action problems, informed by the official recommendations for support to decentralisation (OECD 2004 and 2019; Booth 2012; EU 2016). The review of our previous studies from the brokerage perspective of bridging or binding holes in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus, has, however, not only been confined by these recommendations and mandate of a bilateral ODA donor agency. It has also been limited to a static assessment of holes and opportunities, the official logic of most likely political-strategic or operational-strategic support interventions, and the simplified open triad representation of brokerage across holes. We conclude from our reviews that bilateral ODA donors can, in most of the previously identified problem areas, justify their role as broker in the dynamic multi-level governance relations of the agrarian reform programme, as these are predominantly hindered by policy-driven structural or institutional holes. Agrarian reform - *in se* a very contested area – is in South Africa marked by a high degree of fluidity, disjoint and ineffectiveness in the official policymaking and implementation in pursuit of an inclusive and integrated rural economy (see for instance Waeterloos 2020). Fritzen Scott's (2007) ideal-types of surfing or coping/scheming as donor assistance modalities seem, for this reason, more applicable than the partnering one of incremental change in an enabling governance environment. We find in our *ex ante* assessments that there is only one role that single ODA donors can take up: the one of Liaison between three differently affiliated nodes. In the majority of scenarios, this will imply a strategy of binding between the two other nodes (*Tertius Iungens*), or what we call a *Liaison Iungens* approach. Especially when strengthening the capacity of local civil society in its wider sense - including private sector, farmer

organisations and trade unions - is involved, the Liaison brokerage can be undertaken with the intent to maintain the boundaries with governmental nodes (*Tertius Gaudens*) for the time being.

By revisiting the previously identified concerns of weak coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration as collective action blockages through the lens of donor brokerage, we have been able to provide some pointers for a better understanding and positioning of the role of ODA donors in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. Notwithstanding the complexity and messiness engrained in adopting a perspective of brokering in multiple collective action-problem situations, our assessments illustrate that donors can play a role in decentralisation beyond the prescripts of best practice or best fit solutions, and assist in the local search and try-out of good fit solutions. And this alternative good fit role does not necessarily only rely on an uncritical engagement or collusion with less-than-ideal partner policies or implementation mechanisms. On the contrary, we find in our review that donor agencies can actually play a very active role and address the various identified blockages in the compromised process of agrarian reform, by surfing, coping or scheming towards better fitting and, in principle, more locally embedded solutions. As illustrated, this active role can take on various forms, depending on the collective action problems faced, available structural brokerage opportunities, opportune or allowed management strategies, and strategic outcome orientations in terms of (temporarily) preserving or tearing down boundaries across governance levels. Our assessments also underscore that in the precarious domain of South Africa's official endeavour of agrarian reform, the effective uptake of such an active role implies observing the core principles of TWP - political economy approaches; a nuanced understanding of and responsiveness to the local context; and flexibility and adaptation in design and implementation (Teskey 2021).

The brokerage opportunities, strategies and outcome orientations identified in the second part of this dissertation, are in first instance informed by the official strategies of an inclusive transformation of the rural economy and society, and necessary corrections of weaknesses in policy coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration therein. We find that donors working within this framework of brokerage instead of one of principal-agent relations, can justifiably engage with a wider range of underlying local collective action problems (and actors) than the traditional ones of coordination and distribution. Important (potential) blockages such as disagreements, instability and even defection problems can be included in the official assistance programmes. In brief, we find that by adopting the perspective of brokerage to assist in resolving local collective action blockages, bilateral ODA donor assistance to decentralisation can break out of the confined mainstream mould of principal-agent relations and their assumptions of best practice or best fit. Breaking out of this

mould opens a wider variety of politically aware strategic activities that aid managers can deploy. These range from gathering and synthesising information, implementation of strategy, facilitating adaptability, and even up to championing alternatives.

It is in conclusion our view, that the perspective on donor support as brokerage across holes in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus we developed here, helps to orient donors in steering a course in complex, unstable and sensitive development domains, such as agrarian reform. Since decentralisation and agrarian reform are, as argued above, intrinsically arenas of political change, ODA donors are bound to deploy TWP strategies for more effective assistance. The brokerage perspective allows then a more systematic explanation of some of the actual, more political negotiations and translations that take place within development agencies, and frames some of the practical options faced, activities undertaken and results that can be obtained (Waeterloos and Cockburn (2017). We have also shown here that, in addition to literature review and PEA, the need for brokerage can, to some extent, be fairly easily identified and transparently communicated through (the further refinement of) a user-friendly assessment tool such as the SI framework on collaboration we developed (Waeterloos 2021). The feasibility of such user-friendly assessment of system opportunities for improved collaboration depends, however, most likely on the degree to which the organisational cultures of both donors and recipients can accommodate and frame the principles of brokerage transparently and purposefully. While brokerage may in worse cases raise associations with backdoor manoeuvres and lobbying, we have found in our empirical review that adopting the perspective of donor brokerage in agrarian reform, may entail a distinct added value of aid effectiveness. More than in a principal-agent perspective, it can clear the interaction arena between donors and recipients of implicit assumptions and caveats related to for instance results-based management or mutual accountability (Booth 2011). By framing the use of external assistance to help unlock various local collective action problems based on shared context, political economy or SI analyses, both parties can safely portray and justify their actions as a genuine concern of seeking good fit rather than best fit or -practice solutions in unchartered territory. This take on the role of donors, allows (or may push) them to more openly TWP, surf on changes, and cope or scheme towards incremental improvements, while ownership of development policies can be deepened, widened and consolidated further – as an outcome. This is a more pragmatic but also more challenging position for both donors and recipients in terms of alignment, harmonisation and mutual accountability. And it defies in such fluid, disjointed policy development and implementation environments, the simplistic binaries in aid relations of donor-recipient, principal-agent, central-local, state-non-state actor, and partnering-exit. In brief, conceptually, ODA to decentralisation is

much more complex than merely supporting a centrally led reform process, and donors can have a much more active role in it through a wider range of interventions. Taking on the perspective of multiple collective action blockages allows a donor to engage in TWP more openly on specific areas of concerns through a selective support of brokerage to a range of (non-)governmental actors, while still aligning to official reform policies and invited spaces of participation. Existing and/or additional analyses need to buttress this brokerage for donors to fully appreciate what is technically most appropriate and politically feasible – both on the donor and recipient side. It thus widens the spectrum of working options available to donors between full alignment to ineffective partner strategies on the one hand, or damage control and exit on the other (Fritzen Scott 2007). In brief, 'more politically aware' donor brokerage in supporting the locally owned resolution of collective action blockages, can and should become part of more rigorous theories of change and action of both donors and recipients (Teskey 2021). However, how can this be done in a more systematic way?

11. Can this approach be systematised in development management agencies?

It comes as no surprise, that we cannot identify nor define a blueprint for systematic donor brokerage in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. That is obvious from the many theoretical and empirical instances of complexity and context-sensitivity we have not refrained from pointing out, as well as from the specific limitations of the applied methodology, as outlined above. It follows that there may be many more possible combinations of holes, opportunities, management activities, motivations and intended outcomes that donor broker behaviour may cover. These depend in first instance on the specific governance context a donor agency has to partner, surf or cope/scheme in, the extent of repeated, dynamic and adaptive support one foresees in the longer term, as well as the number and type of actors one would want to engage with or reach. In other words, observing the three key tenets of TWP allows to sketch out 'technically appropriate and politically feasible' brokerage scenarios (Teskey 2021). However, some of the brokerage support needs that were identified by the recipients, are not compatible with the donor's vision, strategies, priority interests or mandate. We discussed the example that financing the actual operational and human resource blockages of DLRCs is riskier for the reputation of a donor, than funding broader training programmes in for instance legal or management topics. In some of these cases, more informal or *ad hoc* types of brokerage may be available and preferred by a donor over the open, transparent and systematic bilateral brokerage interventions we deem feasible here. The likely presence of many

more possible opportunities and combinations for brokerage does not make it easier to lay out a systematic approach to brokerage.

While in the presently prevailing Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, global public goods and brokering of the resolution of transnational collective action problems become more prominent (Sharma 2016), brokering solutions locally stretches far beyond the construction of indicators of global sustainable development and attempts at localising them. As donor brokerage eventually boils down to the intended and actual uptake of a range of singular opportunities through a variety of strategic management practices in complex situations, it is difficult to design universal and systematic prescripts for such locally adapted strategies. To a certain extent, a further systematisation of this approach can, however, be conceived. First, by systematically providing more space and guidance to both donor and recipients for the innovative and creative use of local context analysis (e.g., PEA), structured multi-actor dialogue facilities, and joint vision formulation, buttressed by codes of more modest, transparent and less-biased conduct in the spirit of ownership-as-an outcome and respective mutual accountabilities (Booth 2011). Secondly, we have argued above that while donor-brokered assistance confirms the need for a much more profound understanding of and working with the complex and multi-facetted local context, actors and political economy, it does not necessarily require a deep-seated body of particularistic and unique localised knowledge. The System of Innovation (SI) framework we adapted and elaborated in Waeterloos (2021) is an illustration of a more structured approach to the assessment of external brokerage opportunities. Additional focused and applied political economy analyses tailored on specific issues, actors, sectors or themes, may be hauled in to provide further detailed information. Such instruments can however only deliver valid and reliable information if both donor and recipients' strategic settings allow, and staff are able, to tune in into local specificities and particularities on which the opportunity and success of brokerage may depend. As argued in the preceding paragraph, this can only be realised through an acknowledgement that brokerage activities are part and parcel of the donor's role and mandate. Such stance requires a more open and pragmatic assessment by the donor of the degree of ownership of partners' policies and of the need for real-life, good fit alternatives to best practice monocropping in most development contexts. In other words, a third pointer is to promote a more systematic disposition by both donor and recipient towards pragmatic, flexible, and complex applications of official development assistance resources –such as for example in the case of scheming toward an improved skills profile of DLRCs secretariats or participation of weaker civil society DLRC members. And this with the explicit mutual understanding that such pragmatic assistance and TWP may be required over an extended time period. Fourthly, in line with the spirit of Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approaches (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013)

to develop more realistic, pragmatic and modest perspectives on TWP and ownership-as-an-outcome, the transparent reporting *ex post* of context-specific or particularistic (failed) experiences of brokering in case study research, monitoring and evaluation reports, can be more systematically promoted as evidence base (Teskey 2021). As such, these boundary objects are then not only useful within the specific triad under consideration, but become part of the bigger picture of feedback loops within and between donor and recipient authorities as learning organisations.

Obviously, as highlighted above, promoting such alternative perspective of brokering by donor agencies in multiple and different collective action problem situations, implies further investment in adapting systematic methodologies, human resource skills, planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, institutional incentives, and strategies of communication and accountability; and this for both recipients and donors. Unsworth and Williams' (2011) specific recommendations to take political economy analysis forward within the European Commission, apply in our opinion, more generally to 'more politically aware' ODA brokerage (see also Teskey 2021). They emphasise the engagement of donor field quarters and senior technical staff, incentives for longer-term commitment and objectives, investment in staff skills and capacity strengthening within aid agencies, and a general operational redesign to respond in more flexible ways to opportunities for change processes. From the point of view of systematic adaptation of ODA's organisational design and process management, this may seem a daunting task indeed. However, as Booth (2011) points out when noting that treating country-owned development as an aid outcome to be constructed suggests a different concept of the role of development cooperation, it is "Needless to say, development agencies will only be able to transform themselves in this way if there is a shift in the politics and public discourse around international development in donor countries". For a further adoption and systematisation of the collective action brokerage perspective to take precedence over the mainstream best practice or best fit principal-agent one, we concur with Booth's (2012) observation that:

> *"There should be no doubt that this conclusion involves a radicalisation of the specialist consensus about getting seriously engaged with country realities. The principal-agent perspective in both its supply and demand variants takes programming into safe and relatively generic territory. Collective action problems are more challenging, because they are specific to a given situation. Advocacy or facilitation work of this type requires detailed knowledge not only of the actors and settings involved but also of the extent to which solutions may need to be practical hybrid arrangements: ones that borrow from local cultural repertoires.*

> *Getting engaged in these kinds of ways may be difficult for actors that are not thoroughly embedded in the relevant national and local situations. Under current arrangements, officials and advisers in development agencies may well not be in a position to play a significant role in such actions. However, the design of development cooperation needs to adapt to reality, not the other way around"* (Booth 2012: 14).

If such an approach is to be embraced more openly and strategically, and elaborated more systematically, what then is the theoretical and conceptual work imminently outstanding for academics (and similarly inclined development managers) to enhance the receptibility and applicability among donors in the first instance? We will share our understanding of this, deepened throughout the academic and management journey we have referred to in this dissertation, in the following concluding paragraph.

12. What is still outstanding?

The main new contributions we have made throughout this dissertation to scientific approaches to the study of development assistance and state-led agrarian reform in South Africa, purported to pursue an integrated and inclusive rural economy and society are: a further conceptual integration of decentralisation and brokerage theories from a collective action problems perspective, originally elaborated by Booth (2012), and applied to collective action blockages in the resolution of South Africa's agrarian question; the study of inclusive and integrated agrarian reform from a public sector innovation perspective, and the elaboration of a basic user-friendly SI framework for identification of external support and brokerage needs to encumbered local collaborative governance mechanisms; and finally, the coining of 'majoritarian managerialism' to depict the unstable distinction between developmental patrimonialism (Booth 2012) and authoritarian populism in South Africa's reforms. The contributions to the study of development assistance management as such, on the other hand, relate specifically to the characterisation of the mesh of interlinked actors involved in development aid to decentralisation processes as an 'aid-to-decentralisation plexus' instead of an aid chain; and orientations towards a more systematic adoption of brokerage and ownership-as-outcome strategies in the daily practices of more TWP in ODA. These orientations refer, in short, to the acknowledgement that 'more politically aware' brokerage can and should be openly part of the ODA donor's mandate, and to the need and feasibility of a more systematic promotion of a variety of

pragmatic, flexible, and complex so-called Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) applications of official development assistance resources. We have thus, to a certain degree, addressed some of the concerns raised by Teskey (2021) about the future of TWP, by illustrating in *ex ante* scenarios built on empirical material how donors can actually and openly operationalise it.

However, two simplifications used in the depiction of likely brokerage behaviour to facilitate local collective action problem resolution, have been singled out for future refinement. First, the static rather than dynamic, repeated take on brokerage provides a simplistic, one shot-depiction of an often complex and messy reality. A dynamic view on repeated brokerage may shed a more realistic light on development assistance to decentralisation, especially in view of the recommendations for longer-term objectives and commitment in ODA and flexible, adaptive management in TWP (OECD 2019; Teskey 2021). It is therefore an important next step in the study of donor brokerage to delve deeper into the possible effects of *Tertius Gaudens* strategies, especially in the case of disagreement, defection or instability problems, and to analyse such externally facilitated resolution of local collective action blockages over time (Spiro, Acton and Butts 2013; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis 2014). A better understanding of for instance the range, location or intensity of recurring or newly occurring collective action problems following such external interventions, may provide further orientations for longer-term TWP donor approaches. A second problematic feature of the present theory of brokerage is its use of open triads to simplify the representation of the number of nodes between which brokerage can be analysed. However, in the aid and development effectiveness agendas, coordination and harmonisation feature prominently to counter collective action problems due to fragmentation and proliferation, especially at the supply side of aid. The development of more complex brokerage models that can accommodate the inclusion of multiple actors – at the donor and recipient side - is therefore urgently due. However, as the model of Shi, Markoczy and Dess (2009) foresees eight different roles in function of qualified affiliation of *Ego* and *Alters*, the inclusion of more actors and affiliations centred around one structural or institutional hole, will probably yield a vastly complex model. Indeed, as indicated before, the criterion of affiliation used to determine the nodes involved in the actual brokerage, is in general a very coarse one. Individual (inter)national and local governance actors, although structurally grouped into a limited number of nodes such as donor, national government, local government, or civil society, may know considerable internal differentiation in terms of ownership, strategic priorities and policy-induced incoherencies, and actually exacerbate collective action blockages due to their internal problems with coordination, harmonisation and complementarity (Winters 2012; Waeterloos and Renard 2013).

