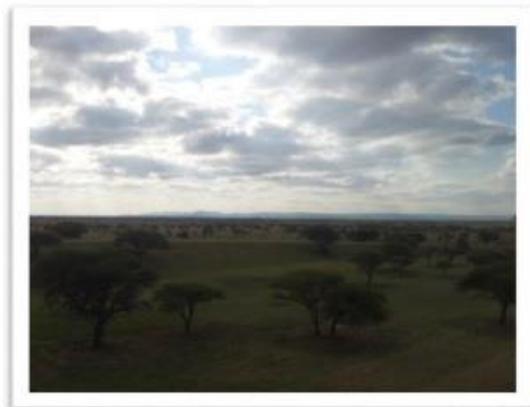




Universiteit Utrecht

Poverty in a transforming landscape

Research in Bela-Bela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa



Master thesis

International Development Studies

Utrecht University

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In cooperation with Stellenbosch University



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“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”
- Nelson Mandela

Abstract

The spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela changed severely in the last twenty years. The emergence of tourism transformed the rural municipality into a popular tourism hub. The transformation of the landscape of Bela-Bela Local municipality has not only changed the area spatially and economically, though also influenced the nature of poverty. Within this research the central question is how the spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela changed and what the consequences are for poverty. The process of de-agrarianisation of the area fits within a more global trend in the Rural South. Rigg (2006) describes the emergence of a rural non-farm economy within the Rural South, which leads to a new type of poverty. Instead of old poverty, whereby the poor are not integrated in the system, the poor suffer now from new poverty; meaning that they are integrated, but on very unfavourable terms.

The transformation of Bela-Bela not only involves the emergence of tourism, though also the implementation of land reform projects. The elitist position of tourism and the mainly failing land reform projects within the area put Bela-Bela in a distinct position. Although the process of de-agrarianisation fits within Rigg's concept of the changing Rural South, the position of the poor is contradicting. It seems that in the apartheid era, the poor were in a position whereby they were actually part of the mainstream economy, though treated very unequally. Nowadays one can identify a clear disconnection between the rich and the poor whereby failing agricultural land reform projects only create holes in the economic landscape. Furthermore the pro-poor focus of tourism is more or less absent. Nonetheless it provides the area with a successful land restitution and development model, in the case of the Bela-Bela CPA. The collaboration between the white established order and the black community provides an exemplary role for the further transformation of Bela-Bela and South Africa.

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This master thesis is the closing document of my academic career and the result of a long process of research and writing both in the Netherlands and in my beloved South Africa. During this process I have received a lot of support and help and I would like to express my gratitude for the people who assisted me. First of all I would like to thank my supervisor at Utrecht University, dr. Guus van Westen, who provided me with many critical notes and advice on my writings. The process of research started with the preparation in Utrecht and later in Stellenbosch. In Stellenbosch I have received a lot of help from Prof Ronnie Donaldson. I would like to thank him for his assistance in setting up the research and familiarizing me with doing research in South Africa. The research and assistance of Prof Sanette Ferreira was also very helpful. Furthermore I would like to thank Schalk van Heerden from UNISA, who supported me with information and maps of Bela-Bela.

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My stay in South Africa was very pleasant, which only was possible because of all the friendly people I have met. Back in the Netherlands the gathered information has been processed into this master thesis. The process of writing took place during an intense period in my life and I would like to thank my family and friends who supported me in this time and made it possible for me to successfully end my academic career.

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List of abbreviations

- ANC:** African National Congress
- CPA:** Communal Property Association
- CPR:** Common Pool Resources
- CWP:** Community Work Program
- ESTA:** Extension of Security of Tenure Act
- GDP:** Gross Domestic Product
- GGP:** Gross Geographical Product
- IDP:** Integrated Development Plan
- LED:** Local Economic Development
- LIBSA:** Limpopo Business Support Agency
- LRAD:** Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
- NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation
- NP:** National Party
- PLAS:** Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy
- PPT:** pro-poor tourism
- PWV:** Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vaal
- RNFE:** Rural Non-Farm Economy
- SDF:** Spatial Development Framework
- SLAG:** Settlement Land Acquisition Grant
- SMME:** Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
- UNISA:** University of South Africa

Introduction

Bela-Bela Local Municipality is situated in the Southern part of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. This municipality used to be a quiet rural town, though since the last twenty years the area transformed into a tourist destination whereby the visitors are welcomed by a Waterfront entrance and have the possibility to select from more than hundred tourist establishments. The image of the area and the town underwent a major transformation, though as in the whole of South Africa one encounters high inequalities in the social and economic development. Poverty is still widespread and within this research the subject of poverty in the changing landscape of Bela-Bela is central. The Bela-Bela Local Municipality is an example of a de-agrarianising area where occupations and livelihoods are diversifying. This municipality not only underwent the South African political transformation, but developed the last twenty years from an agriculture based town into a tourism hub in the region.

The history of apartheid created an exceptional situation in South Africa, though many development problems connect to global trends and fit in a wider perspective. Rural poverty is a global phenomenon and about 70 % of the poor live in rural areas and are predominantly dependent on agriculture (World Bank, 2008). This image of poverty presents the poor world as a largely rural world, where livelihoods are dependent on agriculture and land is the crucial resource. There is a strong farming and land-focused vision and development interventions often tend to focus on the redistribution of rural resources and/or on a (re)-invigoration of agricultural production (Rigg, 2006). However, the situation in the Rural South is subject to change, whereby non-farm activities become more important in rural livelihoods and there is a decreasing commitment to farming. The occupations and livelihoods in rural areas are diversifying and shift from farm to non-farm, whereby job creation is the key to address poverty.

The development of Bela-Bela fits in a global concept of rural transition. According to Rigg (2006), non-farm activities are becoming more central to rural livelihoods in the Global South and the commitment to farming is decreasing. This change in livelihoods creates new opportunities for the poor in rural areas. Thereby he differentiates between old and new poverty; concepts which explain the changing nature of poverty. The transformation of the Bela-Bela area has many parallels with the transition seen in the Rural South and extensive research of the area will clarify these concepts through a case study. The municipality of Bela-Bela is the main focus of the research and the main question to be answered is: *How did the spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela change and what consequences did this have for poverty?*

The main topics discussed can be divided into four sections, each explaining a different component of the situation in Bela-Bela. First the transformation of Bela-Bela will be highlighted,

thereby focussing upon the structural changes in economy and society. In the late 1980s a study was of the area was made by Sanette Ferreira, which makes it possible to compare between the two periods and to look at the differences between the situation then and now. Secondly, the spatial effects of the changing economy will be highlighted, thereby focussing on the change of land use, the access to land and the different transformation processes. When the change of the spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela is discussed, the subject of poverty will stand central. Though the presence of poverty in the area is still current, the situation has changed severely. The emergence of tourism has created major diversification possibilities, the role of the government has changed and pro-poor initiatives are attempted. The third section will then focus on the role of pro-poor initiatives in the local policy framework. Here the government plays an important role, for example by implementing land reform projects. These land reform projects, mainly carried out in the agricultural sector, attempt to address poverty and to redress the effects of apartheid. This is an on-going process and the last section will focus on the effect of pro-poor initiatives and the nature of poverty in the continuing transformation of the area. In these sections all the different actors and stakeholders are covered at some point, with special attention to the role of the (municipal) government, which plays an important role throughout the whole research.