Ensuing from the above are two specific points of attention in the donor node. The variations in interests and political motives from the side of donors – where some may be more reform and risk inclined than others – have only been indirectly considered here through the wider range of ODA recommendations applicable and their TWP dimensions (OECD 2004 and 2019). A more detailed analysis how donors' political stance and institutional and/or operational preferences may actually influence the choice between different technically appropriate and politically feasible brokerage strategies, is an overt opportunity to refine the orientations for ODA support introduced here. What also deserves further attention, is how brokerage takes or may take place most effectively within donor country portfolios. Donor support to decentralisation can consist of up- and/or downstream support (Romeo 2003). However, donors often focus only on one type of support and fail to combine up- and downstream support. These poorly coordinated approaches are aggravated by the proliferation and fragmentation of the aid supply itself, and by a compartmentalisation of technical expertise within and between international agencies (Verbeke and Waeterloos 2010; Winters 2012). Yet, such supply-side coherence and coordination are allegedly strongly appreciated by aid recipients (Custer et al. 2015). From an analytical point of view, a portfolio approach in which several aid modalities such as projects and sector budget support are complementarily combined, is regarded to contain incentives for coordination and harmonisation within as well as between aid policymaking and implementing agencies (de Renzio, Booth et al., 2005; Waeterloos and Renard 2013). Situations where donor brokerage is deemed advisable to overcome for instance distribution or coordination collective action problems, provide then a unique opportunity to put this portfolio recommendation into practice, and to refine the theory of brokerage in terms of benefits of intra- and inter-donor complementarity and harmonisation.

Lastly, we return to Booth's (2012) proposal to focus on three generic intermediate factors that help to explain most local collective action blockages. This is a tempting proposal against the backdrop of the staggering complexity enmeshed in the aid-to-decentralisation plexus. His three inductively identified factors are policy-driven institutional incoherence, weak top-down performance discipline, and an inhospitable environment for local problem-solving. In our previously identified problems of coherence, inclusion, coordination and collaboration in South Africa's agrarian reform programme, the factor of policy-driven institutional incoherencies prevailed. However, when applying the lens of donor brokerage of collective action problems, we assumed the motivation of donors to be based on the ODA recommendations to decentralisation (especially OECD 2004 and 2019; EU 2016). While these recommendations all relate, in their own right, to dimensions of central-local institutional coherence, supervision and feedback, and local contributions to problem-solving, it is Booth's (2012) specific merit to frame the importance of second-best institutional arrangements to local problem

solving. Rather than to assume seamless institutional interplay and performance discipline by promoting best practice or best fit solutions to scale problems, Booth hints that good fit institutional arrangements will often be hybrid combinations of modern bureaucratic and people's values, grafted on previous institutional arrangements that have a history of local problem-solving. In the review of our previous studies on the promotion of an inclusive and integrated rural economy in South Africa, we have not been able to delve deeper into such mechanisms of local problem-solving. Going forward, case study research such as Hall and Kepe (2017) or Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima (2019) should not only try and lay bare systematic dynamics of local elite bias or capture, but also identify and study cases of deep-seated localised (potential) problem-solving. These are important priorities in the research agenda on integrated and inclusive agrarian reform and the role of the state, civil society and (if necessary) donors therein. Yet, given their particularistic nature, including information on donors' varying preferences and on different localised problem solving may again vastly complicate attempts at developing systematic approaches to the analysis and praxis of donor brokerage. But then again, given the challenge of necessary and required changes in development theory and management pertaining to the aid-to-decentralisation plexus as discussed in Part 1, this should not be the main concern at this moment. Or as Booth (2012) formulates it: *"Putting it more positively, context-sensitive programming needs to be an evolving agenda. Good fit must not be allowed to become a new conventional wisdom when it has not yet led to a real turnaround in policy and practice. It must not lose its sharp edge and radical potential."* We hope to have contributed in this dissertation to this evolving agenda, by providing orientations on the feasibility and outstanding challenges in the application of a 'more politically aware' ODA donor brokerage perspective to South Africa's encumbered state-led programme of agrarian reform of the last decade, which comprises a combined endeavour of decentralisation, rural development and land reform.

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Summary in Dutch

De afgelopen drie decennia is een *mainstream* paradigma gepromoot van officiële ontwikkelingshulp (ODA) aan decentralisatie voor een doeltreffendere, efficiëntere en democratischere levering van openbare goederen en diensten. Aangezien er echter een heel maas van (niet-)gouvernementele, (inter)nationale en lokale actoren bij betrokken is, is ODA aan decentralisatie vatbaar voor veelvuldige en uiteenlopende collectieve actieproblemen, die eerder "goed passende" lokale oplossingen vereisen dan "beste praktijken". Dit perspectief van een "plexus van hulp aan decentralisatie" met meerdere blokkages in collectieve actie, wordt aangevuld met het perspectief van *brokerage*, waarbij derden "interacties tussen niet- of weinig verbonden actoren beïnvloeden, beheren of mogelijk maken". In dit proefschrift onderzoeken we of het voorgestelde gecombineerde perspectief aanwijzingen kan geven over hoe ODA-agentschappen zich in de praktijk systematischer en doeltreffender kunnen inzetten als *brokers* bij het ondersteunen van lokale oplossingen van blokkages in collectieve actie. Het perspectief wordt toegepast op drie eerdere analyses van het moeilijk verlopende landhervormingsprogramma van Zuid-Afrika tussen 2011 en 2019. Door eerder vastgestelde problemen van coherentie, inclusie, coördinatie en samenwerking opnieuw te bekijken door de lens van donor *brokerage*, concluderen we dat donoren in principe een actieve rol kunnen spelen in het sturen naar beter passende en meer lokaal verankerde oplossingen in de agrarische hervorming in Zuid-Afrika. Wij illustreren hoe deze actieve rol verschillende vormen kan aannemen, afhankelijk van de problemen in collectieve actie, beschikbare structurele bemiddelingsmogelijkheden, opportune of toelaatbare strategieën, en strategische resultaatoriëntaties van behoud of opheffen van grenzen tussen bestuursniveaus. Aangezien decentralisatie en agrarische hervorming politieke veranderingsprocessen zijn, kan de toepassing van het *brokerage* perspectief bijdragen tot een meer pragmatische en realistische ODA-koers van "politiek denken en werken" (TWP). De daadwerkelijke aanvaarding van een dergelijke actieve *broker* rol impliceert inderdaad de inachtname van de kernbeginselen van TWP - politieke economie benaderingen, een genuanceerd begrip van en respons op de lokale context, en flexibiliteit en aanpassing bij ontwerp en uitvoering. Wij stellen dat het perspectief van donor *brokerage* een duidelijke toegevoegde waarde kan hebben voor de doeltreffendheid van hulp, aangezien beide partijen hun acties kunnen verantwoorden vanuit een oprechte zorg om actief te zoeken naar passende lokale oplossingen en een opener insteek van TWP. Uiteraard vergt het promoten van een dergelijk alternatief perspectief aanzienlijke verdere inspanningen om methodologieën, personeel, planning, toezicht- en evaluatiekaders, institutionele *incentives*, en strategieën van communicatie en verantwoording verder te onderzoeken en aan te passen.

ANNEXES

Land Reform and Rural Development in South Africa: The Need for Further Complementarity and Coherence Between Rights and Needs-based Approaches

EVERT WAETERLOOS AND SARA JANSSENS

This article discusses a need for a balance between a rights and needs-based approach to land reform and rural development in addressing transitional justice, reconciliation and inequalities in South Africa. In doing so the authors highlight some lessons for other countries in the process of addressing historically and structurally unequal rural development.

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1. South Africa's Land Reform Policies: A Rights-based Reconstruction

Present day South Africa cannot be discussed outside of the country's specific historical path of colonial dispossession and apartheid segregation. Since the Natives Land Act of 1913 and up until 1994, when the first democratic elections after the Apartheid era were held, black people were formally excluded from secure access to land. Fourteen million blacks gathered in the former Bantustans and reserves—occupying only 13 per cent of the country's area. The large majority of them engaged in one way or another in small-scale farming activities, mainly for subsistence. The 'white' privately owned countryside on the other hand comprised 68 per cent of the overall land area of the country. Around 60,000 white commercial farms contributed about 95 per cent of South Africa's total agricultural production. South Africa's policy of food self-sufficiency was characterized by agricultural surplus and export amidst food shortage, or 'hunger and malnutrition next to the granary.'[1] In countries with such highly unequal land distribution, there are strong arguments pertaining to equity, balanced economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and conflict prevention that favour the redistribution of land from the rich to the poor or from large to small farmers.[2]

The land reform policies of South Africa's first democratic government begin with the post-Apartheid 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which saw land reform as 'the central and driving force of a programme of rural development' and set a specific target of redistributing 30 per cent of agricultural land by 1999.[3] The 30 per cent redistribution target was

first proposed in the 1993 World Bank document "Options for land reform and rural restructuring in South Africa". According to this document, the main economic impact of a well-executed land reform programme would not only come from a more intensive use of agricultural land; it would, more importantly, come from multiple livelihoods created by a more dynamic local peri-urban and rural economy, and a substantial increase in small family farms.[4]

The RDP's proposals for cautious market-based land reform show the post-Soviet influence of neo-liberal discourse in the World Bank and among allied South African academics. The RDP was also heavily marked by the compromises negotiated in the early nineties to facilitate the peaceful regime change. It was necessary to meet the redistributive demands of the liberation struggle, while at the same time avoiding the flight of capital and skills from the country or a right-wing uprising.[5]

The 1997 White Paper on South African Land Policy[6] elaborates, in addition to the redistribution pillar, the tenure reform and restitution pillars of South Africa's land reform programme. Under the restitution pillar a legal and administrative process was established, governed by the Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 of 1994, to restore rights in land to people who can prove that they were dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913 due to racist laws or policies of former governments. Successful land claims can be settled with the return of land, alternative land, payment of cash or other forms of compensation. Tenure reform on the other hand has two distinct aspects to it, one dealing with improving the security of tenure for those living on other people's land, primarily farm dwellers on commercial farms, and another aimed at providing legally secure tenure for people living on communal land, primarily in the former Bantustans.

In the popular account or what Walker[7] calls the 'master narrative' of land dispossession, black people were excluded since the Native Land Act of 1913 and subsequent legislation from secure access to 87 per cent of the overall land area. However in the 'domain of the actual', numerous particular histories of dispossession, resistance or accommodation coexist. All these different histories cover a range of tenure forms, relationships to land, and include overlapping and often competing rights and claims. Such diversity and multiplicity explains why time is required for proper beneficiary identification, participation and institutional development. Unlike the official objective to redistribute 30 per cent of 'white-owned' agricultural land, there were no hectares set as a target for the restitution pillar of South Africa's land reform programme. With the slow progress of land reform, official statistics have over the years been accounting for both redistribution as well as restitution land transactions. Between 1994 and 2013, the redistribution pillar had clocked 4.4 million hectares, while the restitution pillar was responsible for the transfer or compensation of 3.3 million hectares at the end of 2015.[8] This means that only about 10 per cent of 80 million hectares of 'white agricultural land' has been reallocated through the publicly funded land reform programmes, instead of the target of 30 per cent. Ownership of land in South Africa remains therefore highly skewed and concentrated.

Several social, political and economic concerns have been raised regarding the slow trajectory of South Africa's land reform programmes. As du Toit[9] points out more generally, the concept of land acts as an empty signifier, a field of meaning available for appropriation by different political projects. He lists the four most common narratives in South Africa's recent history of land reform and rural development. The first discourse treats land reform as a vehicle for national reconciliation, restorative justice and reparation. A second one uses the framework of human rights violations, and emphasizes the need to protect and empower the marginalized and vulnerable through security of tenure. A third discourse centres on land for national food security and economic efficiency, with the view to create a deracialized, efficient, and

globally integrated commercial agricultural sector. The fourth is the one which views land as a resource to kick-start rural development at large, beyond mere agricultural production. The combination of these four narratives in a meta-narrative of post-Apartheid normalization and reconciliation, explains why the country has difficulties in dealing with the inherent contradictions and tensions.

2. Towards a Needs-based Agrarian Transformation

While the restitution pillar articulates the intents of a restorative land rights justice programme, the government's initial and various recently amended redistribution policies try to address the land needs of the previously disenfranchised black populace for purposes of socio-economic equity, agricultural and rural economic development. In reply to the slow process of land reform, government policies for land reform and rural development since 2009 aim to transform South Africa's rural space, economy and society. Based on the principles of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009, policies developed since then have pursued the objective of 'agrarian transformation', which is 'a rapid and fundamental change in the relations (systems and patterns of ownership and control) of land, livestock, cropping and community'.

The CRDP frames this as an anti-colonial struggle for the repossession of lost land and restoration of the centrality of indigenous culture.[10] A three-pronged strategy of land reform, production and livelihoods support, and economic and social infrastructure development is deployed to facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches. In the same vein the recent National Development Plan (NDP) aims to eliminate income poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The NDP calls for an integrated and inclusive rural economy to which land reform, job creation and agricultural production need to contribute. Household food security and food trade surplus are to be realised, of which one-third is to be produced by small-scale farmers.[11]

3. Restitution of Rights in Land Re-emphasized as a Vehicle for Transitional Justice

The seminal Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 was one of the first pieces of legislation of the new post-Apartheid democratic government. It adopted a rights-based approach to restoring the land rights of people and communities dispossessed due to racially discriminatory laws and practices since the Natives' Land Act of 1913. By the cut-off date of December 1998, a total number of 79,996 claims had been lodged with the governmental Commission on Restitution of Land Rights ('Commission' or 'CRLR'). As of November 2015, up to 78,483 land claims were reported as settled; 59,758 of these were finalised as claimants had received the determined compensation. These settled claims have benefited 1.94 million people or 390,621 households (both original victims and their descendants). The Commission has not published recent updates on the outstanding claims from the first round, but in 2014 it still noted 8471 claims outstanding or only partially settled.[12] Especially in the first few years, the progress of settling claims was indeed very slow as it was a fully legally driven process. All claims had to be assessed by the Land Claims Court; it was later that it was turned into an administrative process whereby the Commission settled claims, and only disputed ones had to pass through court.

The recent Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 re-emphasizes restitution of land rights as a vehicle for transitional justice. The Act provides a renewed opportunity for people who missed the initial cut-off date of 1998 to lodge land claims until 30 June 2019. Meanwhile the Commission continues to settle outstanding claims. The rationale for the reopening is that potential claimants missed the initial deadline. Claimants became victims of fraudulent claim practices, were not (well) informed about the programme or its criteria, or lacked the capacity and means to lodge a claim due to reasons such as illiteracy, poverty, or the inaccessibility of government offices. It is expected that a further

1. New claims with the highest added value in terms of restorative justice should be prioritised, rather than 'numbers' in terms of hectares, claims or individuals as has been done in the past. This implies adhering to a strict interpretation of the criteria espoused to warrant the reopening: historic 'Betterment Schemes' and areas where communication was obviously insufficient or corruption was reported.
2. The Commission should inform aspiring claimants realistically and transparently regarding the complexities and protracted time frames of settling claims.
3. Increase the Commission's implementation and facilitation capacity to ensure screening and settling of claims within a clearly established and communicated time frame. Invest especially in multi-actor planning and programming, including mediation and conflict resolution strategies.
4. Safeguard institutional transparency and accountability more effectively (e.g. monitor and tackle corruption, improve information management and timely dissemination, etc.). Use multi-actor fora at district level to address issues of restitution and other land reform and rural development programmes comprehensively (e.g. District Land Reform Committees).
5. Align the prioritisation of claims with the drivers of the rural economy and sustainable human settlements as identified in the NDP. Claims that decongest neighbouring overpopulated areas (e.g. vicinity to communal areas, towns, and rural growth points) and/or have no immediate negative impact on high (potential) agricultural production enterprises should receive priority.
6. Improve the flexible integration of criteria of needs-based land reform and rural development programmes into the rights-based restitution programme in communally governed group claims. Provide for instance selective and gradual enterprise support to young and aspiring individual rural producers of not only agricultural products but also of rural based services (e.g. marketing, transport, finance).

5. Conclusion: Striking a Strategic and Coherent Balance

South Africa is deeply unequal in terms of distribution of income, assets and opportunities, and deeply racialized in cultural and social terms. The agrarian question in South Africa remains at the cutting edge of the debate between arguments of transitional justice, socio-economic equity and macro-economic efficiency of agriculture and especially smallholder production. Or, in other words, between advocates of rights - and needs-based approaches to rural economic transformation. Proponents of the reopening of the restitution programme argue that this is vital to move on with reconciliation, stability, and peace in South Africa. For critics, it is a populist step back which dodges tough questions about long-term macro-economic strategies and complementarity with other land reform and rural development initiatives which prioritise smallholder producers.

This article highlights points of attention for rights- and needs-based approaches to land reform and rural development to address reconciliation and inequalities in South Africa in a more complementary and effective manner. In brief, the new restitution round should apply a very selective approach to restorative justice and focus strictly on the most pressing arguments for the reopening. Furthermore, the restitution programme should strive for far more complementarity and coherence with the redistributive programmes of land reform and rural development. The capacity of the public administration to facilitate and manage the many challenges entailed in land reform and rural development effectively and in collaboration with civil society and private sector, is an area of serious concern. The same applies to sourcing finance for

400,000 valid land claims may be lodged.[13] In 2015/2016 143,720 new claims have already been received since the reopening. [14]

While original targets were probably unrealistic, resolving restitution claims has proven to be immensely complex and time consuming. This is due to the extensive time period under review, the intricacies of oral testimonies, conflicts between stakeholders and changes in land use and demography.[15] In addition, underfunding, unrealistic deadlines, and the lack of coordinated support for beneficiaries have hampered the restitution programme. [16]

The restitution programme and in particular the reopening of the lodgement process, has sparked fierce criticism from various corners. Some land activists fear that the reopening jeopardises the settlement of outstanding claims, that tribal leaders will claim land individually on behalf of their communities, and that capacity and public funds necessary to manage the programme is inadequate.[17] Commercial farmer organisations on the other hand criticise the renewed opportunity to lodge claims as a threat to commercial farming and investment security, pointing to disappointing production levels on farms restituted thus far.[18]

In reply to such concerns, the South African Constitutional Court declared on the 28th of July 2016 the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 invalid, largely due to an insufficient degree of public participation.[19] The Court ordered that all claims lodged after the 1st of July 2014 should be put on hold until earlier claims are settled, and that new appropriate legislation should be produced within the next two years.

4. Towards Coherent and Complementary Restorative and Redistributive Justice

The general question remains whether and under which circumstances the renewed emphasis on rights-based restorative justice will complement rather than compete with the needs-based redistributive justice perspective of land redistribution and social and infrastructural rural development promoted since 2009. Contradictions loom especially where new claims may again cast a shadow of temporary uncertainty of land rights over the productive use and development of operating enterprises, including already redistributed ones. A careful assessment of such possible contradictions is required to make a firm choice - where necessary - between rights and needs-based approaches to land reform and rural development. The significant but complex programme of restoring rights in land - sometimes dispossessed up to 100 years ago - must not jeopardize programmes of inclusive social and economic development based on needs for access to land of approximately the past 20 years.

With 22.6 per cent of households experiencing (severely) inadequate access to food in 2015,[20] an unemployment rate of 26.7 per cent mostly among the youth (38%) in 2016,[21] a strategic public sector commitment towards job creation in the agricultural and rural service sectors through for instance district-based hubs of processing, marketing, credit and retail facilities ('AgriParks') for smallholder farmers, and through capacity support to around 300,000 black commercially-oriented smallholder farmers, the need for a strategic complementarity and coherence of land reform and rural development pillars is clear.[22] The rights-based restitution approaches need therefore to be more clearly aligned with other recent redistributive and economic development policies. The need for complementarity of the reopening of restitution claims with the recently initiated identification at district level of 20 per cent of redistributable land, beneficiaries and enterprises by multi-stakeholder 'District Land Reform Committees' is a case in point.

We can at this early stage only conclude by outlining a few critical points of attention for the reopened restitution process to contribute to such complementarity and coherence:

such a multi-pronged transformative exercise. The (stalled) reopening of the restitution programme deserves therefore a more strategic response from national and international stakeholders in support of further policy complementarity and coherence, rather than merely viewing it as a case of shifting the political spotlight away from solid long-term macro-economic strategies.

Lastly, four generic lessons can be distilled for other countries in the process of addressing historical and structural unequal rural development paths. Firstly, that restitution of rights in land is both in its technical and political dimensions, a very complex and time consuming mechanism to redress violations of land rights and livelihoods. Secondly, that the restoration of rights in land cannot be isolated from the (re)productive use of this multi-functional resource. Thirdly, that rights- and needs-based approaches only provide a relevant contribution to rural economic transformation if they are mutually aligned and strategically balanced for purposes of coherence, complementarity and effectiveness. This implies that on the one hand a more selective prioritisation of rights-based interventions is made in view of the country's most pressing social, political and historic sensitivities. And that on the other hand, an effective interplay with the needs of present-day livelihood strategies and capabilities, especially those of the younger rural populations, is sought, in order to safeguard the inclusivity of rural policies as well as the efficiency of the contribution of (small) agricultural producers and rural service providers to the macro-economy. Finally, new challenges such as increasing regional inequalities, population pressure on the resource base, and uncertainties in the economic and climatic contexts drive further towards such strategic complementarities, coherencies and balances between the historic and formal rights of rural populations and the continuously evolving needs of the geographic and functional areas they live in.

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State-led agrarian reform in South Africa: policy incoherencies and the concern for authoritarian populism

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ABSTRACT

In response to slow and ineffective agrarian reform in South Africa, an integrated and inclusive rural economy is proposed through the active engagement of a capable and developmental state. This noble-sounding official ambition raises concerns of potential authoritarian populism. Through a review of recent agrarian polices and strategies in the dimensions of policy development, management and intergovernmental relations, we find that the concept of policy-driven institutional incoherence in the local provision of public goods frames the growing evidence of corruption, elite capture and exclusion better. Two cases from within local government illustrate further how unclarity or incoherencies in the rules-in-use are driven by ill-defined mandates, overlapping jurisdictions, incomplete implementation or contradictions between policies.

RÉSUMÉ

Face à la lenteur et l'inefficacité de la réforme agraire en Afrique du Sud, une approche intégrée et inclusive de l'économie rurale est proposée par le biais de la participation active d'un État compétent et développementaliste. Cette ambition officielle en apparence noble soulève des préoccupations liées à un potentiel populisme autoritaire. Par le biais d'un examen de récentes politiques et stratégies agraires dans les domaines de l'élaboration des politiques, de la gestion et des relations intergouvernementales, nous constatons que le concept d'incohérence institutionnelle résultant des politiques dans la prestation locale des biens publics explique mieux le nombre croissant de données démontrant l'existence de la corruption, de l'accaparement par les élites et de l'exclusion. Deux cas émanant d'un gouvernement local illustrent bien comment le manque de clarté ou les incohérences qui existent dans les règles en usage résultent de mandats mal définis, du chevauchement des compétences, d'une mise en œuvre incomplète ou de contradictions entre les politiques.

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Introduction

The outcomes of South Africa's post-Apartheid agrarian reform thus far are commonly rated as disappointing. The government's agrarian transformation objectives are spelled

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out as the "rapid and fundamental change in systems and patterns of ownership and control of land, livestock, cropping and community" (GoSA 2010). South Africa thus not only aims for land reform – shifts in the distribution of landed property rights – but for agrarian reform which refers to land and complementary socio-economic and political reforms (Borras et al. 2007). Especially the slow pace of land reform, the minimal impact of agrarian reform policies on livelihoods and poverty, and concerns for elite capture have been well documented (Cousins 2015; Hall and Kepe 2017). Questions have been raised whether the contradiction between political discourses of equity and land redistribution and elite-biased land use and administration practices reveals currents of authoritarian populism (Scoones et al. 2018). Authoritarian populism is a process in which democratic institutions are used to centralise power and limit dissent on behalf of "the people". In this contribution, we review South Africa's official ambition to undertake an agrarian reform backed by a capable and developmental state through the lens of authoritarian populism. Following a conceptual orientation in authoritarian populism, South Africa's policies for state-led agrarian reform are analysed from the perspective of authoritarian populism as a political strategy. We find this perspective of little value to explain the problem of (neo-patrimonial) clientelism, elite capture and exclusion of poor segments of the black majority at this stage. We therefore approach it then through the theory of decentralisation, which associates the risk of authoritarianism, inequality, corruption and ethnicity with failing intergovernmental checks and balances in policy design, management or implementation. In a third section, the ambitious developmental role the state sets itself in managing agrarian reform is analysed. We find that a public management approach based on majoritarianism – the mandate given through an electoral majority – and managerialism – technocratic interventions for and on behalf of the people-, has been ineffective as illustrated by persistent weak state capacity, underfunding, and neglect of poor beneficiaries. We then explore how the country's decentralisation strategy further adds on to the policy-driven institutional incoherencies in agrarian reform policy development and management. Two examples of such incoherencies from inside local government illustrate how in its centralised majoritarian managerialist approach to agrarian reform, government continues to neglect investing in harmonisation, coordination and coherence of policy development and implementation. The resulting unclarity or incoherence of the rules-in-use allows clientelism, elite capture and authoritarian practices to creep in. This leads us to re-emphasise in conclusion the urgency of a seriously strategised, resourced and monitored approach to state-led agrarian reform in South Africa, as well as the importance of continued investigation into systematic accountability failures, dynamics of local elite capture and clientelism, and their potential authoritarian populist motivations.

Agrarian reform and authoritarian populism

Current development trajectories of BRICS[1] countries are often portrayed as an emerging post-neoliberal paradigm which combines market-oriented growth with substantial social protection and redistribution programmes. Following Standing (2017) we understand neoliberalism as the economic ideology and political agenda of maximising world-scale liberalisation of markets and commodification and privatisation of goods and services. However, concerns are raised that in the debate on the extent to which BRICS countries

constitute such alternatives, complexities of agrarian reform and currents of authoritarian populism are underplayed (Cousins et al. 2018; Scoones et al. 2018). As a subset of populism, authoritarian populism depicts according to Scoones et al. (2018) politics as the struggle between the unfairly advantaged "others" and "the people" who take back control. It captures democratic institutions and uses them to legitimate power and limit dissent. In the case of South Africa, political discourse embraces equity and land redistribution but hides often deeply conservative practices which favour access to land for elites. Hall (2015) and Hall and Kepe (2017) find for instance that official agrarian transformation policies are inconsistent with a continued preferential support to commercial larger-scale farming models. Land is predominantly leased out by the state and accompanied by state support to beneficiaries who are able to invest in and operate commercial farms, while poor beneficiaries may access state land but are left to their own devices. In Scoones et al. (2018), Hall uses this argument as an illustration of the authoritarian populist character of land reform politics, where local elites' claims to land are favoured, subdivision of commercial farms for redistribution to smaller producers avoided, and alliances between authoritarian traditional authorities and state agents render land tenure more insecure. The 2017 official "High Level Panel On The Assessment Of Key Legislation And The Acceleration Of Fundamental Change" confirms that there is an increasing denial of land rights and dispossession motivated by political alliances and elite enrichment, but does not share the authoritarian populist analysis (Motlanthe 2017). In 2018, the Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture was installed to advise amongst others on changing the constitution to allow land expropriation without compensation – arguably an authoritarian populist measure *par excellence*. In its report of July 2019, the Panel supports the proposal to change the constitution, but only to further clarify present constitutional prescriptions and cases of possible zero compensation (GoSA 2019). In December 2019, the contested amendment to change the constitution was published for a brief period of public inputs. The Panel also acknowledges that legislation has failed to meet the objectives and that policies have shifted from pro-poor to better-off beneficiaries, resulting in a lack of clarity of tenure rights, an underrepresentation of female beneficiaries, and growing corruption and elite capture (GoSA 2019).

The framing of authoritarian populism by Scoones et al. (2018) is much broader than the original conceptualisation by S. Hall in 1979 as "an exceptional form of the capitalist state which has retained most of the formal representative institutions in place, and which has been able to construct around itself an active popular consent" (Akram-Lodhi 2018). A renewed interest in authoritarian populism has applied the concept to a diverse range of examples such as Trump's anti-trade nationalism, Chavez' economic populism, or the transformation of India into a Hindu majoritarian state under Narendra Modi (Glasius 2018). Zürn (2018) characterises authoritarian populism as illiberalist as it questions the rights of the "others" (for example minorities) to limit the rights of the "majority". It is also antipluralist in that it idealises the majority as a homogeneous entity. Morelock (2018) revisits the earlier insights of the Frankfurt School on societal conditions, socio-psychological dispositions, and authoritarian political mobilisations toward Nazism and populism. He defines authoritarian populism as pitting "the people" against "the others" in order to have the power to dominate the latter. Generally, this involves prejudice and charismatic leaders. Gidron and Bonikowski (2013) identify three different but not mutually-exclusive concepts of populism in general which emphasise respectively

ideology, discourse and strategy. In the ideational approach, populism is understood as a thin-centred ideology of loosely interrelated ideas which places the virtuous general will of "the people" in opposition to the moral corruption of the elite. Populism as a discursive style on the other hand is viewed as a rhetoric that presents politics as the moral struggle of "the people" against the elite. As such, it is a mode of political expression employed by both right and left. Finally, populism may be analysed as a political strategy consisting of policy choices, political organisation or mobilisation. Populist policies usually aim at economic redistribution and nationalisation of natural resources, while mobilisation consists of anti-establishment, often nationalist, appeals to reclaim the majoritarian power of ordinary people. Political organisation typically centres around charismatic leaders. Scoones et al.'s (2018) understanding of authoritarian populism encompasses all three approaches. When probing their concern in South Africa's official agrarian reform programme, we will limit our scope to authoritarian populism as a political strategy which systematically pits in its policy choices, the rights of minority "others" against those of the disadvantaged and purportedly homogeneous "majority" and seeks to capture democratic institutions to (re)claim power and dominate the "others". The systematic and open state-led capture or elimination of democratic institutions is part of what Bermeo (2016) terms democratic backsliding. The most far-reaching varieties of backsliding – coups d'état and blatant election fraud – have all declined since the Cold War. Other varieties are however on the rise. For South Africa, which is presently reeling under suspicions of state capture by its former president Zuma,[2] especially so-called executive aggrandizement seems relevant. This occurs when elected executives weaken checks on executive power through institutional changes which are either put to vote or legally decreed.

South Africa's post-Apartheid agrarian reform programme has known anything but institutional stability, as it has been marked by several policy changes. The question we wish to address here is whether the disappointing outcome of the past 25 years of agrarian reform and specifically the increased reporting of (neo-patrimonial)[3] clientelism and elite bias or capture, do indeed point to such a conscious political strategy of authoritarian populism. Or can they be explained from a different angle, namely ineffective decentralisation policies and implementation, which are known to open space for authoritarianism, inequality, corruption and ethnicity (Crook 2003; Smoke 2003)?

Official agrarian reform policies and the disadvantaged majority

In South Africa's state-led programme of agrarian reform, positioning the landed white elite against the landless black majority results from a history of intense racial-capitalist exclusion. Up until the first post-Apartheid elections in 1994, black people were formally contained to land in the former Bantustans and reserves – occupying only 13 per cent of the country's area, and engaged predominantly in small-scale or subsistence farming. On the other hand, around 60,000 white farmers owned 70 per cent of the country's total surface area and most of the high potential arable land (Walker 2005). Post-Apartheid land reform policies set a specific target of redistributing 30 per cent of agricultural land by 1999 (GoSA 1994). Under the restitution pillar, rights in land are to be restored to people who were dispossessed of such rights after 1913 due to racist laws or policies. Tenure reform on the other hand deals primordially with improving the security of tenure of dwellers on commercial farms and communal lands (GoSA 1997). With a

publicly acknowledged slow progress in land reform, official statistics have over the years accounted for both redistribution as well as restitution land transactions. Between 1994 and 2016 only about 10 per cent of 80 million hectares of "white agricultural land" has been reallocated through the public land reform programmes, instead of the target of 30 per cent (GoSA 2017). Not only has land reform been slow, but also highly uneven in gender and spatial terms, with some provinces and districts achieving far better results than others (Cousins 2015; GoSA 2019).

The persisting shortcomings in the state-led land reform and rural development programmes are in spite of the creation in 2009 of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) as the central agency of agrarian transformation. To give effect to this mandate, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009 foresees that the state will facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in production and livelihoods support, land reform, and economic and social infrastructure development (GoSA 2009). In 2011, the Green Paper on Land Reform re-emphasises the centrality of land in the resolution of race, gender and class inequality, and aims for secure land tenure for all South Africans, particularly rural blacks (GoSA 2011). In 2012, the National Development Plan (NDP) formulated the ambition to eliminate income poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through an integrated and inclusive rural economy, to which land reform and agricultural production contribute. The wide range of opportunities in rural areas for inclusive development require state-led support strategies tailored to local conditions and improved coordination between the government spheres (GoSA 2012a). A range of new legal and policy initiatives have been undertaken since 2009 in pursuit of these objectives. However, except for the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act of 2013,[4] which for the first time in the segregated country's history strives towards a long-term aligned spatial development plan by all spheres of government, most legal and policy initiatives have incurred various parliamentary and judicial obstacles and undergone multiple changes. This may in itself indicate that the capture or elimination of the country's democratic institutions for agrarian reform has not been as easy as in the energy and transport sector, where Zuma's role is presently under investigation. Rather than pursuing an exclusionary populist or institution-capturing authoritarian agenda, the recent policies express the ambition of land access for the black majority, within relevant legal frameworks and through the state in cooperation with all stakeholders. They do however proceed explicitly with an orientation towards the selective promotion of agricultural production instead of general poverty reduction (Cousins 2015; Hall 2015). Scoones et al. (2018) highlight that these legal and policy initiatives contain inconsistencies which may create space for elite capture or even authoritarian populism.