Regional context

The release of Nelson Mandela leading to the end of apartheid is one of the key events of the 20th century and set South Africa free from a racial minority rule. The end of apartheid started the transformation of a troubled country and gave the people hope for a better future. South Africa underwent a major political transformation since the end of apartheid, though poverty and inequality remain widespread, especially in rural areas. Since 1995 income inequality actually increased. Approximately 70 % of the rural inhabitants are poor of whom between 18-24 % are chronically poor (Hebinck & Shackleton, 2011). This confronts the country with enormous challenges and despite certain impressive results in battling different dimensions of the socio-economic legacies of apartheid, development problems continue to exist (Rogerson, 2006). The political transformation seems not to have led to poverty reduction in the country and this is still the main political challenge.

Despite all the national development problems South Africa is the biggest African economy and a regional hub for surrounding countries. Within the country a limited number of core areas are responsible for the economic results. Nearly 80 % of the country's economy is generated in four core areas, namely the Gauteng province and the cities of Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth (Nel & Rogerson, 2009). These regions contribute to the relatively high level of wealth present in the country and linkages with these areas provide further development opportunities for the rest of the country. The promotion of economic development within South Africa is part of the tasks of all three layers of government, namely national, regional and local, since the national state underwent a profound decentralization process and recognized local governments as key agents of change. Local governments are tasked to respond to the developmental needs faced in their localities, with a specific focus on the poorest members of society (Rogerson, 2006). Local governments became a key-player in post-apartheid South Africa, whereby powers were devolved and decentralised towards the municipal level. The transfer of these powers means that local governments bear great responsibilities in fostering local development, becoming a developmental local government (Rogerson, 2011). The role of the local government will play an important role throughout the research and will be highlighted in the different sections of the research.

The subject of this research is the Bela-Bela Local Municipality. Bela-Bela is a rural municipality located in the south-western region of the Waterberg District at the edge of the Limpopo province. The town of Bela-Bela is the centre of the area, which has about 60.000 inhabitants. The municipal area borders Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the North-West Province. With an approximate distance of 100 km to Pretoria and 170 km to Johannesburg, Bela-Bela is relatively close to the major cities of Gauteng and directly linked through the National (N1) Route (See Figure 1). This spatial linkage with Gauteng created the opportunity for Bela-Bela to develop into a

(weekend) holiday destination and a location for major private investments (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013).

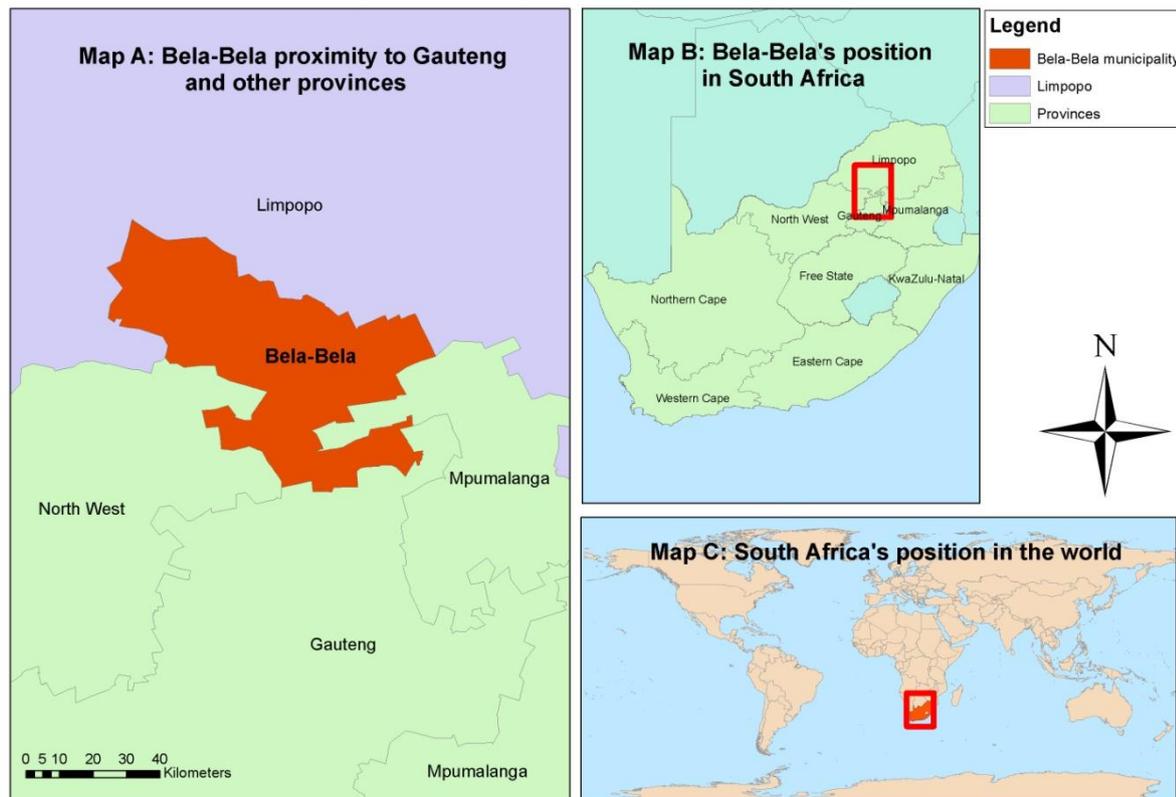


Figure 1 Regional context of Bela-Bela (CSIR, 2010)

Due to former research, we have a comprehensive image of the area of Bela-Bela in the late 1980s, then named Warmbaths. The area is extensively described in the PhD thesis of Sanette Ferreira *'The spatial analysis of the district economy of Warmbaths, Transvaal'* which was published in 1992. Bela-Bela was a rural town where agriculture was the main contributor to the local economy, though in the mid 1980's the first touristic nodes started to open in the Warmbaths district. Ferreira described the agricultural component as the greatest risk factor in the district economy and tourism is mentioned as a positive factor which should be further expanded (Ferreira, 1992). At that time the area did not seize the development opportunities and despite that it seemed to contain all the basic elements to be a flourishing district economy, the region was according to its levels of socio-economic development classified as part of the downward transitional region (Ferreira & Hanekom, 1995)'.