A few recent legislative and policy initiatives can illustrate this. The Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 aimed to restore the land rights of those dispossessed due to racially discriminatory laws and practices since 1913. In 2014, still more than 8400 of the 79,996 claims that had been lodged by the end of 1998 were outstanding or only partially settled (CRLR 2016). In the same year the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 opened a new round of claims. The official rationale was that during the first round, some claimants had become victims of fraud and lacked information or the capacity to lodge a claim. While this rationale may be motivated by a genuine concern for a fully inclusive and rights-based restorative justice process for the landless majority, many critics discarded it is a populist

move in view of upcoming elections, and missing any connect to other on-going land reform and rural development initiatives. In 2016, the Constitutional Court declared the Act of 2014 invalid, largely due to an insufficient degree of public participation and government capacity, and requested new and appropriate legislation (Waeterloos and Janssens 2016). The proposed Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill of 2017 on the other hand strives toward ensuring just and equitable distribution of agricultural land to Africans. It intends to establish a Land Commission that will manage a register of all private and public agricultural land, with information on land size and use, and owners' race, gender and nationality. Foreign nationals will no longer be allowed to purchase agricultural land and can only engage in long-term leases. Since the 2006 Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), it is the state which buys and leases out land to beneficiaries. The subsequent 2013 and 2019 State Land Lease and Disposal Policy determines the conditions under which state and redistributed land can be accessed through a 30-year renewable lease by various categories of landless, subsistence-cum-marketing, medium-scale commercial black farmers and constrained large-scale or well established commercial black farmers. These categories – especially the latter three – refer to the 2013 Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP) that has become the main vehicle for support to land reform beneficiaries. The RADP intends to support especially these three categories of emerging black farmers through financial assistance and the provision of training and/or mentoring through strategic partnerships with commercial farming enterprises. In addition, the Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill of 2017 introduces ceilings in every district for private or leased agricultural land, to be determined by the state on the basis of land capability, current production output and turnover, farm viability or capital requirements. While intended to deliver just and equitable distribution of agricultural land for the majority of the South African population, information on gender, nationality and race as well as the criteria to prescribe RADP support and land ceilings may turn into a powerful tool for discrimination on the basis of financial capacity, ethnicity or gender. This is being confirmed by recent research on persistent clientelism and elite capture in land reform (Hall and Kepe 2017; Mtero, Gumede, and Ramantsima 2019). A final example lies in the complex domain of security of tenure in the previous homelands. The 2004 Communal Land Rights Act (CLRA) foresaw that traditional councils would represent the community as owner in land administration. This reinforced disputed chiefly power over communal land dwellers, some of whom had obtained title deeds in the past, and others who were organised in Communal Property Associations (CPA)s or trusts. This would enable traditional leaders to override family-controlled rights and participatory decision-making processes, possibly making way for elite capture through land sales and marginalisation of widowed and unmarried women. The CLRA was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2010, which found that the legislative process had been abridged and inadequate. The new Communal Land Tenure Bill of 2017 has been published for consultation and is supposed to address these concerns. It provides for instance for the requirement of a majority consent before communal land is sold; for communities to choose an entity that will administer their land (traditional council, CPA or any other) and which may run under supervision of DRDLR; and for additional accountability structures such as a households forum or Communal Land Boards. Both are to consist of at least 50 per cent women. However, the balance between individual land rights, chiefly power and state authority to determine access and use of land remains fragile and contestable. In

the end, it is the Minister who decides on types of ownership, land use rights and institutions of governance in each and every communal area, and the community which sets the conditions under which individual land ownership rights are granted (Claassens 2015).

In short, in our reading of present official policies, the concept of authoritarian populism as a conscious political strategy adds little to explain (neo-patrimonial) clientelism, elite capture and exclusion of poor segments of the black rural and urban population. Can the theory of decentralisation, which highlights the risk of authoritarianism, inequality, corruption and ethnicity when intergovernmental checks and balances are failing, provide more useful explanations (Crook 2003; Smoke 2003)? What Booth (2012) calls "policy-driven institutional incoherence" in the local provision of public goods, describes and frames in our opinion the above-described policy incoherencies at this stage better than the concern over a move towards systematic authoritarian populism. He underscores three important generic factors in his middle-range theory of the local provision of public goods as a collective action problem. First, policy-driven institutional incoherence is usually linked to ill-defined mandates, overlapping jurisdictions, or perverse incentives resulting from incomplete implementation or contradictions between policies. Secondly, lack of central-level commitment appears not only through lack of availing resources, but also through lack of hierarchical discipline. Decentralised performance is found to be constrained when rules are not clearly laid down or enforced, or essential tasks not executed. Finally, when longer-standing institutional arrangements exist that permit successful problem-solving locally, the provision of local public goods tends to benefit. In what follows, we explore the poor record of South Africa's official agrarian reform programme further from the perspective of policy-driven institutional incoherence and its effect on the rules-in-use for local access to public land and support services. Following the above discussion of incoherencies in policy development, we now turn our attention to the adoption of incomplete and contradictory management approaches in the public sector.

Majoritarian managerialism: ambition versus underperformance

In the official discourse, the agrarian transformation requires managerial support by a "capable and developmental state". This is a state "which actively intervenes for benefits to accrue across society and builds consensus among various sections of society around long-term national objectives", and which will thus improve government's performance and increase public confidence (GoSA 2012a). The concept of developmental state was introduced in 1983 by Johnson (1999) to characterise the role of governmental policies in Japan's extra-ordinary post-war economic growth. Researchers exploring high economic growth patterns in other East Asian countries elaborated it further, but fail to agree on core characteristics of a developmental state (Routley 2014). Leftwich (2008) emphasises both economic and social development when portraying developmental states as states which "whether democratic or not, have the capacity to enhance, orchestrate and manage both the promotion of job-creating economic growth and the provision of welfare nets through redistributive practices". As most countries were primarily agricultural and poor at the time, political, military and ideological power was concentrated in the hands of the state, which kept synergetic relations with the few existing business interests. The concept of developmental state is thus replete with populist and authoritarian opportunities. In South Africa, the call for a developmental state gained centre stage in the late

2000s under the Mbeki administration (Mayende 2010). The Mbeki government paid little attention to growing popular protest, and rather backed top-down managerialism and state-led technocratic solutions to development in general and agrarian reform in particular (Vincent 2011; Aliber et al. 2013; Southall 2014; Lodge 2014; Cousins 2015; Hall and Kepe 2017). Under the subsequent Zuma administration, the NDP of 2012 pointed out sound and stable policies, leadership, skilled human resources, appropriate institutions, policy adherence and accountability as key characteristics of the capable and developmental state the country needs to build (GoSA 2012a). In 2012, DRDLR expanded its original mission of initiating, facilitating, coordinating, and catalysing integrated rural development interventions with the actual implementation of these, which signals an even more direct managerial approach (GoSA 2012b). Under the present Ramaphosa presidency, the ruling party ANC acknowledges in its Election Manifesto of 2019 that it allowed corruption to creep in into state institutions. It therefore reiterates the ambition to rebuild and renew a capable and developmental state which enhances public accountability and improves the system of local government (ANC 2019). With the ANC's persistent though declining electoral overweight,[5] the risk of a slide towards unhindered majoritarianism – rule of the majority without any consideration for minorities – has been highlighted as early as the mid-2000s by van Cranenburgh and Kopecký (2004) when assessing South Africa's democracy status. While majoritarian democracy concentrates power based on electoral ascendancy, the consensus model seeks to disperse and limit power across different political interests and parties. The authors assessed the country at the time as a moderate consensual democracy, especially in terms of the proportional representation electoral system, decentralisation, bicameral legislature, a Constitutional Court, and an independent central bank. However, trends of unhindered majoritarianism were also observed in the ANC's resolution of inter-governmental conflicts internally in the executive rather than in the legislative branch, and thwarting of parliamentary inquiries into corruption by closing party ranks, such as recently illustrated in the obstruction of inquiries into state capture by Zuma (Martin and Solomon 2016). Vincent (2011) finds that a long tradition of technocratic-managerialist disdain for popular sentiment have paved the way for majoritarian-justified populist politics in South Africa. Especially as of 1999, development became framed under the Mbeki government as a highly bureaucratised, state-led project to lift up the black majority, with a preference for top-down managerialism and intellectualist-technocratic solutions (Southall 2014). This framing was also reflected in the copying of New Public Management models from the West. These models were to make the public sector lean and more competitive, and at the same time more responsive to citizens' needs by offering value for money, flexibility and transparency (Frödin 2009; Tshandu and Kariuki 2010). An explanation for the premature internal removal of Mbeki in 2007 is that his centralised technocratic design and implementation of neo-liberal policies, as well as his autocratic style, created animosity around the fate of the poor black majority. Such grievances made key constituencies of different ideological and organisational backgrounds inside the ANC switch their support to Zuma (Southall 2014; Mac Giollabhuí 2017). In short, this combination of majoritarian democracy features and managerialism or what we wish to call "majoritarian managerialism" – the ambition to manage development for and on behalf of the majority – has been characterised by authoritarian reflexes, but especially by unfulfilled lofty promises of public management for the people. In agrarian reform,

majoritarian managerialism has not been able to contend with a persistent weak state capacity, underfunding, and neglect of poor beneficiaries. Especially by mostly concentrating in a productionist way on commercial land use and better-off land redistribution beneficiaries, the state has in its managerialist take contributed to further incoherencies in rules-in-use as far as inclusive and integrated agrarian reform is concerned (Cousins 2015; Hall and Kepe 2017; Mtero, Gumede, and Ramantsima 2019). As findings of such local "contorted reform governed by state officials, consultants and agribusiness 'strategic partners'" (Hall and Kepe 2017, 8) surface more frequently, it is important to focus in what follows on the country's complex decentralisation process and intergovernmental relations.

Decentralisation and agrarian reform

South Africa is politically and administratively decentralised into a national, provincial and local sphere. The national sphere of government is responsible for functions that affect the entire country, the provincial sphere for programmes of social service delivery such as health and social development, and the local sphere for municipal planning and the delivery of basic services such as water and sanitation. The constitutional principles of intergovernmental relations and co-operative government require that national, provincial and local policies and interventions must be coordinated and aligned (Malan 2012). The 1998 Local Government White Paper introduced the notion of developmental local government "working with […] the community to […] meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (Buccus et al. 2007). The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 states that each municipal council must adopt a five-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP). All local development initiatives are to be incorporated in the IDP and annually reviewed through participatory planning processes involving governmental and non-governmental actors. This discourse on developmental local government aligns to mainstream thinking on decentralisation as promoting tailor-made policies and services based on better knowledge of local circumstances, greater possibilities of civil participation, and in general more effective and efficient allocation of public goods (De Vries 2000). The evidence-based verdict on decentralisation globally is however more varied and conditional, as local authoritarianism, inequality and ethnicity may actually thrive under poorly coordinated decentralisation (Crook 2003; Fleurke and Willemse 2004; Faguet 2014). Evaluations of local government in South Africa raise serious warnings about municipalities as developmental institutions. Lack of managerial capacity and oversight, intergovernmental alignment and local participation are singled out as a major weaknesses in general and in agrarian reform in particular (Hall, Isaacs, and Saruchera 2007; Frödin 2009; Siddle and Koelble 2012; GoSA 2019). Since the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005, which explicitly aims for the alignment of national, provincial and municipal policies, emphasis lies again on central oversight rather than the bottom-up developmental local government planning of the 1998 White Paper. As already pointed out above, as early as in the Mandela and Mbeki-era, the African National Congress (ANC) attempted to create, by virtue of its electoral majority, unity and conformity via centralisation. This is also evidenced in the increasing prescriptive and supervisory role of the Presidency and in forcing civil society into partnership with the state (Galvin and Habib 2003; De Jager 2006; Southall 2014). However, in spite of the electoral and

managerial dominance of the ANC, the general public is losing trust in the political institutions. In 2013, less than half of South African citizens put their trust in political parties (46.2%) or local government (48.6%) (Wale 2013). In addition, long-standing concerns exist about a renewed devolution of land governance and administration to traditional authorities in communal areas. Colonial and Apartheid laws imposed a segregated system of autocratic customary law and ascribed tribal identities in the homelands. Traditional authorities have argued that their roles in the governance of land or welfare have been usurped by elected local government in the post-1994 era. More recent legislation such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, the Traditional Courts Bill of 2017 and the Communal Land Tenure Bill of 2017 reallocate power to traditional leaders. It is feared that this will lead to more elite capture, insecurity and marginalisation (Claassens 2015).

The local participation and governance dimensions of South Africa's decentralisation programme continue to be replete with incoherencies in terms of overlapping or disjointed jurisdictions, unclear mandates, incomplete coordination and contradictory implementation, adding on to the incoherencies in agrarian policy development and management. The rest of this contribution will document from inside local government in slightly more detail – as such information is sparse –, two examples of policy-driven institutional incoherencies at the local level. These cases of local collective action problems demonstrate that in its centralised and majoritarian managerialist approach to agrarian reform, the state has continued to neglect investing in harmonisation of policy development and implementation, and coordination across the various spheres of government. The resulting institutional unclarity or incoherence can open (new) space for local (neo-patrimonial) clientelism, elite bias or capture, authoritarian practices and ethnic prejudice, hampering secure land tenure and livelihoods promotion for the black majority. A first empirical assessment "from within" deals with the views of local government actors on the clarity and coherence of policies and strategies of integrated and inclusive agrarian transformation under the developmental state banner. A second empirical assessment discusses the tensions between inclusive policy ambitions, majoritarian managerialism and elite capture in a recent experiment of decentralised multi-stakeholder land administration and management.

Many a slip twixt cup and lip …: two views from within local government

Local officials and the renewed undertaking of coordinated and integrated agrarian reform

Following the release of the Green Paper and the National Development Plan, government officials from the provincial and municipal tiers were asked to assess the capacity of the state to pursue coordinated and integrated agrarian reform as a developmental state. This self-assessment exercise of government's novel managerialist approach was inspired by the European Union's Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for public sector organisations (EIPA 2013). CAF allows a self-assessment of an organisation's performance from different angles such as leadership, strategy and planning, human resources, partnerships, operational resources and processes, citizens or customer orientation, human resources, social responsibility and key performances. Between December 2013 and

December 2014, an explorative self-assessment was held countrywide in 31 District and 18 Local Municipalities. Interviews were held with 67 provincial DRDLR officials and municipal managers from the different municipalities. Respondents assessed gaps and opportunities in the coordination and integration of interventions at provincial and municipal level, by (dis)agreeing with various statements[6] put to them. In this contribution, we focus on those assessments which contain an indication of under-strategising, under-resourcing and under-coordinating in the majoritarian managerialist approach, and the risk of clientelism, elite bias or capture. In Table 1, the perceived lack of human resources at provincial or municipal level and insufficiency of operational budgets of DRDLR and municipalities come to the fore (median assessment score of 10 – no agreement at all). The absence of joint decision making and implementation within DRDLR and between DRDLR and municipalities are assessed to hinder integrated and coordinated agrarian reform (median score of 30 – full agreement). Areas which need further improvement are clarity of policy and legislation, inclusion of measurable targets, collaboration by municipal management and staff, participation of other stakeholders, participation of DRDLR staff in IDPs, and the effectiveness of DRDLR projects in uplifting the economic and social situation of target groups (median of 20). This notwithstanding the fact that space has been created for inputs from local economic and social stakeholders, and that when such inputs are given, they are taken into account by DRDLR and municipalities (median of 30). In short, this self-assessment exercise points out that while elements of inclusivity, participation, coordination and developmental orientation are acknowledged by government officials in the new policies of inclusive agrarian transformation, they also hint at potential policy incoherencies. Concerns are especially raised over a lack of operational resourcing, conceptual clarity and accountability in both process (e.g. participation in IDP) and outcomes (strategic targets). Adding complexity to government's managerial ambition is the stark variation between provinces in areas such as clarity of policies and targets or human resource capacities, where some provinces score very high (median of 30) and others very low (median of 0).

District Land Reform Committees as an experiment with decentralised land administration and management "for and by the people"

In line with proposals from the Green Paper and the National Development Plan, DRDLR established in December 2015 District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) across the country's rural districts. DLRCs are set up as multi-stakeholder platforms to increase local participation in land governance and management (GoSA 2015). DLRCs aim for participation of stakeholders in decisions on land acquisition as well as in the implementation of centrally-led policies. DLRCs are purported to thus foster social mobilisation and cohesion and build capacity of local government officials and stakeholders (GoSA 2012a). DLRCs need to identify farms suitable for acquisition by government, candidates for farm allocation, and advise on strategic support needs and land rights conflicts. DRDLR is to provide technical and logistical support through a DLRC Secretariat and to the Beneficiary Selection Committee, a sub-committee of the DLRC for identification of suitable candidates for land redistribution. In general, core members of DLRCs are local representatives of line ministries such as DRDLR, Agriculture or Water Affairs, as well as

Table 1. Assessment of state capacity of coordinated and integrated land reform and rural development (2013–2014).

Province	Q1	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9	Q10	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q21	Q23	Q31	Q35	Q36	Q38	Q39
Eastern Cape	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	30	30	10	10	10	10	30	20	10	20	20
Free State	30	30	30	30	25	30	10	25	25	25	10	20	10	30	20	25	20	25
Gauteng	15	20	30	30	20	25	15	30	25	15	5	10	5	30	25	15	25	25
KZN	15	20	0	30	30	15	20	20	30	5	10	10	10	30	10	20	20	20
Limpopo	20	20	20	10	30	20	20	30	30	0	20	10	20	30	20	20	20	20
Mpumalanga	20	20	20	30	30	20	20	30	25	20	10	10	10	30	20	20	20	10
Northern Cape	10	20	10	30	30	20	20	20	30	10	10	5	10	20	10	10	20	20
North West	20	20	0	0	30	0	20	30	30	10	10	10	10	30	10	20	20	20
Western Cape	20	20	20	25	30	15	20	20	30	10	10	10	10	30	10	15	10	15
Median All Provinces	**20**	**20**	**20**	**30**	**30**	**20**	**20**	**30**	**30**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**30**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**20**

Scores: 30 – Agree fully; 20 – Agree to some extent; 10 – Do not agree at all; 0 – No idea or response.

Legend:

Q1 DRDLR's policy on Planning and implementing integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development is clear;

Q3. The legislation to coordinate and integrate planning and implementation between DRDLR and Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) is clear;

Q4 DRDLR policy on planning and implementing integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development contains measurable output and outcome targets.

Q5 Absence of joint decision making between branches in DRDLR blocks a coordinated approach to integrated rural development.

Q6 Absence of joint decision making between DRDLR and municipalities blocks a coordinated approach to integrated rural development.

Q7 Provincial DRDLR staff are allowed and have the capacity to plan and implement integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q9 Municipal management and technical staff collaborate in planning and implementing integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q10 Opportunities are foreseen for local economic and social stakeholders to contribute to planning and implementation of integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development with DRDLR.

Q15 Present lack of joint administration and implementation between DRDLR and municipalities is an important blockage to integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q16 The human resources (number and skills) in the provincial and/ or district DRDLR offices suffice for planning and implementation of integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q17 The human resources (number and training profile) in the municipality suffice for planning and implementation of integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q21 DRDLR operational budget foreseen for implementation in the municipal space is sufficient for integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development.

Q23. The municipal operation budget foreseen for implementation of integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development is sufficient.

Q31 Your organisation takes this information about stakeholders into account in its integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development strategy and activities.

Q35. Relevant provincial and municipal stakeholders participate directly in implementing and updating DRDLR's integrated and coordinated land reform and rural development interventions in the area.

Q36 Provincial/ district DRDLR staff participate directly in the formulation and review of municipal IDPs in the area.

Q38.DRDLR is able to deliver through its projects the needed services to uplift the economic production of target groups.

Q39. DRDLR is able to deliver through its projects the needed services to uplift the social situation of the target group.

District Municipal officials or Councillors, agricultural interest groups, non-government organisations and Traditional Leaders (GoSA 2015).

Some of the challenges which these multi-stakeholder platforms face in the complex context of South Africa's agrarian reform, relate to whether the target of an additional 20 per cent of land to identify may also include private land transactions, and how to coordinate with previous redistribution or restitution projects (HSRC 2017). Land redistributed by DLRCs will go to four mutually exclusive categories of previously disadvantaged black farmers: households with very limited (or no) access to land; small-scale farmers who sell part of their produce; medium-scale commercial farmers with the ability to expand; and finally, large scale or well established commercial farmers with potential to expand. Every DLRC will need to strike a balance between economic production, social cohesion and agrarian transformation. This also relates to other options of land use, which may not necessarily be agricultural but rather for human settlement or service provision. This requires substantive capacity building among DLRCs members and government officials, as they need to understand local land needs and uses and keep abreast of the evolving policy and legal context. A 2017 review of ten DLRCs in the provinces of Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape depicts how they struggle with these challenges (HSRC 2017). Some DLRCs are not yet operational while others meet irregularly; they all suffer from a general dearth of public visibility, solid information, coordination and supervision from DRDLR. The latter leads to the DLRCs' claim that they are performing unpaid work for government, which demands too much of their time and effort. The risk associated with lack of support, supervision and public accountability according to the researchers is that it can yield local elite capture. Urgent action is therefore recommended to bolster the provision of relevant information and coordination by DRDLR, and to address functional, institutional and managerial shortcomings in the domain of visibility and accountability, inclusive participation, payment and collaboration skills.

This recent faltering experiment shows that decentralised platforms were created centrally with an ambit of land administration and management "for and by the people", without however equipping them with the required information, operational resources, skills, institutional clarity, accountability mechanisms or hands-on central government supervision. Although only a future country-wide evaluation of this experiment can provide an encompassing insight into patterns of land redistribution and beneficiary selection in every district, this early assessment raises huge concerns about policy-driven institutional incoherencies in the DLRCs. This concern seems to be confirmed by the proposed replacement of DLRCs by more centrally-led land allocation panels in a new draft National Policy for Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation of 2020 (GoSA 2020). Potential downside effects of this ineffective decentralisation of land administration identified during this first survey are local elite capture, exclusion and aggravated inequality, which may remain hidden from the eye of public accountability. Part of this slippage may fall within the realm of authoritarian populism, if found to be motivated by the enforcement of the assumed will of "the people" over the "others" (Kitchin and Ovens 2013; HSRC 2017). It is evident that under these conditions, DRLCs entail a huge risk of undermining rather than fostering social mobilisation and cohesion as originally set out in the policy.

Conclusion

South Africa's agrarian reform programme set out on a trajectory of reconciliation and restoration of the black majority's land rights, as opposed to one of exclusion and domination of the landed white elite. In response to slow and dismal progress, an integrated and inclusive rural economy is proposed through the active engagement of a capable and developmental state. The concern for authoritarian populism as a conscious political strategy does, for now, not square with the official policies of inclusive and participatory development through a state-led managerial approach which abides by legal frameworks. We find that Booth's (2012) concept of policy-driven institutional incoherence in the local provision of public goods, frames the growing evidence of exclusion, corruption, and elite bias and capture better. Such unclarity or incoherencies in the rules-in-use result from ill-defined mandates, overlapping jurisdictions, incomplete implementation or contradictions between policies. We have traced such incoherencies in South Africa's agrarian reform in the domains of disjoint policy development, ineffective majoritarian managerialism and uncoordinated decentralisation. There are however some practices of exclusion and elite capture in communal areas which seem to force "the people's will" over "the others" by using democratic institutions. This confirms that authoritarian populism may surface through the cracks of policy-driven institutional incoherencies. Two cases from within local government illustrate some drivers of such incoherencies at the interstices of agrarian policy development, public sector management and decentralisation. Going forward, case study research such as Hall and Kepe (2017) and Mtero, Gumede, and Ramantsima (2019) should continue to try and lay bare systematic dynamics of local elite bias or capture, and differentiate between *bona fide,* mere opportunistic corrupt or authoritarian populist motivations of such instances. From the perspective of theories of local governance and intergovernmental relations, a clearer light needs to be shed on where in the decentralisation chain the accountability mechanisms founder and permit such local level capture and clientelism. Government, on the other hand, needs to seriously heed the risks to the vast, complex, but highly pressing task of agrarian reform, of addressing previous shortcomings in uncoordinated and underfunded reform with policies and managerial models again fraught with incoherencies. In that respect, Booth's (2012) three generic factors for a successful local provision of public goods instigate South African agrarian policy makers not only to avoid such incoherencies in rules-in-use by effectively streamlining, aligning and harmonising policy and implementation designs. They must also assure central-level commitment by availing resources, effective monitoring and hierarchical discipline. And finally, when creating structures and institutions, these are better grafted on previous institutional arrangements that have a history of local problem-solving.

Notes

1. Brazil, India, Russia, China and South Africa.
2. From the beginning, Zuma provided high profile jobs to personal loyalists. However, a more recent string of revelations on the procurement of a nuclear plant, the management of the national air carrier and electricity utilities, and especially the sudden replacement in 2015 of the Finance Minister by a little-known loyalist, appear to confirm the existence of a parallel network of public and private actors who seized control over the state to the personal interest

of the president and his close allies, the Guptas (Martin and Solomon 2016). The "Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State" of 2018 or Zondo Commission, is still investigating the full details of the alleged state capture.

3. Under neo-patrimonialism, personal rule exists alongside and intertwined with bureaucratic order (Lodge 2014).
4. Legislation and polices are retrievable from https://www.drdlr.gov.za/sites/Internet/Pages/Legislation-and-Policies.aspx
5. The governing African National Congress (ANC) won its smallest percentage of votes for national office ever in the 2019 elections. It won 57.51 per cent over the vote, while the Democratic Alliance won 20.76 per cent and the Economic Freedom Fighters won 10.79 per cent. The ANC's vote share peaked in the 2004 national elections, when it received 69.69 per cent of the vote, but it dropped to 65.9 per cent in 2009 and to 62.15 per cent in 2014 (Campbell 2019).
6. For full discussion of the survey methodology and detailed results, see Waeterloos (2017).

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Introducing Collaborative Governance in Decentralized Land Administration and Management in South Africa: District Land Reform Committees Viewed through a 'System of Innovation' Lens

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Abstract: A Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) land administration system strives for a more flexible, inclusive, participatory, affordable, reliable, realistic, and scalable approach to land administration and management in developing countries. The FFP finds itself thus at the interface with the coordination and governance challenges of the mainstream promotion of democratic decentralization of the past decades in general, and collaborative systems for decentralized and participatory land governance in Africa, in particular. One recent example of such collaborative systems for decentralized land governance is the introduction in South Africa between 2015 and 2019 of District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs). We analyze this official experiment in collaborative land governance from a 'system of innovation' (SI) perspective. An adapted SI framework is developed and applied in three DLRCs. This study points out that for the innovation of collaboration to be effective, DLRCs require a firm operational and institutional backup. This is an important lead for the general discussion on inclusion, participation, and collaboration in FFP. We not only need these innovations to be well-supported and -resourced; they also require the explicit adoption of a systemic perspective in which various technical and social dimensions are interlinked.

Keywords: land governance reform; capacity development; Fit-for-Purpose land administration (FFP); institutional frameworks

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1. Introduction

The past decade has seen the promotion of the concept of Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) land administration in response to challenges to security of access to land globally, especially in developing countries. The promoters of FFP land administration see, in addition to specific legal, institutional, and political factors, secure access to land especially hindered by the ambitions to adopt Western-style land administration systems that are too costly, time consuming and capacity demanding [1]. Rather than strictly abiding by advanced technical standards, a Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) land administration system aims to manage current land issues within a specific country or region through a more flexible, inclusive, participatory, affordable, reliable, realistic, and scalable approach [2]. Ho, Choudhury, Haran and Leshinsky [3] situate FFP, therefore, at the interface with the mainstream promotion of democratic decentralization of the past decades, and its challenges in India in terms of coordination and governance between the multiple levels and actors. These result especially in contested political authority, low local capacity, limited democratic dividends, and a lack of integration between new and existing land administration systems. They point out the need for collaborative governance to facilitate institutional integration and accountability and to allow the scaling of FFP to deliver also a 'fit-for-people' system that redistributes power and yields social justice. There has, indeed, been a resurgence of collaborative systems for decentralized and participatory land governance in Africa between state and non-state actors in the recent past, often to try and accommodate

customary land governance in modern, land administration systems [4,5]. One recent example of such collaborative systems for decentralized land governance is the introduction in South Africa of District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) between 2015 and 2019. In response to the slow and encumbered process of agrarian reform since 1994, these local multi-stakeholder platforms were introduced by the state in an attempt to improve local participation in land administration and management [6]. DLRCs were to identify farms for acquisition by government and candidates for farm allocation and advise on strategic support needs and land rights conflicts. However, from the beginning, DLRCs were not fully equipped with the required information, operational resources, skills, institutional clarity, accountability mechanisms or supervision [7]. In this contribution, we analyze the short-lived introduction of DLRCs specifically as an innovation for improved participation and collaboration in land administration and management. The experiences with this particular attempt at collaborative governance at the decentralized level are expected to provide pointers for the further conceptualization and implementation of Fit-for-Purpose land administration.

Our analysis will especially focus on the aspects of envisaged participation and collaborative governance in the FFP and its scaling-up. After briefly describing the complexity of South Africa's agrarian reform and decentralization programs, the roll-out of DLRCs in 2015 will be discussed. As the main innovative element of the DLRC initiative lies in promoting the collaboration of state and non-state actors toward joint proposals for land administration and management, we will first review the concept of collaborative governance. Since the focus in this article is on the innovation of promoting collaboration, the relevance of the 'system of innovation' (SI) approach for this undertaking is then explained. An adapted SI framework is developed for the structured yet simple assessment of collaborative governance as an innovation in three District Land Reform Committees. Using thus a fairly simplistic logic to describe complex (sub)system relations, information can be easily collected from within, analyzed and understood by both internal and external actors in terms of prevailing and aspired collaboration as well as priority support areas. These assessments of present collaboration opportunities and failures from a SI perspective in DLRCs do, in conclusion, lead to relevant pointers for the discussion of the systemic promotion of participation and collaborative governance in FFP in general.

2. South Africa's Agrarian Reform: In Search of an Integrated and Inclusive Rural Economy

2.1. Decentralization and Coordination Challenges in Agrarian Reform

Present day South Africa cannot be discussed outside of the country's specific historical path of colonial dispossession and Apartheid segregation. Since the Natives Land Act of 1913 and up until the first post-Apartheid elections in 1994, black people were formally excluded from secure access to land [8]. Fourteen million black people gathered in the former Bantustans and reserves—occupying only 13 percent of the country's area. The large majority of them engaged in small-scale or subsistence farming. Around 60,000 white farmers occupied 86 million hectares of privately owned land, or seventy percent of the country's total surface area. Post-Apartheid land reform policies begin with the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which saw land reform as 'the central and driving force of a programme of rural development' and set a specific target of redistributing 30 percent of the agricultural land by 1999 [9]. The 1997 White Paper on South African Land Policy [10] elaborates, in addition to the redistribution pillar, a tenure reform and restitution pillar. Under the restitution pillar, rights in land are meant to be restored to people who can prove that they were dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913 due to racist laws or policies. Tenure reform, on the other hand, has two distinct aspects: one deals with improving the security of tenure for those living on other people's land, primarily farm dwellers on commercial farms; the other aims at providing legally secure tenure for people living on communal land, primarily in the former Bantustans. With the slow and unsystematic progress of land reform since 1994, official statistics have accounted for both redistribution as well as restitution land transactions. Between 1994

and 2016, the redistribution pillar had clocked 4.8 million hectares, while the restitution pillar was responsible for the transfer or compensation of 3.4 million hectares [11]. This total of 8.2 million hectares amounts to only 10 percent of the 80 million hectares of 'white agricultural land' that was reallocated through the publicly funded land reform program instead of the target of 30 percent.