The last twenty years the tourism industry within Bela-Bela expanded greatly. Especially in the north-western area towards the Waterberg Mountains you now find a large amount of different touristic establishments. Bela-Bela used its excellent location in the pleasure periphery of the

Gauteng area and its quiet, malaria-free Bushveld surroundings to become a popular tourist destination. It is good to introduce the concept of pleasure periphery here because it can be used in different ways. It can be used to define the location of an area close enough to visit and attractive enough to visit as a holiday location. Furthermore it can be defined as a phenomenon whereby space is created in the (peri-)urban area to use for pleasure activities. This has happened in Bela-Bela and the area is now marketed by the municipality as a tourism getaway, to be a tourist destination of choice in Limpopo Province (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2012). The presence of tourism can have a positive impact on the poor, and when it generates net benefits for the poor it can be defined as pro-poor tourism (PPT) (Ashley & Goodwin, 2002). Although reduced in size, the agricultural sector in Bela-Bela is still present and also subject to change. Large-scale commercial farmers, who are predominantly white, are still present. However, through government funded land reform projects there is a rising number of black farmers. The land reform projects are pro-poor initiatives in line with the government approach to redress the effects of apartheid. Thus the transformation of Bela-Bela consists not only of structural changes in economy and society, but also of a changing role of the government. The transformation of Bela-Bela has led to structural changes in the economy and in society and this research aims to explore the structural changes, the spatial effects and the consequences for poverty in the area.

Research aim and objectives

The research concentrates on the changing situation of Bela-Bela, with the focus on poverty and poverty related issues in the area. It would be interesting to see what actually has changed in the last twenty plus years and what consequences this has had on the nature of poverty in the area. The aim of this research thus, is to investigate the change of the rural municipality of Bela-Bela from a predominantly agricultural area towards a diverse and multi-faceted countryside. The key issue herein is to focus on what consequences the structural changes for poverty have. The main research aim is therefore: To gain a deeper understanding of the transformation of Bela-Bela and discover the changing nature of poverty in the area, whereby the main stakeholders are identified and recommendations for future development can be made. This is formulated in the following main research question: *How did the spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela change and what consequences did this have for poverty?*

The research objectives present the more concrete measurements to achieve the aim of understanding the influence of the changes in Bela-Bela. To understand the changes the first objective is to research what has changed, thereby answering the first sub-question: *What structural changes did occur in the social and economic situation in Bela-Bela in the last twenty years?* Then, a current picture of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality can be drawn to make clear how the area currently looks. First, the objective will be to present a further, clear but concise historical image of the area to be able to identify the structural changes in economy and society.

The second objective is to map the spatial effects of the changing economy. An extensive image should be created how the land in the area is used and what it means for the access to land for the different people in Bela-Bela. Furthermore new economic sectors developed in the area, which created possibilities for a rise in employment differentiation and influenced the access to land. To identify which spatial effects the transformation of Bela-Bela had, the following sub-question has been formulated: *To what extent did land use and access to land change for the different actors in the region?* Next to the land use and the access to land, the two main processes of transformation, tourism and land reform, will be analysed.

The third objective is to identify pro-poor initiatives and discover to what extent pro-poor development is embedded in the local policy framework. The key factors of pro-poor development are the processes that benefit the poor. Within this subject, the following sub-question will be answered: *To what extent are pro-poor development initiatives part of the local policy framework?* The two main sectors of research will be tourism and agriculture, thereby also focussing on sectors strongly connected to or dependent on these sectors. Within these sectors the subjects of research will be the different public, private and civil society actors within the area. In this way the

proceedings, policies and activities explicitly or implicitly contributing towards pro-poor development can be identified. The emergence and existence of tourism could have a positive impact on pro-poor development opportunities, though could also conflict with agricultural interests. Although agriculture might be of a decreasing importance within the local economy, there are multiple land reform projects present in the region aimed at promoting equality, which are predominantly implemented in agriculture.

The fourth objective is to discover how the nature of poverty has changed in Bela-Bela and to identify the consequences of the transformation. The emergence of the leisure and tourism industry created a new system of sectors in the area and next to that the role of the government changed. The aim is to eventually present an image of the current poverty situation, identify the struggles of development and see what place poverty has in Bela-Bela. Covering these subjects, the following sub-question will be answered: *To what extent did the characteristics of poverty change in present Bela-Bela, and to what extent do the poor benefit?*

The final objective of the research is to contribute to the local development process. This will be done by presenting the findings of the research to the local department of agriculture and municipality. The recommendations will be presented in a letter of recommendations (see Annex C) and so contribute to the continuing transformation of Bela-Bela. In this way the research creates new academic knowledge of the area as a follow-up research of the research of Ferreira. Furthermore is the subject of land reform integrated in the wider local perspective, connected to a critical analysis of the influence of tourism. The research is focussed on the different actors in the area, with a focus on the role of the state, placing poverty at the centre of development.

Theoretical framework

The following chapter provides a background of academic literature and theoretical concepts which are relevant to the topic of the research. In this way the context of the research will become clear and is it possible to connect the results to a broader perspective. First a general framework will be presented, focussing on the most important themes within the subject of rural poverty. Within this framework the concepts relevant for this research will be discussed. These are discussed with attention to a changing Rural South and a context of structural change through de-agrarianisation and the emergence of a rural non-farm economy (RNFE). The nature of poverty is central here and the difference between new and old poverty will be highlighted. Connecting to the subject of poverty, pro-poor development opportunities will be discussed as well. Secondly, the attention will be on the specific situation of South Africa. This is important because South Africa has such a distinct history which is of great influence on the social and economic situation. This will be discussed within the thematic framework. Here is elaborated upon rural poverty within South Africa and the policies of land reform are explained. Furthermore, the role of local governments in South Africa will be covered, since they are assigned with great developmental responsibilities. In this way a complete theoretical framework will be presented to which the research will connect.

General framework

Rural poverty

Rural poverty is a global phenomenon and about 70 % of the poor live in rural areas. The livelihoods within these rural areas are predominantly dependent on agriculture and agricultural activities. In its World Development Report, the World Bank presented agriculture as the means for development in rural areas. The report stated that agricultural activities could provide pathways out of poverty in the so called Rural South. In this way agriculture could still play a very important role in poverty reduction. It can function as an engine for growth for the agricultural based countries and therefore contribute towards development. The World Bank argues that development policies should be focussed on a more effective agricultural sector; working towards a sector that will be used to its full potential (World Bank, 2008). This is a predominant agricultural focus on the issue of poverty. Contrary to this focus Rigg is arguing that in the Rural South the situation is changing and other sectors next to agriculture play an increasingly important role.