It is against this background that in 2009, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) was created as the lead agency of agrarian transformation [12]. The DRDLR's Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009 sought to facilitate integrated development through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society. It was to deploy a three-pronged strategy of production and livelihoods support, land reform, and economic and social infrastructure development [13]. In 2012, South Africa's first National Development Plan (NDP) pleads similarly for an integrated and inclusive rural economy through the promotion of land reform, job creation and agricultural production. This requires support strategies tailored to local conditions and improved coordination between the national, provincial, and municipal government spheres [14–16]. The South African Constitution of 1996 created a government structure with three distinct but interdependent tiers: the national, provincial and local 'spheres' [17]. Some functions fall within a single sphere, while others are the responsibility of more than one sphere. The national sphere of government is exclusively responsible for functions that affect the country's security and economic unity, such as defense or land administration. It also formulates broad framework policies and has to monitor the implementation of these in or between lower spheres. The provincial sphere of government has the primary responsibility for public service delivery, for example, in education or agriculture. The sphere of municipal (Metro, District or Local) government is responsible for the delivery of basic services, such as water and sanitation. The way in which local development planning should find expression was set out in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The instrument of five-yearly Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) was introduced, which are supposed to integrate various actors and development interventions toward coordinated service delivery in a municipality. DRDLR—renamed as Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in June 2019—was during the period of concern for this study (2015–2019), a national department responsible for land administration and management through its deconcentrated presence. Other government spheres involved in land reform and rural development were, for instance, provincial departments of agriculture or economic development as well as District and the subordinate Local Municipalities (DM and LM). Even in the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme—the precursor to the CRDP, which was specifically dedicated to improved coordination and integration—municipal, provincial, and national authorities continued to fail in aligning their planning and implementation [15]. Despite a lack of technical capacity at the municipal level, the responsible provincial or national sector departments did not share information or participate in municipal planning processes. Together with discrepancies in planning and budgeting cycles between the different government spheres, such a non-cooperative disposition jeopardizes the efficacy of the intergovernmental set-up for agrarian reform. In addition, long-standing concerns exist about a renewed devolution of land governance and administration to traditional authorities in communal areas. Traditional authorities have argued that their roles in the governance of land have been usurped by the elected local government in the post-1994 era. More recent legislation, such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, the Traditional Courts Bill of 2017 and the Communal Land Tenure Bill of 2017, reallocate power to traditional leaders. It is feared that this may lead to further elite capture, insecurity of tenure, and marginalization of rural dwellers on, for instance, a class or gender basis [18]. Siddle and Koelble [19] plead, therefore, for a revision of the ambitious intergovernmental framework, a simplified task allocation in function of actual local government capacity, and possibly the recentralization of certain functions. Of particular interest to this research contribution is the launch

by government of District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) to address the fledgling coordination and decentralized implementation of agrarian reform [6].

2.2. *District Land Reform Committees as an Experiment in Decentralized Participatory Land Administration and Management*

In line with proposals from the 2011 Green Paper on Land Reform [20] and 2012 National Development Plan (NDP), DRDLR initiated in December 2015 the installation of District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) throughout the country's 44 rural districts. DLRCs were set up at the district level as multi-stakeholder platforms to improve participation in decentralized land reform, governance, and management [6]. DLRCs would, in principle, consist of a diverse range of stakeholders, such as local representatives of line ministries, District Municipal officials or Councilors, agricultural interest groups, non-governmental organizations, and Traditional Leaders. DLRCs aimed for equal participation of local stakeholders in decisions on land acquisition and the implementation of centrally led policies. As such, DLRCs were purported to foster social mobilization and cohesion and build the capacity of rural citizens and local government officials. DLRCs were to identify farms for acquisition by government, identify candidates for farm allocation, and advise on strategic support needs and land rights conflicts. DRDLR was to provide technical and logistical support through a DLRC Secretariat and to the Beneficiary Selection Committee, a sub-committee of the DLRC for the identification of suitable candidates for land redistribution [6]. However, little clarity is provided in the policy on institutional issues, such as rules of decision making, safeguarding of inclusiveness of participants and land information, or the capacities required to fulfil all these functions by such a wide range of (non-) governmental representatives and their various interests.

A first, and, to our knowledge, only, systematic study thus far reviewed ten DLRCs in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape provinces during their first year and a half of existence; they depict the challenges that these newly created spaces of participation and collaboration face [7]. Some of the challenges relate, for instance, to whether the target of an additional 20 percent of land to identify may also include private land transactions and how to coordinate with previous redistribution or restitution projects. Land redistributed by DLRCs will go to four mutually exclusive categories of previously disadvantaged black farmers: households with very limited (or no) access to land; small-scale farmers who sell part of their produce; medium-scale commercial farmers with the ability to expand; and finally, large scale or well-established commercial farmers with potential to expand. Every DLRC will need to strike a balance between economic production, social cohesion, and agrarian transformation. This also relates to other options of land use, which may not necessarily be agricultural but rather for human settlement or service provision. This requires substantive capacity building among DLRCs members and government officials, as they need to understand local land needs and uses and keep abreast of the evolving policy and legal context. However, at the time of the study, some DLRCs were not yet operational, while others met irregularly; they all suffered from a general dearth of public visibility, solid information on local land needs, and coordination and supervision from DRDLR [7]. The latter led to the DLRCs' claim that they are performing unpaid work for government, which requires too much of their time and effort. The reviewers found that better information on local land needs and uses need to be gathered and disseminated, DRDLR should assume its coordinating role more prominently, attention should be paid to remuneration and members' skills, and the DLRCs must become more visible, accountable, and inclusive [7]. This recent experiment shows that decentralized platforms were created centrally with an ambit of land administration and management "for and by the people" without, however, fully equipping them with the required information, operational resources, skills, institutional clarity, accountability mechanisms or hands-on supervision [21]. Although only a future, country-wide evaluation of this experiment can provide an encompassing insight, this early assessment raises huge concerns about policy-driven institutional incoherencies in the DLRCs. This concern seems to be confirmed by the proposed replacement of DLRCs

by more centrally led land allocation panels in a new draft of the National Policy for Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation of 2020 [22]. Potential downside effects of such ineffective participation and collaboration by various (non-) governmental stakeholders in decentralized land administration and management are local elite capture, exclusion, and aggravated inequality, which may remain hidden from the eye of public accountability. It is evident that under these conditions, the innovation of DRLCs entails a huge risk of undermining rather than fostering social mobilization and cohesion as originally set out in the policy. The main objective of this contribution is to identify key characteristics of success and failure in the adoption of collaborative governance as an innovation in the DLRCs, and to formulate general recommendations for the promotion of participation and collaboration in FFP in general. For that purpose, we first need to define and operationalize the concept of collaborative governance in DLRCs from an innovation perspective.

3. Conceptual Framework for the Study of the Introduction of Collaborative Governance in South Africa's DLRCs

Globally, collaboration has been an important innovation trend in the public sector over the past decades [23]. Collaboration is understood as a subtype of coordination in which autonomous actors interact and negotiate (in) formally and jointly create rules and structures which involve shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions [24]. For clarity's sake, Emerson, Nabachi and Balogh [25] add that this is to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished by the actors individually. Achieving shared and interdependent collaboration implies a dynamic synergetic process characterized by multiple viewpoints, contradictions, and unintended outcomes [23]. The recent promotion of collaborative governance proves, however, to be highly complex and context-dependent. Not in the least since its theoretical and empirical development is informed by multiple disciplines, theories, and practices of which, for instance, Emerson, Nabachi and Balogh [25] provide a succinct overview.

3.1. Counting Collaboration on one Hand?

To approach the DLRCs from the perspective of collaborative governance as an innovation, we first revisit Ansell and Gash's [26] review of more than 130 studies of collaborative governance, which they understand as the public sector's strategy to formally incorporate non-state stakeholders into consensus-oriented decision-making processes. The five critical variables of collaborative governance that they retain are facilitative leadership, institutional design, face-to-face dialogue, trust building, and commitment and shared understanding. In this, they pay particular attention to incentives to participate, power and resource imbalances, and prior history of conflict or cooperation. In a broader take on collaboration in such settings, Thomson and Perry [24] do not limit their interest to state strategies of formal engagement with other stakeholders only. They define collaboration as a voluntary alignment process between actors in general with shared norms and mutually beneficial interaction. From their extensive multi-disciplinary literature review, they retain five similar but wider-ranging core dimensions: governance, administration, autonomy, mutuality, and social capital. The combination of these dimensions articulates collaborative action; in other words, ideally, strong collaboration requires a full hand made up of these five dimensions or fingers. Since the main innovative element of the DLRC initiative lies in promoting the collaboration of various (non-) governmental actors toward joint proposals for land administration and management to be submitted by the DLRC to the central ministerial level for approval, we will, in the first instance, base our analysis on the broader conceptual understanding of collaboration in se in the promotion of collaborative governance. To that effect, the five collaboration fingers will be discussed here and, where relevant, complemented with elements from Ansell and Gash's [26] collaborative governance model.

The first dimension of collaboration, governance, is characterized by participative decision making, shared power arrangements and joint problem solving [24]. Therefore, a reputation of trustworthiness, face-to-face communication, and the creation of an ethic

of collaboration, while building the respective reputations, benefit collaboration. This is corroborated by Ansell and Gash [26] who highlight the critical role of the institutional set-up, shared ownership of process, face-to-face dialogue, and trust building. The second dimension, administration, needs to be adapted to horizontal and symmetrical relationships between non-hierarchical autonomous units. Additional complexity surfaces, as autonomous partners may play different administrative roles simultaneously, such as those of convener, advocate, technical assistance, funder, facilitator, and others [24]. Thirdly, parties bear at least a dual identity: their own distinct organizational identity and interests, and the collaborative ones. When a balance can be established between individual and collective interests, there is ample evidence that collaboration can yield highly satisfying results. This is the third finger of autonomy—the ability to defend and pursue individual stakeholders' interests within the collaborative venture. Organizations that collaborate must, in the fourth instance, experience mutuality, which includes beneficial interdependencies based on differing or shared interests. Shared interests may derive from homogeneity in mission or can also be informed by meta-issues, such as humanitarian crises. Collaboration based on differing interests or complementarities occurs when one party has unique resources, such as skills or funds, which another party needs. Ansell and Gash's model [26] is heavily biased toward this fourth dimension. For instance, the starting conditions of power–resource–knowledge asymmetries and incentives for and constraints on participation fall within the realm of mutuality. In particular, recognition of interdependence, openness to explore common values, mutual gains and common problem definitions highlight the importance of mutuality to the formal collaboration between state and non-state actors. The fifth finger on the collaboration hand refers to the extent of trust and reciprocity. Often, individual partners only dare to collaborate if other partners demonstrate a similar willingness. This 'tit-for-tat' reciprocity is based on the perceived degree of obligation; partners are willing to initially bear disproportional costs because they expect the others to act fairly and equalize the distribution of costs and benefits over time. Closely related to reciprocity is trust, which is the belief that the other partners will be honest, will try to stick to commitments, and will not take excessive advantage of the other. Trust reduces complexity and transaction costs in collaboration, and as collaborative partners interact and build reputations for trustworthy behavior over time, they may move away from tit-for-tat reciprocity to longer-term commitments [24].

When in the context of decentralization, coordination—of which collaboration is a subtype—is ineffective, various coordination gaps may appear. Charbitt [27] distinguishes seven such gaps in decentralized contexts: information, capacity, fiscal, policy, administrative, objective and accountability gaps. An information gap is characterized by information asymmetries between levels of government and is included in the governance finger of the collaboration hand, which considers the degree of shared power arrangements and joint problem solving as based, among others, on sharing information [24]. An administrative gap occurs when the administrative scale for policy making and implementation is not in line with its functional reach. In turn, capacity gaps may arise when there is a lack of human, knowledge, or infrastructural resources to carry out tasks at any of the government levels. The fiscal gap is represented by the difference between subnational revenues or financial resources and the budget required to implement the identified development strategies [27]. These three gaps are dealt with in Thomson and Perry's [24] administration dimension, which captures the different administrative roles that partners simultaneously may play, such as convening, technical assistance or funding. Charbitt's policy gaps result when central line ministries take a purely vertical or silo approach, while subnational governments are thought to be best placed to customize complementarities between policy fields. The objective gap refers to different rationalities among national or subnational policy makers, which create obstacles for adopting convergent strategies. These two gaps are fully covered by the fingers of autonomy and mutuality on the collaboration hand. Collaborative actors must experience mutually beneficial interdependencies and only such perceived mutuality can enable a collaboration in which stakeholders defend and pur-

sue common interests without loss to their own autonomous interests [24]. Finally, an accountability gap surfaces when the transparency of practices across different levels of government falls short or the integrity of policy makers is questioned. The success factors of trust and reciprocity on the collaboration hand cover this aspect. Thomson and Perry's five-fingered analytical framework of collaboration appears, thus, sufficiently robust to heed coordination risks specific to multi-level interactions as pointed out by Charbitt [27]. Now that we have elaborated the conceptual understanding of collaboration in the new collaborative governance set-up of DLRCs, we turn our attention to framing its introduction as an innovation.

3.2. A System of Innovation Framework for Collaborative Governance

The study of specific innovations as part of a wider system has, since the late eighties, received attention through the so-called 'system of innovation' approach. The neo-classical perspective on innovation, which deems that technical change stems from an isolated profit-maximizing agent, may overlook important interrelations. For instance, many actors involved in research and development, such as universities and public research institutions, are not primarily profit-seeking. The legal context also plays a significant role in shaping innovation opportunities and possibilities [28]. In the late 1980s, the 'system of innovation (SI)' approach emerged to focus on the influence of national policies and institutions on innovations. Here, innovation is seen as a non-linear process in which actors interact with a manifold of other organizations, such as research institutes or financial organizations, and institutions, such as laws, regulations, cultures, or codes of conduct. These interactions are influenced by the institutional set-up of society as well as capabilities of the individual actors in the system [28,29]. According to SI, for innovations to be successful, interactions between actors need to take place, rules of the game have to be observed, the evolutionary process has to function, and actors need to have innovation capabilities. If these functions are ineffective, system failures appear [30]. Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing [29] propose a framework of system failures, which distinguishes between system failures and the actors involved. These actors—policy makers, customers, or firms—are not only seen to (co-) create products and technologies, but the actual institutional framework in which they function as well. Setting system failures against actors allows a clearer attribution of (mal) functioning: a system network failure may, for instance, be differentiated in terms of a lack of cooperation with either technologically complementary firms (producers) or innovation-stimulating market parties (consumer-oriented). In the systems-failure framework, infrastructural failures pertain to failures in the physical infrastructure, such as accommodation or information technology. When institutions fail to institutionally regulate economic behavior and interaction, they may hinder innovation. Hard institutional failures refer to the formal institutional mechanisms, such as technical standards or health and safety regulations. Soft institutional failures refer to the implicit rules of the game and include social norms and values, such as entrepreneurship. Interaction failures can surface when there is either too much or too little interaction. Intensive cooperation between actors can be very productive as a source of creative problem solving and capacity sharing. However, strong cooperative relationships may also lead to myopia and inertia, where parties mainly focus on themselves and on what they do well. As a result, actors may be locked into existing technological trajectories. On the other hand, if certain actors dominate, they may lock in others into their ways of doing things due to, for instance, a lack of alternative partners. Such weak network failures may lead to the underutilization of opportunities for learning and innovation. Finally, in the case of capability failure, actors may simply lack the individual competences, capacity, or resources for effective innovation and interaction. In short, this framework points out where an innovation system failure will likely occur, differentiates between distinct types of failure, and enables the evaluation of how effectively failures have been addressed [29].

The system failure framework of Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing [29] hones in on infrastructural, institutional, interaction and capabilities risks during innovations.

Where may such SI potential failures then appear in the five finger-model of collaboration of Thompson and Perry [24]? Institutional failures in collaborative governance as an innovation may be linked to ineffective legal and regulatory frameworks or norms and values, and be situated in the governance finger. In managing voluntary collaboration between autonomous actors, the key is the right combination of administrative capacity to coordinate and elements of hierarchy and social capacity to build relationships [24]. In terms of the SI, this administration finger requires hard infrastructural resources, such as meeting facilities, as well as soft administrative infrastructure, such as operational and human resources. Interactions between various collaboration candidates can hamper new forms of collaboration if shaped by centripetal or a lack of centrifugal forces in the case of respectively strong or weak network failures. In addition, Charbitt [27] stresses the risk of information failure in a multi-level governance set-up. It is, therefore, critical to include in the proposed SI framework to assess DLRCs the existing and preferred levels of informational interaction between stakeholders, including between the central and local level. Prior interactions of cooperation or conflict and the crucial role of leadership herein are suggested by Ansell and Gash's [26] to determine the range of collaboration opportunities. Hence, asymmetrical power distribution, prior cooperation or antagonism and the facilitating role of leaders are added in the proposed SI under the interaction dimension. Finally, SI's attention to individual capabilities for innovation is further specified for collaboration—informed by Thomson and Perry [24] and Ansell and Gash [26]—as the ability to pursue autonomy and mutuality and to trust and reciprocate in a practical, as opposed to a normative, way. Autonomy and mutuality are operationalized as the ability to defend and pursue own interests and common interests, respectively. Reciprocity or tit-for-tat commitment as proposed by Thomson and Perry [24] is operationalized as actual working together by providing committed, obligatory inputs. Trust is then measured by whether actors in a collaboration setting are thought to also provide non-obligatory, voluntary, or additional inputs (in future) or are able to make proactive use of the environment for the common goal (going the extra mile). It should be noted that mutuality, in principle, not only features in the capability subsystem; partners who acknowledge shared benefits may forge common problem definitions and identification of common values. Failing to translate such mutuality into laws, regulations, norms, or values are either hard or soft institutional failures, which may pose a risk to innovation. Thus, adapting Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing's [29] generic system failure framework of innovation to the multiple dimensions of collaborative governance [24,26], specifically in a multi-level setting [27], intends to yield a more complete framework for the systematic analysis of collaborative governance as an innovation in South Africa's DLRCs.