Within the Rural South a clear shift away from agriculture is visible and non-farm activities are becoming central to rural livelihoods (Rigg, 2006). This development creates new opportunities and possibilities to tackle rural poverty outside the agricultural sector. The emergence of a rural non-farm economy (RNFE), for example tourism, could provide opportunities and possibilities to move

away from agriculture. For the poor to take advantage, schooling and training are necessary, so unskilled labourers can be converted to skilled labourers (World Bank, 2008). The process of turning away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihoods can be described as de-agrarianisation. Bryceson (2000) defines de-agrarianisation as ‘a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income-earning reorientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood’. What this actually means is that rural people turn away from their agricultural means of life and find other non-agricultural jobs which earn them a different income. In this way they will change their physical and social place of life. The process of income diversification may result from the rising cash needs in a neo-liberal system with affiliated market liberalism and a growing uncertainty of agricultural returns.

In several case studies Bryceson (2000) points out that non-agricultural activities provide different opportunities for work, income and flexibility, unavailable within the traditional agrarian sectors. Agricultural businesses have always been dominated by family structures and characterised by the strength of family ties. The trend in current agriculture is that many young people seek other opportunities outside agriculture because they are looking for more flexibility or necessary income. Next to that could de-agrarianisation contribute to overall risk reduction, though in itself can also provide more risk; it could be materially beneficial or impoverishing (Bryceson, 2000). This process of de-agrarianisation can be seen throughout the Rural South in a transforming rural landscape whereby according to Jonathan Rigg (Rigg, 2006) multiple processes and trends are occurring. He describes a picture of a countryside where occupations and livelihoods are diversifying and the balance of household income is shifting from farm to non-farm. Next to that is the average age of farmers rising and play remittances a growing role in rural household incomes. This is resulting in cultural and social changes within more mobile and delocalized livelihoods

Trying to escape from poverty, rural households shift away from an agricultural and farming position and therefore rural development does not only depend on agricultural production. Poor people acquire skills so that they can escape from their agricultural livelihoods and hereby especially the younger generation plays a key role. Parents invest in their children to give them the necessary skills and education to create opportunities for them to escape from farming and build a better future (Rigg, 2006). This process can best be defined as rural livelihood diversification, which means ‘the process by which households construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities for survival and in order to improve their standard of living’(Ellis, 1999).

Factors of the described change in the Rural South can be seen in practice in the Bela-Bela Local municipality, where the severely changed local situation could have far-reaching consequences. In the following section the possible effects and implications will be discussed. Here the research of Ellis (1999) on livelihood diversity in developing countries will be used to set out the several factors.

According to this research different positive and negative effects could occur due to diversification (See Figure 2).

• **Positive effects**

- o *Seasonality: Agriculture is often subject to cyclicality and this could lead to the mismatch between farm income and consumption requirements. Diversification could lead to more stable income streams and provide alternative sources of income in off-peak periods.*
- o *Risk reduction: Other economic activities could prevent risks or create increased resistance opportunities.*
- o *Higher income: New job opportunities and better education could be a boost for appreciation and wages.*
- o *Asset improvement: Resources obtained from diversification may be used to invest in, or improve the quality of education, equipment, adaptation measures and other valuable assets.*
- o *Gender benefits: The income-generating capabilities of women could be improved, thereby improving the care and nutritional status of children and the family welfare.*

• **Negative effects**

- o *Income distribution: Disparities between the incomes of the rural poor and the better-off could grow and the inequality gap might increase because lack of access by the poor to advantageous labour markets.*
- o *Farm output: Due to the diversification process, labour force could leave the home farm, which would stagnate agricultural production so those who are left behind become dependent on remittances.*
- o *Adverse gender effects: When male labour is able to take advantage of the diversification opportunities, then women may be even more relegated to the domestic sphere and to subsistence food production.*

Figure 2 Diversification effects (Ellis, 1999)

Haggblade et al. (2010) focusses on the implications of the emergence of the rural non-farm economy (RNFE) and these are very much in line with the factors Ellis (1999) describes, though some supplementary factors are worth highlighting. Where the RNFE is emerging, the agricultural economy becomes less important as the economic motor for the regional economy and especially the rural areas with a good infrastructure and market access appear to gain from urbanization and globalization. The RNFE as an economic motor for the regional economy has multiple implications and could even increase food security in the region. Increased non-farm income helps to finance on-farm investments to improve poor households' food security by creating the ability to buy food and

invest in the farm to increase efficiency. The emergence of a RNFE is not a certain formula for success, because poor rural households often lack the opportunities or capabilities to participate in the growing segments of the RNFE. Nonetheless, it could be a slow development process and poor households can potentially participate in an expanding RNFE in two ways: as entrepreneurs or as employees in the labour market (Haggblade, Hazell, & Reardon, 2010).

The change within the Rural South creates opportunities to decrease rural poverty, though could also create new ways of dependency and poverty. Here the distinction can be made between 'old poverty' and 'new poverty' (Rigg, 2006). Old poverty can be defined as poverty which arises if people lack access to the market and the state. People are living simple and meagre lives and therefore are poor. Due to the process of de-agrarianisation rural communities and households can be incorporated in the economic mainstream through market integration or through markets which are expanding into domains which were ignored before. Poor people are becoming more dependent on the system of market and state. The separation from the mainstream drives people for market integration which can create new poverty. New poverty means that people suffering from new poverty have access to the system, though fulfil a subordinate position in this system. Households are poor because they have been drawn into the modernization process on highly unfavourable terms. New poverty then, stands opposed to the old poverty that arises from dependence on traditional technologies, limited income and dislocation from the resources of the state and the market (Rigg, 2006). Old and new poverty do not exclude each other and could rather be seen as different ways in which poverty is affecting the people.

Central in the research is how the changes have influenced the local situation in Bela-Bela and how poverty has developed and is developing. The attention goes out to the processes of change, how this has influenced the local situation and which processes are contributing to poverty alleviation. The process contributing to the alleviation of poverty can be defined as pro-poor development and within the de-agrarianising area of Bela-Bela especially tourism could have an impact. The following section will highlight the possibilities for pro-poor development and further conceptualizes this issue. In this way one can, later in the research, recognise the processes occurring in Bela-Bela and analyse to what extent the transformation of the rural South as described by Rigg (2006) can be applicable to the local situation of Bela-Bela.

Pro-poor development

The concept of pro-poor development is quite broad, since it covers the developments contributing to a better situation of the poor. Here one can make a distinction between on the one hand developments deliberately designed as pro-poor policies and on the other hand pro-poor outcomes connected to the developments occurring in an area. By focussing on the nature of poverty this

research looks at the situation of the poorest members of society and how the transformation of Bela-Bela has influenced this situation. Poverty is a relative concept and the spatial and economic transformation of an area influences the poor. Within this research the transformation of Bela-Bela is central and thereby the focus is how this transformation changes the nature of poverty. Within the situation of South Africa and Bela-Bela underwent specific transformations which will be discussed more extensively in the thematic framework, though some introduction is welcome.

Within South Africa the government plays an important role. Local governments in South Africa have received the responsibility to act as agents of development and land reform policies are carried out to counter the apartheid influences. In the thematic framework more attention will be given to the specific situation of South Africa and Bela-Bela, though some general remarks on land reform can be mentioned. Land reform is focussed on the redistribution of agricultural land to the poor and often promotes smallholder farming. According to Rigg (2006) this does not contribute to pro-poor development, he argues that: *“The best means of promoting pro-poor growth in the countryside may have less to do with supporting small-holder farming, whether through land redistribution or policies of agricultural development, and more to do with endowing poor people with the skills so that they can escape from farming and, perhaps, escape from the countryside.”* In a de-agrarianising area the redistribution of agricultural land may not lead simultaneously to the redistribution of wealth, because in a context where farming is declining farm investments struggle to create a higher return than nonfarm investments (Rigg, 2006).

Within the changing Rural South livelihoods diversify and agricultural activities are declining. Within this transforming landscape other activities and actors arise. An interesting sector here is tourism, which has developed in Bela-Bela and could have a profound pro-poor impact. Within the following section the possible pro-poor influence of tourism will be highlighted, defined as pro-poor tourism (PPT). This should explain the concept of PPT and how an area can benefit from the rise of the tourism sector. The following section will elaborate upon the possible pro-poor development outcomes of tourism and pro-poor policies which can be connected to the tourism sector.

Pro-poor tourism

Because tourism has become such a distinct actor in the area of Bela-Bela, the more general influence of tourism will be highlighted here. In this way one can connect the specific environment of the research to more general processes occurring. Tourism has become an enormous industry around the world with an increasing impact on national, regional and local development. Since the end of apartheid South Africa has become a major international tourist attraction. The post-apartheid tourism policy frameworks are clearly focussed on responsible tourism development with attention to local economic development (LED) and small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME)

within a pro-poor development context (Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2011). Tourism could function as a catalyst for economic and social development (see Figure 3) (Rogerson, 2006). The development of a tourism sector can attract



Figure 3 Tourism and poverty (Rogerson, 2006)

economic activities to marginal areas, which would otherwise not have occurred. This emergence of economic activities can boost an area whereby the whole area benefits from the developments. Tourism could therefore also unlock opportunities for the poor and become in this way pro-poor. The pro-poor effect of tourism is more the creation of new opportunities, such as employment opportunities for low-skilled workers, than distinct pro-poor policies within the tourism sector. Nonetheless, both processes can occur and will receive further attention in the research. Hereby, PPT should not be seen as a different sector of tourism, though is merely concerned how tourism can be used to benefit the poor (Mazibuko, 2010). The emergence of a tourism industry creates the opportunity to contribute to local development, though this development could also have unequal outcomes. These unequal outcomes can be visible in a division of economies. Here one can differentiate between a first and a second economy. The first economy then, is a formal, advanced, sophisticated economy, based on skilled labour, which is becoming more globally competitive. The second is an informal, marginalised and unskilled economy, populated by the unemployed which cannot participate in the other economy (Kingwill, Cousins, Hornby, Royston, & Smit, 2006). The revenues of the tourist sector would more trickle down to the first economy, leaving the poor in the second economy not benefitting to the fullest. This then would rather strengthen than reduce inequality.

Within the research the focus will be on the pro-poor influence of tourism, thereby asking to what extent tourism contributes to pro-poor development. Here one can distinguish between on the one hand the unlocking of opportunities by the economic activities due to the presence of tourism, and on the other hand on the presence of active pro-poor strategies. Ashley and Roe (2002) elaborate on the latter and distinguish three categories of strategies of how tourism can be pro-poor. These are pro-poor tourism strategies that are mainly concerned with poor people, though might also benefit the non-poor. The first strategy is to increase access of the poor to economic benefits, provide training in order to be able to make use of expanding business and employment

opportunities. Secondly a strategy to address the negative social and environmental impacts often associated with tourism. The third strategy, which is overlapping with the above, is to focus on pro-poor policies, processes and partnerships. This could be active PPT strategies undertaken by the businesses or communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or the municipality. Another option would be that the impacts of the tourism industry benefit the poor through various linkages. PPT rarely stands in isolation from general tourism development and should be interwoven throughout the general tourism development approaches. Furthermore is it possible that PPT is not a primary or explicit objective, though tourism is still benefitting the poor (Ashley & Goodwin, 2002).

Valuable PPT should impact poverty in real reductions, not just in terms of policies and intentions. Tourism could have several impacts on the livelihoods of the poor, whereby employment can be a route out of poverty, though other non-financial impacts could also reduce the vulnerability of the poor (Ashley & Roe, 2002). In the research of the pro-poor impact of tourism in Bela-Bela one can distinguish between economic, financial and other meaningful livelihood. The pro-poor economic impacts resulting from tourism could be employment possibilities, LED initiatives related to tourism and SMME development with linkages to tourism. The non-economic benefits which could arise are access to education, capacity building and training to skill poor people. In this process, the position of women can improve. People can furthermore participate in decision making and become involved in the tourism development process. An increasing involvement of the poor community could also have significant social and cultural benefits for them (Mahony & Zyl, 2002).

The section above has highlighted the concept of tourism within a pro-poor context. This is relevant for the research because tourism has become a sector of importance in the Bela-Bela Local Municipality and a rather large part of the RNFE in the area. This creates development opportunities and tourism can function as an economic motor for the area. The existence of a tourism sector though, does not guarantee equal benefits for all, but active development policies could contribute to create pathways out of poverty. This will receive further attention in the research chapters. Before analysing this further, the specific South African situation will be highlighted within this theoretical framework. The general framework has presented the more general themes to which the research connects and explained the most relevant concepts, though due to the distinct history of South Africa a more regional framework is necessary. Within the following section the historical background of rural poverty in South Africa will be given, thereby focussing on the legacy of apartheid and how this influences the situation until today. Furthermore, the role of the local government and land reform policies will be highlighted.

Thematic framework

Rural poverty in South Africa

Within the rural areas of South Africa poverty is also widespread, though due to the history of colonialism and apartheid South Africa is in an exceptional position. To understand the South African situation today, a historical background has to be given. The National Party (NP) came to power in 1948 and introduced apartheid, which was an official system of social engineering and segregation within South Africa. The policy of apartheid divided ethnic groups where the white minority governed the country with an idea of superiority of the white race. This oppressive and racial rule was presented as a system of good neighbourship, whereby the different races were segregated. Apartheid was established throughout all aspects of South African society and established policies, of which the consequences are still being felt in South Africa until today (Welsh, 2010). The inequality between whites and non-whites in South Africa was exacerbated due to the exclusion of land rights of the non-white population in several policies (Deiniger, 1999). Already before the rise of the apartheid regime, policies of segregation and dispossession had been put into place. The 1913 Native Land Act, and the 1923 Native Urban Areas Act deprived African (black) people of owning land outside the native reserves of that time (Lall, 2009). Where some legislation was overtly segregationist, most of the measures brought segregation through the backdoor, under the guise of housing, health care or planning legislation. The policymaking was predicated upon racial terms and South African society was confronted with acts and legislation, which denied Africans an equal position.