The SI framework for collaborative governance that we elaborate in Figure 1 draws on Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing's [29] framework. However, the four subsystems—failure in infrastructure to perform the key administration function of collaboration in a multi-level governance set-up; institutional failure; interaction failure and capability failure—have been retained as dimensions, and not necessarily as failures as such. Further qualifications (e.g., administrative infrastructure; information exchange between central and local level) and specifications (e.g., leadership; power balances; past cooperation and conflicts) have been added, based on the above-summarized literature review. The resulting SI framework for collaborative governance can, in line with the metaphor of the five-fingered hand of collaboration, be represented in a more mechanistic way by a four-wheel drive car. For the car as an entity or system to move, each wheel requires an individual 'drivetrain' or subsystem to transfer power to the wheels. Each drivetrain is compiled of different components, resulting in different forces being transferred to the wheels. The speed and comfort with which the car can cobble over difficult terrain depends on the interrelation and synchronization between the distinct subsystems. Viewed from above, and with one axis representing the original system's structural and the other axis the actor dimension, the collaboration car and its four drivetrains appear as follows.

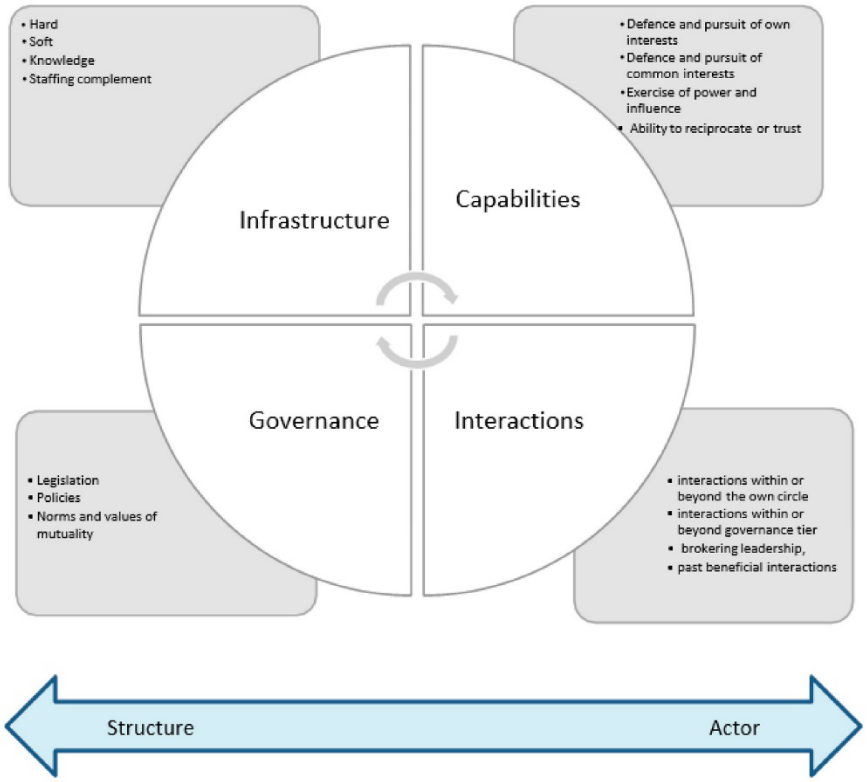

Figure 1. SI Framework for Collaborative Governance.

The four drivetrains—infrastructure, capabilities, governance, and interactions— represent the subsystems of the SI framework for collaborative governance; their relevant components are listed in each wheel and represent the collaboration-specific characteristics identified in the literature. Moreover, when incorporating an assessment of not only the actual but also of aspired levels of collaboration, this new framework not only allows to determine which systemic failures of collaboration prevail, but also to what extent. Through a comparison between the actual and the preferred scenario of collaboration, it allows to analyze, in addition, how these system failures may be resolved. Such a comparison facilitates a regular iterative assessment of actual progress toward innovation as promoted by the SI perspective. In that sense, it not only turns into a framework that scans for the system's opportunities for collaboration rather than merely its failures, but, more so, it has the potential to monitor progress in resolving the most relevant system failures by measuring ongoing discrepancies between the actual and preferred performance for each collaboration dimension. The important subsystems of collaboration and their components are a range of hard and soft infrastructural features related to administration for collaboration: legal and policy frameworks, norms and values toward shared outcomes; interactions within or beyond the own circle or governance level, brokering leadership, and past beneficial interactions; and capabilities involving both the defense and pursuance of own as well as common interests, the exercise of power and influence, and the ability to reciprocate or trust. This proposed framework is specified below for three DLRC case studies in South Africa.

4. Collaborative Governance in District Land Reform Committees: How Far (To Go)?

4.1. Case Study Rationale and Methodology

This collaboration case study applies the developed SI framework for collaborative governance in three DLRCs—Chris Hani, Joe Gqabi and Sarah Baartman—in the Eastern Cape province. These three DLRCs are selected from the 2017 review of ten DLRCs on the basis of their operationality, availability of encompassing plans for rural development, and openness to research [7]. For purposes of information gathering, official members of the three DLRCs were interviewed between February and April 2019. The DLRCs of Sara Baartman and Joe Gqabi consisted each of 14 members with known contact details, while only 10 DLRC members could be traced in the Chris Hani DLRC, bringing the total to 38 governmental and non-governmental respondents. They were asked to individually assess how collaboration is actually undertaken, supported, or impacted upon in each of the subsystems and dimensions identified as conducive for collaboration. The SI framework was adjusted to the tasks and composition of the DLRCs (see Table 1). For instance, infrastructure refers to the meeting venue, facilities, and IT equipment and stationery to support the new DLRCs; financial resources refer to sitting or travel allowances, resources for site visits, and payment of support staff; human resources refer to the number, efficiency, and knowledge of DRDLR staff and/or members of DLRC who provide operational or technical support to DLRC. Governance is covered by the knowledge that the members of DLRCs have of the laws and legal regulations on DLRCs and on operational guidelines, policies, and strategies, as well as the norms and values of members of DLRC to make decisions which promote interests and objectives shared by all members. Interactions are captured by the assessment regarding whether the information on DLRC matters is circulated and exchanged between stakeholders at the local as well as the central level, or rather only at the national or provincial level; whether members of DLRC exchange questions, ideas and proposals with stakeholders other than DLRC members or mostly only among themselves; if members of DLRC have worked well together with each other in the past; and whether severe power imbalances are noticed when it comes to decision making in the DLRC, as well as whether the leadership of the DLRC supports the decision making in the DLRC in such a manner that members of DLRC are able to come to shared, joint decisions. Capabilities indicate whether members of the DLRC are able to defend their own interests and those of the groups they represent; whether or not all members of the DLRC defend the common interests; and whether members of the DLRC fulfil the duties they are legally obliged to fulfil, do willingly extra tasks when asked to do, or take the initiative to fulfil additional tasks in addition to their standard duties (going the extra mile). Subsequently, respondents assessed the degree of contribution that is preferred or required to render the collaboration in that subsystem or dimension successful. Assessment scores were solicited in ten equal percentage intervals, with 0 percent being the lowest and 100 percent the highest assessment score. Such intervals facilitate the gathering of assessments by providing a limited number of categories for scoring, yet still allow a meaningful use and interpretation of the scores on a continuum. The various dimensions' actual scores are expressed as a percentage of preferable scores so that each and every dimension—even the ones with a degree of preferability of less than 100—is standardized for the purpose of comparison. The standardized assessments of the actual vis-à-vis preferred status thus reveal existing opportunities (high scores) and gaps (low scores) for collaboration as an innovation. In order to identify possible external support mechanisms to revealed systemic collaboration failures, an additional question was put to the DLRC members. This question relates to the role of governments or organizations from outside South Africa who may be willing to assist the DLRCs to improve their operations in land administration and management in line with South Africa's legislation and policies. Members were asked to highlight the five most important areas where such external support to collaboration may contribute most significantly in their DLRC. Below is an outline of the developed system framework, while the full questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

Table 1. SI framework for collaboration in DLRCs.

Collaboration Dimensions	Individual DLRC Members' Assessments of Actual and Preferred Collaboration
Administration: convening, advocating, technical assistance, funder, facilitator . . .	
Physical infrastructure/resources: Secretariat and meeting facilities	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Human resources: number	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Human resources: competency	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Operational resources: financial means for, e.g., sitting, accommodation and subsistence allowances, transport, site and exchange visits	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Governance: participative decision making, shared power arrangements and problem solving	
Legal framework	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Policy framework	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Norms, values towards shared outcomes (mutuality)	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Network interactions	
Dominant stakeholders exchange predominantly amongst themselves to elaborate their expertise further (centripetal)	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Dominant stakeholders engage with new stakeholders to explore new ideas and methods (centrifugal)	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Information exchange between central level stakeholders	Actual: 0–00% Preferred: 0–100%
Information exchange between central and local level stakeholders	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Stakeholders have engaged productively with each other in the past	0–100%
Leadership	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Capabilities	
Ability to defend and pursue own interests	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Ability to defend and pursue common interests	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Severe imbalances in power between the stakeholders are to be expected	0–100%
Actual working together by providing committed/obligatory inputs	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Actual working together by providing non-obligatory, voluntary or additional inputs	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%
Making proactive and maximal use of the environment/situation for the common goal (going the extra mile)	Actual: 0–100% Preferred: 0–100%

4.2. Systemic Failures and Opportunities in the Innovation of Collaborative Governance

In terms of standardized assessments of the present vis-à-vis preferred situation, the three DLRCs demonstrate clear, common, but also very specific, patterns. Overall, opportunities for collaboration as an innovation to work are assessed fairly high in the present rural system with an average score of 61.68 percent across the three DLRCs and the four subsystems of administration, governance, networking, and capabilities (Table 2). The composite

score of system opportunities of collaboration is the mere sum of DLRCs scores in the four subsystems. The opportunities are commonly discerned to be lowest in the subsystem of administration (almost 48%) and highest in the subsystem of governance (67.76%). The capabilities and networking dimensions score in between with respectively almost 64.46% and 66.52%. The linear tradition in public administration and management analysis is expressed very clearly in this SI framework in the assumption of simple additivity of the composite score of (sub) system opportunities of collaboration. The idea that decision making and management in public policy and public administration are complex should, however, receive far more attention in operational research (see further) [31].

Table 2. (Sub) systems and opportunities of collaboration in DLRCs (average standardized assessment score in %).

DLRC	Administrative Infrastructure	Governance	Networking	Capabilities	System Opportunities of Collaboration
Chris Hani	48.63	59.67	65.67	62.79	59.19
Joe Gqabi	47.32	75.71	75.89	69.32	67.06
Sarah Baartman	48.20	65.60	57.72	60.78	58.08
Total	47.99	67.76	66.52	64.46	61.68

The weakest administrative opportunities for the introduction of collaboration (Table 3) are identified in the financial resources available, for instance, for sitting and travel allowances or running costs of the secretariats (Q2 26.44%), as well as the human resources (Q3 number of staff 49.96%) who provide operational or technical support to DLRCs and their efficiency and skills profile (Q4 53.60%). The least systemic failure in the administrative drivetrain is located in the physical resources and infrastructure, such as the meeting venue and facilities or IT equipment, which do score reasonably (Q1 61.95%). The DLRC under the most financial pressure to meet its obligation and expectations is Joe Gqabi, which assesses its actual financial performance as 20 percent of its preferred profile (Q2). The Sarah Baartman DLRC is in a relatively better position, having reached 35.70 percent of its preferred financial resourcing position.

Table 3. Administrative infrastructure (average standardized assessment score in %).

DLRC	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Administrat. Infrastructure
Chris Hani	62.00	22.50	53.00	57.00	48.63
Joe Gqabi	68.21	20.00	50.00	51.07	47.32
Sarah Baartman	55.65	35.70	47.76	53.70	48.20
Total	61.95	26.44	49.96	53.60	47.99

The more conducive scores for collaboration are found for capabilities, networking, and governance. In terms of capabilities, Table 4 reports that all members of the DLRC fulfil additional tasks in addition to their standard duties (going the extra mile) (Q19), receiving the highest affirmation of 81.39 percent, followed by the assessment that all members of the DLRC willingly do extra tasks in addition to their standard duties when asked to do so (Q18 81.13%). However, there is less of a convincing assessment in both capability factors in Sara Baartman (73.05% and 73.06%). Similar scores are given to the statement that members are able to defend their own groups' interests in the DLRCs (Q15 80.34%), especially in Joe Gqabi (88.93%). Whether members of the DLRC defend the common interests of all people of the district (Q16) is the most varied factor, ranging from a high of 87.50 percent in Joe Gqabi to a lower 64 in Chris Hani. Except in Joe Gqabi (Q13 53.57%), members of DLRC consider themselves to be able to exercise fairly equal levels of power and influence (a rather low 35 and 41 percent assessment score of unequal power distribution in Chris Hani and Sarah Baartman). While Thomson and Perry [24] acknowledge that beneficial

interdependencies based on differing interests may feed collaboration where one party needs unique resources from the other, power imbalances may also lead to manipulation of weaker actors [26]. These conditions do not seem to prevail here, as DLRC members find that they are quite able to defend their own groups' interests. This is even more so in the Joe Gqabi DLRC, which displays the most unequal power distribution. The rather low assessments of actual power imbalances as well as the members' firm interest representation capacity do not justify attributing a strong negative influence on collaboration to power imbalances in the DLRCs under review. In the absence of any indication from the literature on how to objectively express the magnitude of the reported negative influence, a rough estimate has been resorted to here. When proposing an intuitive course scale of 100 percent for a full-fledged, strong influence, 75 strong, 50 mild, 25 very mild and 0 no effect, a counter-collaboration vector of 25 percent seems adequate in the case of the three DLRCs because of the above-explained indications of inequality. This means that the imbalance of power is treated as a negative force in the composite of capabilities, but only up to 25 percent of its assessed value. This turns, for instance, the overall average score of Q13 of 43.42 percent into a vector of -10.86 percent (Q13VECTR). As coarse as this approach may be, it does provide a first way to discount the negative influence that power imbalances may have on collaboration while awaiting further experimentation. In the case of the three DLRCs, it levels off some of the high-end self-assessment scores on, for instance, going the extra mile or defending the common interests in the most 'capable' DLRC of Joe Gqabi, which, coincidentally, also knows the highest power inequality (see further). Discounting the negative effect of power imbalances—even as coarsely done as it is here—yields a more consistent pattern across the three DLRCs of composite capabilities (CAPABILITIES), which center around the overall average of 64.46 percent.

Table 4. Capabilities (average standardized assessment score in %).

DLRC	Q13	Q13VECTR	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	CAPABILITIES
Chris Hani	41.00	10.25	75.00	64.00	82.00	83.00	83.00	62.79
Joe Gqabi	53.57	13.39	88.93	87.50	76.43	87.86	88.57	69.32
Sarah Baartman	35.00	8.75	75.56	75.18	76.61	73.06	73.05	60.78
Total	43.42	10.86	80.34	76.78	77.96	81.13	81.39	64.46

The third subsystem of actual interactions and networking within the DLRCs appears promising, churning out assessment scores ranging between 42 and 81.84 percent, on average (Table 5). The lowest score is found in the circulation of information among stakeholders at the district level (Q8 42.00%). This score has been constructed by deducting the originally obtained response on reserving information, especially at the national or provincial level, rather than circulating among local stakeholders (original Q8) from a justifiable ideal preference score of 100 percent for local circulation of information. This deducted score is in line with the fairly low exchange of information between stakeholders at the local and central level (Q7 57.64%), while leadership toward shared decision making appears to be already quite present (Q14 81.84%). Big variations can be observed in reserving information among stakeholders at the national or provincial level rather than at the district level, with Sarah Baartman suffering most from this as opposed to Joe Gqabi (respective constructed Q8 scores of 28.71% and 54.29%). Previous positive cooperation experiences before the existence of DLRCs also vary widely from a high Q12 score of 90 percent to one of only 55 in Sarah Baartman. Clearly, social capital differs from context and locality.