The clear-cut racist system of apartheid introduced by the NP government in 1948 continued the segregationist system of the previous fifty years and aimed to settle white domination in South Africa permanently. People became racially classified as white or non-white and by subdividing the non-whites into different colours and various ethnic groups, the government tried to weaken African unity and diminish any sense of African nationalism. The 1950 Group Areas Act then divided the country spatially and determined where the various races could live (Shillington, 2005). The whole system was designed to restrict blacks to the position of a permanently subordinate, low-paid working class. Only some Africans were given rights to stay in, the periphery of, cities and all were linked to the so called Bantustans, homeland areas, which were meant to be a permanent rural home for black people, called the Africans. The system of social engineering designed a country where most urban African people were condemned to the townships on the urban periphery and by the beginning of the 1970s an almost complete separation of races had been organized within cities (Lall, 2009).

Even though apartheid policies were repealed in the 1990s, the damages that it caused left the country and thereby the government of South Africa with a heavy task. The government had not only to deal with the highly unequal distribution of land, but also a lack of local government infrastructure, administrative capacity and an indebted farm sector. Also, the redistribution of land could slow down productivity and therefore endanger food



Figure 4 Homelands in apartheid South Africa

security in South Africa (Deiniger, 1999). Currently, land reform is a key policy of the African National Congress (ANC) government. Due to the era of apartheid, white farmers acquired complete domination over the agricultural sector by discriminatory farmland ownership policies (Moseley, 2006). In the apartheid era, different individuals, groups and communities were excluded of land tenure; often this was dependent on a racial background (Pienaar, 2009). Due to these discriminatory policies 87 % of the commercial farmland was owned by white people and 13 % by black people when apartheid ended (Economist, 2009). However, the white people only represented less than 10 % of the total South African population (Atuahene, 2011).

In 1991 the first attempts were made to reverse the discriminative land tenure policies by the 'De Klerk' government through a White Paper of Land Reform. In 1997, this was followed by the White Paper on South African Land Policy. The purpose of land reform was defined in this White Paper as: "the redress of the injustices of apartheid, national reconciliation and stability economic growth and the alleviation of poverty" (Pienaar, 2009). Since 1994, the ANC is attempting to recompense the historically disadvantaged groups through land restitution and redistribution policies (Moseley, 2006). The most important, and overarching, policies in respect to the research question are:

- Restitution: Compensation, in cash or land, through legal processes for individuals who were deprived of their land post-1913. However, only a small amount of people is able to provide evidence of the legal historical ownership of land (Deiniger, 1999).

- Redistribution: Compensation, in cash or land, for specifically non-whites who are interested in obtaining land but currently have no legal land possession. It is estimated in total approximately 8 million black people are eligible for redistribution (Deiniger, 1999).
- Land tenure reform: The recognition of individual and communal land ownership rights. The main objective is to install a land rental market through improved regulations (Deiniger, 1999).

In 1994 the original plan was to redistribute 30 % (approximately 26 million hectares) of white-owned farmland to black people in poverty with the deadline in 2014. However, in 2009 only 5 % of the promised land was handed over, whereby the deadline was postponed to 2025 (Economist, 2009). With the land reform policies the ANC (African National Congress, 2012) tries to achieve de-racialization of the rural economy for shared and sustained growth, democratization and equitable land allocation and use across gender, race and class. Furthermore they strive for strict production discipline for guaranteed national food security. However, from previous research can be concluded that the policy outcomes do not meet these objectives; around 70 % of the farms taken over by black people have failed (Economist, 2009). According to Atuahene (2011) this is mainly due to the lack of support the South African government gives farmers. Furthermore does Atuahene's research state that political apartheid may have ended, but economic apartheid has not due to the unjust redistribution of land. Whites have kept their land and received a legal title to their property, but black people are largely still waiting for theirs. Another negative consequence of the land reform policies is the possible political unrest that may result from land redistribution.

The rural situation in South Africa is complicated and rural poverty is only one of the aspects in the rough landscape. South Africa remains dominated by white-owned commercial farms where African people often work as employees and live on the farm. Of these farm workers 40 % lost their employment between 1993-2006 (Bernstein, 2013). To understand these changes the focus of this research will be on the growing number of non-farm activities, land reform projects and the remaining presence of commercial farms. Earlier in the general framework land reform was shortly mentioned and in the following section land reform in South Africa will be discussed more extensively, explaining the policies and identifying the pro-poor aspects.

South African land reform

Land reform is a widely discussed topic in South Africa, the implementation runs behind the planned schedule and the results are often far from that what was aimed for. Land reform should promote equity and redistributes white-owned agricultural land to the deprived black population. Land reform therefore, aims at the people which are faced with continuing racial segregation and lack the opportunities to improve their livelihoods through agricultural business. The livelihood impacts of

land reform should be positive for the poor members of society, though critics point out that land reform policies often do not fit the beneficiaries and are prone to collapse (Aliber & Cousins, 2013).

Within the land redistribution policies, three programs have been developed:

- Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG), 1994-2000
- Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD), 2001- 2010
- Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), 2006 - to date

SLAG granted group access to land to previous disadvantaged people, though often failed because of unresolved conflicts among beneficiaries. Next to that were the grant sizes not enough for aspirant emerging entrepreneurs. The successor of SLAG was LRAD which faced many challenges too. The main challenges were that the prices of land were high, transactions were delayed or cancelled and post-settlement support was lacking (Ranwedzi, 2011). There have been mixed results, where in some cases only the better off have been able to participate, though in other cases a cross-section of socio-economic groups have participated (Hall, 2004). Aliber and Cousins (2013) discuss LRAD in South Africa and observe modest successes, though additional non-farm income is vital for success. The objective of the PLAS program is to develop land reform further and to accelerate the land redistribution process. Furthermore should the lease contracts of PLAS, which have to be renewed every five year, ensure maximum productive use of land acquired.

The question central in this part of the research will be to what extent land reform policies are producing successful projects and to what extent they contribute to pro-poor development. The pro-poor aspect of land reform depends on the success and the outcomes of the projects. First of all should become clear who owns and controls the land resources and can claim ownership of the property. Secondly, what has actually happened with the original agricultural business is important: did it continue, did it split up or was something new started. The actual land reform project could benefit some individuals or a group. The influence could even be wider, because the outcomes can provide employment, wage raises or other pro-poor development measures. Negative impacts could also occur, when a project fails or people are evicted from the farms they lived on.

The land reform projects make the South African agricultural system vulnerable. The system is challenged because it has to ensure that current performances of new entrants in commercial farming do not endanger national food security and as such food prizes (du Toit, 2011). Limpopo, the province in which Bela-Bela is located, has the lowest food security problems of the country (10%), but it is still a present problem. Land reform outcomes could influence poor people's livelihoods and therefore their food security. By scrutinizing the local situation in Bela-Bela, the pro-poor outcomes of land reform should become clear. As with pro-poor tourism, several actors can play a role and not all pro-poor development measures have to be initiated as so. It is namely about the opportunity to unlock opportunities for the poor to improve their livelihoods. Land reform intends to unlock these

opportunities and the outcomes in Bela-Bela will be analysed later in the research. Next to land reform the attention will go out to the role of the local government. This will be highlighted in the following section, further focussing on the specific South African situation and the post-apartheid role of the local municipalities.

Local government

Local municipalities play an important role in the South African development policy making. The end of apartheid brought drastic changes in public administration and local municipalities were given a greater responsibility in governing their own area. According to the 1996 Constitution, a municipality had now to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community. The newly demarcated municipalities had their first elections in 2000 and a new local democracy was introduced whereby each part of the country became part of a municipality. Local governments became development agents of their own municipalities and the pursuit of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) became compulsory by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. This act has the aim to: ‘provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities’ (Rogerson, 2011).

At the core of the development planning of the municipalities are pro-poor LED initiatives. These LED initiatives are carried out in a form of coalition between the key actors in a locality. Within a municipality are the private sector, government and civil society involved in partnerships to produce development with a special focus to the poorest members of society (Rogerson, 2006). The national government launched a National Framework in 2006 to list the guiding principles of the policy framework for LED in South Africa. Although these principles are compulsory, they focus on what the state can do to support all local actors to realise their own and collective objectives (Rogerson & Visser, 2011).

The devolution and decentralisation of power fits in a global trend, where the last twenty years there has been a transfer of powers, authority and resources to sub-national levels of government throughout developed and developing countries. The downscaling of the state, where regulatory tasks are decentralized to subnational administrative tiers, can for instance be seen throughout the European political space. This is interesting, because the upscaling of the state in the EU gets the most attention (Brenner, 2004). The results of this change have been diverse and especially poor areas are very vulnerable to the risks of failure, because skilled staff and resources are lacking. Poverty is in some cases just decentralized (Nel & Rogerson, 2009). The local approach on development of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality runs like a thread through the research, where the attention goes out to the pro-poor opportunities and actual initiatives to get a clear image of the

current development outcomes in the municipal area. Different aspects play a role in the development of the area and possibly compete by promoting different ways of development. The research presented in the following chapters will further elaborate upon the concepts highlighted in the theoretical framework. Before that, the next chapter presents the methodology of the research and elaborates which data are collected and how the research is conducted.

Methodology

This chapter will cover the methodology and research design of the research conducted in Bela-Bela Local Municipality. The preparation of the research before the field visit in Bela-Bela was done in cooperation with the University of Stellenbosch. The knowledge about the current situation in Bela-Bela was limited and academic work on the region dates back to the research of Ferreira in the 1980's. Schalk van Heerden, a geographical researcher from the University of South Africa (UNISA) could provide a more actual image of the spatial use of land within the Bela-Bela Local Municipality. From his maps and data it became clear that especially in the north-western part of the municipality touristic establishments have become widespread. The southern and eastern parts are still predominantly used for agriculture and in this area land reform projects are present. This image, with a clear division of a touristic part north-west of the town of Bela-Bela and an agricultural part in the southern and eastern part of the municipality, presents the two foci of the research.

Valuable results of research depend on the amount of different actors and stakeholders you are able to speak to and how much information you can get from these people. Before the research could be executed, the various stakeholders had to be identified. Former contacts of the earlier research were mostly outdated and a new framework had to be created. The approach was to get in touch with key actors in agriculture, tourism and the municipality to reach the different public, private and civil society actors. The set-up started in Stellenbosch by trying to contact people by phone to identify leading figures within Bela-Bela and persons responsible for the land reform projects and local economic development. This contact was difficult to establish, took a lot of time and the planned field visit was much needed.

The field visit took place from the beginning of March 2013 until mid-April 2013. These six weeks have eventually resulted in some remarkable contacts and an enormous amount of information on the different aspects of development in Bela-Bela Local Municipality. The first start was made through former research contacts and mister Bosman was approached for information on Bela-Bela. Though not active in the area anymore and currently a Member of Parliament, this former president of Agriculture SA provided me with a contact with a former mayor of Warmbaths who is now a leading businessman in the area. The snowball-effect started to work and suddenly it was known a Dutch researcher was in town, which led to contacts with several leading figures and key stakeholders with valuable information. Furthermore, the department of agriculture of Bela-Bela was interested in the research and willing to assist me to visit as much land reform projects as possible. This led to a mix of qualitative and quantitative interviews with a variety of respondents.

The visits to the land reform projects were done under guidance of technical advisors of the department of Agriculture of Bela-Bela who regularly visit the land reform projects in the area. In this

way transport to the poorly accessible farms was settled and language barriers with the farmers were overcome. The department of Agriculture arranged the visits, tried to show a significant number of different land reform projects as possible and by joining the technical advisors the regular affairs were not severely disturbed. At each land reform project an extensive questionnaire was conducted (See Annex A), questioning about project characteristics, project results and challenges and diversification characteristics. Eventually, 25 land reform projects were surveyed whereby the majority (15) were LRAD projects, five were Lease-projects, four were Communal Property Associations (CPA) and one was a private project. To get a varied image of the agricultural sector, several (white) commercial farmers were interviewed as well. To get more insight in the local development, the municipal LED office was contacted. The local deputy LED manager presented different policy documents and also contact information for actors in tourism, small and medium enterprises and community work. Getting in touch with the actors in tourism sector was different and more difficult, because this sector consists of individual enterprises, whereby an effective central office was lacking. The Bela-Bela Tourism Office could refer to all the different establishments and provide a list of these establishments, though it had no substantive information on data, figures or community projects executed by touristic businesses. To visit all the game farms and lodges individually was time wise unfeasible. It was also very difficult because entrance gates were often closed and not accessible without appointment.