Table 5. Network interactions (average standardized assessment score in %).

DLRC	Q7	Q8 (Constructed)	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q14	NETWORK
Chris Hani	59.50	43.00	62.50	70.50	82.50	76.00	65.67
Joe Gqabi	61.43	54.29	78.57	84.64	90.00	86.43	75.89
Sarah Baartman	52.52	28.71	59.84	68.83	55.00	81.43	57.72
Total	57.64	42.00	67.44	75.10	75.13	81.84	66.52

One subsystem that is noteworthy for the introduction of collaboration is the governance drivetrain (Table 6), which covers the legislation (Q5), guidelines, policies and strategies pertaining to DLRCs (Q6), and the prevailing norms and values toward mutuality—the promotion of shared interests and objectives (Q9). It is the latter that is reported to be most prevalent (average of 77.89%), but with high variation between, for instance, Sara Baartman, which reports a low score on mutuality (70.36%), and Joe Gqabi, where members of the DLRC assess their pursuit of shared goals to be quite satisfactory (more than 87% of the preferred score Q9). This is combined with the highest score for knowledge among members of the legal (Q5) and regulatory (Q6) frameworks that govern the DLRCs, thus making the DLRC of Joe Gqabi stand out as the most promising one for collaboration in governance terms. The Chris Hani DLRC, on the other hand, displays the lowest knowledge of such legal (Q5 44%), regulatory and strategic frameworks (Q6 59.50%) and overall governance opportunities (GOVERNANCE 59.67%), yet their members seem to perform well in pursuing a joint agenda of shared objectives (Q9 75.50%).

Table 6. Governance (average standardized assessment score in %).

DLRC	Q5	Q6	Q9	GOVERNANCE
Chris Hani	44.00	59.50	75.50	59.67
Joe Gqabi	68.21	71.79	87.14	75.71
Sarah Baartman	60.71	65.71	70.36	65.60
Total	59.08	66.32	77.89	67.76

4.3. Priorities for the Promotion of Collaboration in DLRCs

Bringing it all together is the composite score of system opportunities of collaboration (Table 2). By simply adding the DLRCs scores on the four subsystems, a differentiation can be made between DLRCs in terms of overall opportunity for the successful introduction of collaboration. The DLRC of Joe Gqabi scores the best for all systemic opportunities, except for administrative infrastructure. The SI framework, thus, proposes Joe Gqabi as the best candidate for the successful promotion of collaboration, yet warns for slight constraints in the administrative infrastructure in comparison with the other DLRCs. This result underlines the simplicity of the assumption of mere linear additivity of the four subsystems at this stage in the development of the SI framework. Despite subscribing to the idea of collaboration as non-linear and emergent, Thomson and Perry's [24] five-dimensional model falls short in operationalizing this beyond the concept of a covariant model in which variations across dimensions influence each other. They are, for instance, not able to point at specific critical levels for any of the dimensions. Interactions within complex public administration system set-ups often yield unexpected and unpredictable outcomes, which complexity approaches try to explain by factors of non-linearity, emergence, or self-governance [32]. The SI framework under development does, for instance, not take into account the constraining or accelerating effects that investment in the administrative structure may have on the other three subsystems. This is particularly relevant when discussing the DLRC of Joe Gqabi, the most likely candidate for a successful introduction of collaboration as an innovation. It is also the DLRC under the most financial pressure to meet its obligations and expectations since it assesses its actual financial performance as 20 percent of its preferred profile (Q2)

(Table 3). The DLRC also scores highest for knowledge of the legal (Q5) and regulatory frameworks (Q6), previous positive cooperation experiences before the existence of DLRCs (Q12 90%), but also for power imbalances (Q13 53.57%). In terms of some of these complex interrelations, the question then begs whether, in the likely event of prolonged absence of sufficient investment in administrative infrastructure, Joe Gqabi's development potential for collaboration may not reverse drastically toward elite capture or disinterest, for instance? At this stage, the proposed SI framework cannot yet provide a clear-cut response to these concerns of complexity.

The analysis of differences between actual and preferred assessment scores—each with a range between 0 and 100—does, however, reveal which are the most urgent discrepancies that need to be addressed (Table 7). The financial resource discrepancy (Q2STD) is overall the least satisfactory, clocking a difference between actual and preferred scores of 73.10 percent; this difference runs in Joe Gqabi up to 80. High discrepancies of almost 50 percent can be observed for the number of human resources (Q3STD) and their quality (Q4STD), as well as the lack of information flow to the district level (Q8STD), the latter again especially in Joe Gqabi (54.29%). The least discrepancy is found in members fulfilling their duties with additional efforts put in the exercise (less than 22% for Q17STD, Q18STD and Q19STD), making decisions for the common interest (Q9STD), roles of leadership (Q14STD) and members being able to defend their interests (Q15STD). Here, again, it is Joe Gqabi that scores most positively with the fewest differences between the actually observed and preferred situations for most variables.

Table 7. Discrepancies between actual and preferred situation (average %).

DLRC	Q1STD	Q2STD	Q3STD	Q4STD	Q5STD	Q6STD	Q7STD	Q8STD	Q9STD	Q10STD
Sarah Baartman	−42.14	−61.79	−51.01	−45.07	−39.29	−34.29	−46.07	−43.57	−29.64	−38.21
Joe Gqabi	−31.79	−80.00	−50.00	−48.93	−31.79	−28.21	−38.57	−54.29	−12.86	−21.43
Chris Hani	−38.00	−77.50	−47.00	−43.00	−56.00	−40.50	−40.50	−43.00	−24.50	−37.50
Total	−37.31	−73.10	−49.34	−45.67	−42.36	−34.33	−41.71	−46.95	−22.33	−32.38
DLRC	**Q11STD**	**Q14STD**	**Q15STD**	**Q16STD**	**Q17STD**		**Q18STD**		**Q19STD**	
Sarah Baartman	−27.14	−18.57	−24.29	−24.29	−22.86		−25.71		−25.71	
Joe Gqabi	−15.36	−13.57	−11.07	−12.50	−23.57		−12.14		−11.43	
Chris Hani	−29.50	−24.00	−25.00	−36.00	−18.00		−17.00		−17.00	
Total	−24.00	−18.71	−20.12	−24.26	−21.48		−18.29		−18.05	

The priorities identified through the discrepancy scores for collaboration are, in turn, confirmed by the priority needs of external support, as specifically collected in the survey questionnaire (see Appendix A). Across the three DLRCs in Table 8, the most important areas where support is required, according to the respondents, are the financial (FIN median of five "most important") and human resource bases (HR median of four). The human resources ambition aims especially at setting up a skilled permanent secretariat for the DLRCs. The financial resources should allow travel, accommodation, increased stipends, and project implementation. In addition, some important specific needs arise: to better defend and pursue the common as well as the own group's interests in Sarah Baartman (INTRST 4); the elaboration of legislation and policies with a more substantial input from local stakeholders (LEGPOL) and better power relations (PWR) in Joe Gqabi (twice median of 4); and the interaction between central and local level stakeholders (CNTLOC), especially in Sarah Baartman (4.5) and in Joe Gqabi (4). Other areas, such as physical resources and infrastructure (PIR), information exchange (INFO), leadership (LDR) or norms and values toward shared outcomes (NORM), appear as less of a priority for external intervention and support. It is noteworthy that the most promising DLRC Joe Gqabi also expresses the most urgent need for support in critical areas such as human resources, legal and policy clarity, financial resources, power relations within the DLRC and interaction with central

level stakeholders. The high responses of commitment and trust from its DLRC members in this survey corroborate the HSRC's [7] earlier assessment, namely that the explanation for this sense of urgency should rather be sought in this particular DLRC's eagerness to move ahead despite the difficult conditions it faces.

Table 8. Priority areas of external support for collaboration as an innovation (median scores).

DLRC	HR	INTRST	PIR	LEGPOL	FIN	INFO	PWR	CNTLOC	LDR	NORM
Sarah Baartman	4	4	3.5	3	5	3	2	4.5	3	1
Joe Gqabi	4	-	3	4	5	3	4	4	2	1.5
Chris Hani	4	-	3.5	1	5	1	3	-	2	2
Total	4	4	3	3	5	2.5	3	4	2	1.5

Ranking scores range from 1: least important to 5: most important.

In short, the SI framework developed here allows for a more structured assessment of collaborative governance as an innovation in DLRCs. Using a fairly simplistic logic to describe complex (sub)system relations, information can be easily collected, analyzed, and understood in terms of how collaboration looks now and where stakeholders want it to evolve to, as well as where priority support needs and opportunities are. It does, however, require further refining, which falls beyond the present scope of the study. These refinements pertain especially to the user-friendliness of the scale of assessment; the quantification of the negative effect power imbalances; identification of the most befitting external support strategies and coordination among their suppliers; and better modeling of possible interaction effects in the complex system set-up.

5. Conclusion: Some Pointers on the Introduction of Collaborative Governance in FFP Land Administration and Management

The attempt at introducing collaborative governance in DLRCs in South Africa has been analyzed here by means of an elaboration of Klein Woolthuis, Lankhuizen and Gilsing's [29] generic SI failure framework into a SI framework for collaborative governance. Deploying the elaborated framework to three DLRCs in early 2019 reveals that overall, opportunities for collaboration as an innovation to work are assessed fairly highly from within. The opportunities are commonly discerned to be lowest in the subsystem of administration and highest in the subsystem of governance. The analysis of differences between the actual and preferred assessment scores reveals that the financial resource discrepancy is overall the least satisfactory, clocking a difference between actual and preferred scores of 73.10 percent. High discrepancies of almost 50 percent can be observed for the number and quality of human resources as well as information flow to the district level. The least discrepancy is found in members fulfilling their duties, putting in additional efforts, making decisions for the common interest, being able to defend their interests and the role of leadership. These assessments of present opportunities and failures seem to reflect that while some basic conditions for participation and collaboration are quite present, they require a firmer operational, technical, and institutional backup. This is an important lead for the discussion on participation and collaborative governance in FFP and its scaling-up. The analysis of the introduction of collaborative governance as an innovation in DLRCs confirms Ho, Choudhury, Haran and Leshinsky's findings [3] that, when promoting FFP as an innovation in general, and in particular when scaling up the extent and depth of the participation and collaborative governance, the systemic complexities must not be underestimated. In the SI approach, these complexities are seen to emanate from the non-linear processes in which actors interact with many others in a specific societal set-up, with their own idiosyncratic capabilities. The case of the launching of DLRCs without solid technical, operational, institutional, or methodological support demonstrates that FFP does not only need to be a well-supported and -resourced intervention. To paraphrase Barry [33], for FFP as an innovation to be more than a management bumper sticker and to actually suit local circumstances, our study shows that it needs to adopt a systemic perspective from the

beginning. A systemic perspective simultaneously pays attention to the various technical (e.g., flexible data capturing, scalability, reliability, time- and resource efficiency) and social dimensions (e.g., tenure regimes, participation, decentralized collaborative governance), as they are conceived to be interlinked elements of a complex FFP land administration system.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data were not published, but are available in Excel format upon request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. SI Framework for Collaborative Governance Survey Questionnaire

DLRC: … .
Interview: … … … … … … .
Date: … … … … … … … … … … … …

Research project: ASSESSMENT BY DLRC MEMBERS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION IN 3 DLRCS

Q: In which capacity or function do you participate in the DLRC? **A: DLRC MEMBER (FUNCTION):**	
We will present you with 19 characteristics of DLRCS which may contribute to successful collaboration among DLRC members. We ask you to assess, how far in your experience and opinion, these characteristics: 1. *Contribute at present to promote collaboration among the DLRC members?* 2. *Need to be improved in the future to have a satisfactory collaboration among the DLRC members?* *You can score your assessment out of a maximum of 100%, each time in categories from 0–10% (=around 10%); 11–20% (=around 20%); 21–30% (=around 30%); 31–40% (=around 40%); 41–50% (=around 50%); 51–60% (=around 60%); 61–70% (= around 70%); 71–80% (=around 80%); 81–90% (=around 90%); 91–100% (= 100%)* *We will first have three imaginary examples of such an assessment before we start with the real questions.*	
Example 1: Imagine you and your neighbor share a borehole which dries up regularly without any major disputes. We might ask how far you are able to get along because of clear agreements on how much water you can each pump up every day (e.g., 70%). How much you would like this water situation to improve?	*Actual: %70* *Preferred: %.....*
Example 2: Imagine your boss and you have out-of-office meetings every 6 months to discuss your respective marriages, since your boss believes this will improve your work relationship. You have an actual score of about 50% (2 times per year); but what does your preferred score looks like?	*Actual: %50* *Preferred: %......*
Wrap up question: If you are asked to score your agreement to a statement, and the 'no agreement at all'- score is 0%, 'do not agree nor disagree'- score is 50% and 'agree fully' is 100%, then what would be your score for: 1. *'agree to a certain extent': 60%, 70% or 80%¿* 2. *agree mostly': 70%, 80% or 90%?*	% … … … … … … … . % … … … … … … … .

1.	**Physical resources and infrastructure to fulfil administrative and secretarial functions of DLRC:** meeting venue and facilities; IT equipment; stationary, etc.	Actual: % Preferred: %
2.	**Financial resources to run the operations of DLRC:** e.g., sitting allowances, travel allowances, resources for site visits, payment of support staff; running costs of Secretariat, etc.	Actual: % Preferred: %
3.	**Number of DRDLR staff and/or members of DLRC who provide operational or technical support to DLRC**	Actual: % Preferred: %
4.	**Efficiency and knowledge of DRDLR staff and/or members of DLRC who provide operational or technical support to DLRC**	Actual: % Preferred: %
5.	**The legally binding laws and legal regulations on DLRC tasks, functions and matters are well known to DLRC members**	Actual: % Preferred: %
6.	**The operational guidelines, policies and strategies outlining the role and functions of DLRCs are well known to DLRC members**	Actual: % Preferred: %
7.	**Information on DLRC matters is usually circulated and exchanged between stakeholders at the local as well as the central level**	Actual: % Preferred: %
8.	**Information on DLRC matters is more circulated among stakeholders at national or provincial level than at district level**	Actual: % Preferred: %
9.	**Members of DLRC find it important to make decisions which promote interests and objectives shared by all members.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
10.	**Members of DLRC exchange questions, ideas and proposals with other stakeholders than DLRC members.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
11.	**Members of DLRC exchange such questions, ideas and proposals mostly only among themselves.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
12.	**In the past—before they joined the DLRC—members of DLRC haveworked well together with each other.**	Actual: %
13.	**Members of DLRC have very unequal levels of actual power andinfluence when it comes to decision making in the DLRC.**	Actual: %
14.	**The leadership of the DLRC acts and supports the decision making in the DLRC in such a manner that members of DLRC are able to come to shared, joint decisions.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
15.	**All members of the DLRC are able to defend their own interests and of those groups they represent in the DLRC's process of decision making.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
16.	**All members of the DLRC defend the common interests of all people of the district**	Actual: % Preferred: %

17.	**All members of the DLRC do fulfil the duties they are legally obliged to fulfil.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
18.	**All members of the DLRC willingly do extra tasks in addition to their standard duties when they are asked to do.**	Actual: % Preferred: %
19.	**All members of the DLRC take the initiative to fulfil additional tasks in addition to their standard duties (going the extra mile).**	Actual: % Preferred: %
20.	***We discussed in this research factors which according to collaboration theory can improve trust and collaboration between committee members, such as the human resources available to the DLRCs, the ability of DLRC members to defend and pursue the common as well as their own group's interest, physical resources and infrastructure, legal and policies framework, financial resources, the information exchange and power relations between DLRC members and between central and local level stakeholders, the role of leadership, the existence of norms and values towards shared outcomes, and the will to provide more than only the minimum standard tasks.*** ***If governments or organizations from outside South Africa were willing to assist the DLRCS to improve their operations in land administration and management in line with South Africa's legislation and policies, which of these collaboration areas would you see as the five most important ones for such external support in your DLRC? Please list these five most important areas and explain briefly each time what such external support should consist of, and***	
	for how long it is required (short = 1–2 years; medium: next 5 years; long term: next 10 years). ***Finally, order them from least (= score 1) to most important one (= score 5). (Mark the rank in the circle)***	
o		Next 1–2 years Next 5 years Next 10 years *(scrap what is not applicable)*
o		Next 1–2 years Next 5 years Next 10 years *(scrap what is not applicable)*
o		Next 1–2 years Next 5 years Next 10 years *(scrap what is not applicable)*
o		Next 1–2 years Next 5 years Next 10 years *(scrap what is not applicable)*
o		Next 1–2 years Next 5 years Next 10 years *(scrap what is not applicable)*

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