After getting familiar with the area and making contact with a former mayor of Warmbaths,

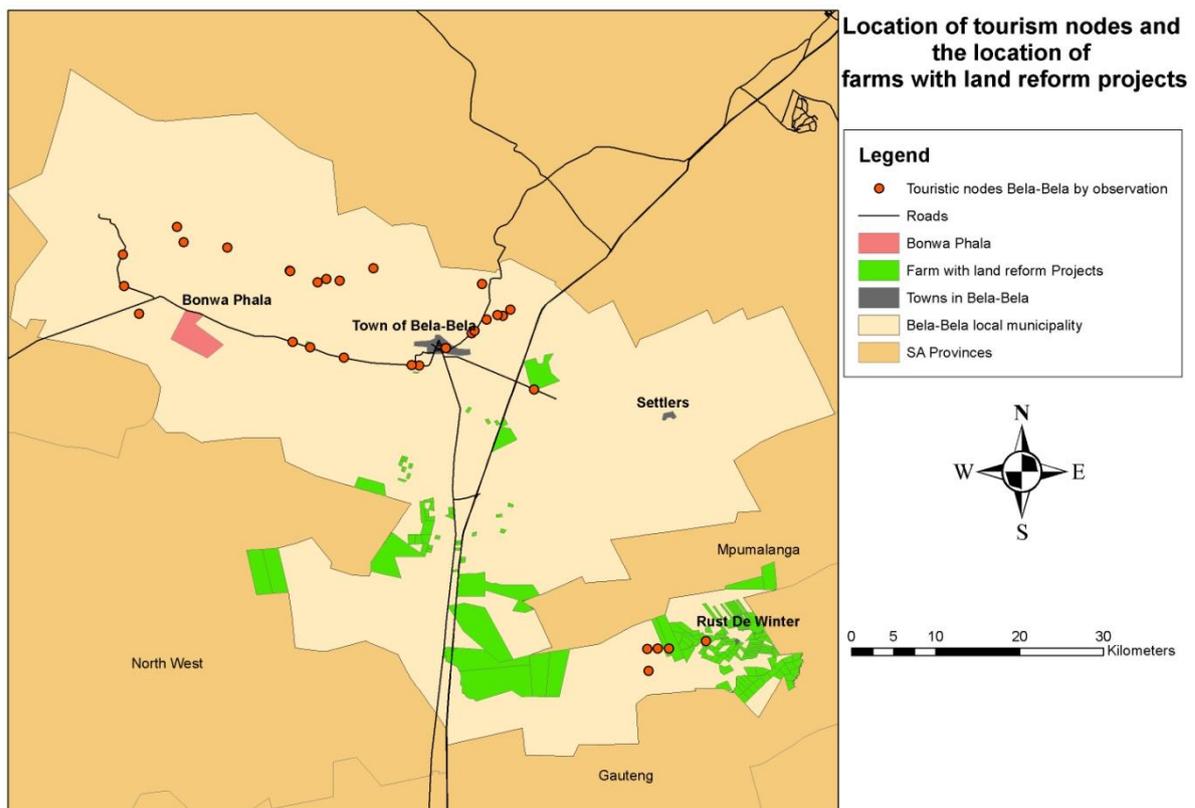


Figure 5 Research in Bela-Bela, map by Schalk van Heerden (UNISA)

and now owner of the local Kentucky Fried Chicken, the snowball effect came into effect. This resulted in contact with some leading figures within Bela-Bela, who were able to provide information about the local history, developments and development challenges within the municipality. Subjects of research here were: the director of the leading property agency, the chairperson of the Waterberg Conservation Forum, a former town planner, councillor of ward one in Bela-Bela, the chairperson of the Tax Payers Forum, the chairperson of the flea market, different community workers, the founder of the Enough is Enough protest movement, the manager of Limpopo Tourism and managers of several touristic establishments. By interviewing these people a diverse and extensive image could be formed. Hereby the focus was on the development of the area in the last twenty years, though also on the present and future developments of Bela-Bela. Furthermore, several meetings and local projects were attended, such as a municipal information meeting in the township, a wheelchair project and a community food project. Gathering information from these different stakeholders was done through interviews with a more unstructured character. The interviews were conducted within the research theme and can also be described as semi-structured interviews. This all led to a large amount of detailed and diverse information on the development of Bela-Bela into the town it is today and an image of the (pro-poor) impact of the touristic industry, land reform projects and municipal activities within the Bela-Bela Local Municipality.

One should also briefly reflect on the struggles and limitations of the research. Starting in Bela-Bela the research field was particularly unknown and open. The position of being a foreign student within a South African municipality can have positive and negative effects. Although being quite unfamiliar and unknown with the daily ins and outs within a municipality, the position as a Dutch researcher opened doors and generated interest in the research. Visiting the land reform projects under guidance of the department of agriculture could conflict with the independency of the researcher, though the interviews were often conducted individually and the department did not hesitate to visit unsuccessful projects. Next to that did the help of the department of agriculture offer a solution to the language problem. Without translation about half of the interviews could not have been conducted. Altogether the time-frame of the research and the available funds were limited. Within the available framework, an extensive research has been conducted throughout different layers of the municipality.

1. Transforming Bela-Bela

The transformation of Bela-Bela throughout its history is also symbolized in its name. Starting as 'Het Bad' in the 1800's it evolved from Hartingsburg to Warmbaths, or Warmbad in Afrikaans, to eventually Bela-Bela. In this period the area developed from a small settlement into a rather striking tourism hub. This chapter describes the transformation of the area, starting with a short historical background and proceeding with a more extensive description of the district economy in the late 1980s. For this, the work of Ferreira (1992) will function as an important source of information. It will form the basis of the comparison with the current situation and enables us to see the structural changes in the economy and society. In this way an answer to the following sub-question can be formed: *What structural changes did occur in the social and economic situation in Bela-Bela in the last twenty years?* Next to the historical description of the area, the current characteristics will be presented. Furthermore, the changes relevant for poverty will be identified, to be explained more extensively in the remainder of the research.

From 'Het Bad' to 'Bela-Bela'

Settlements around the place of modern day Bela-Bela were situated there due to the presence of strong mineral hot water springs producing 22.000 litre of water per hour at a temperature of 52 C°. Originally discovered by Tswana tribes in the 1800's, the Voortrekker Carl van Heerden established the first farm at the hot mineral springs and named it 'Het Bad'. The area was bought by the National Assembly in 1837 after interference by President Burgers and came under state control. The settlement was then named after the Dutch scholar Pieter Harting into Hartingsburg in 1882, and was later changed to Warmbaths on 10 May 1921. Warmbaths developed mainly due to the hot water springs and achieved village town status in 1932 and town council status in 1960 (Ferreira, 1992). The water from the springs is believed to have healing qualities and to be beneficial to persons suffering from rheumatic ailments. Since the establishment of Het Bad people have visited the area to make use of the springs. The name Warmbaths was changed to Bela-Bela in 2002, meaning 'the water that boils' in Northern Sotho. The hot water springs are still active and part of the holiday resort Forever Resorts Warmbaths in the centre of town (Forever Resorts, 2013).

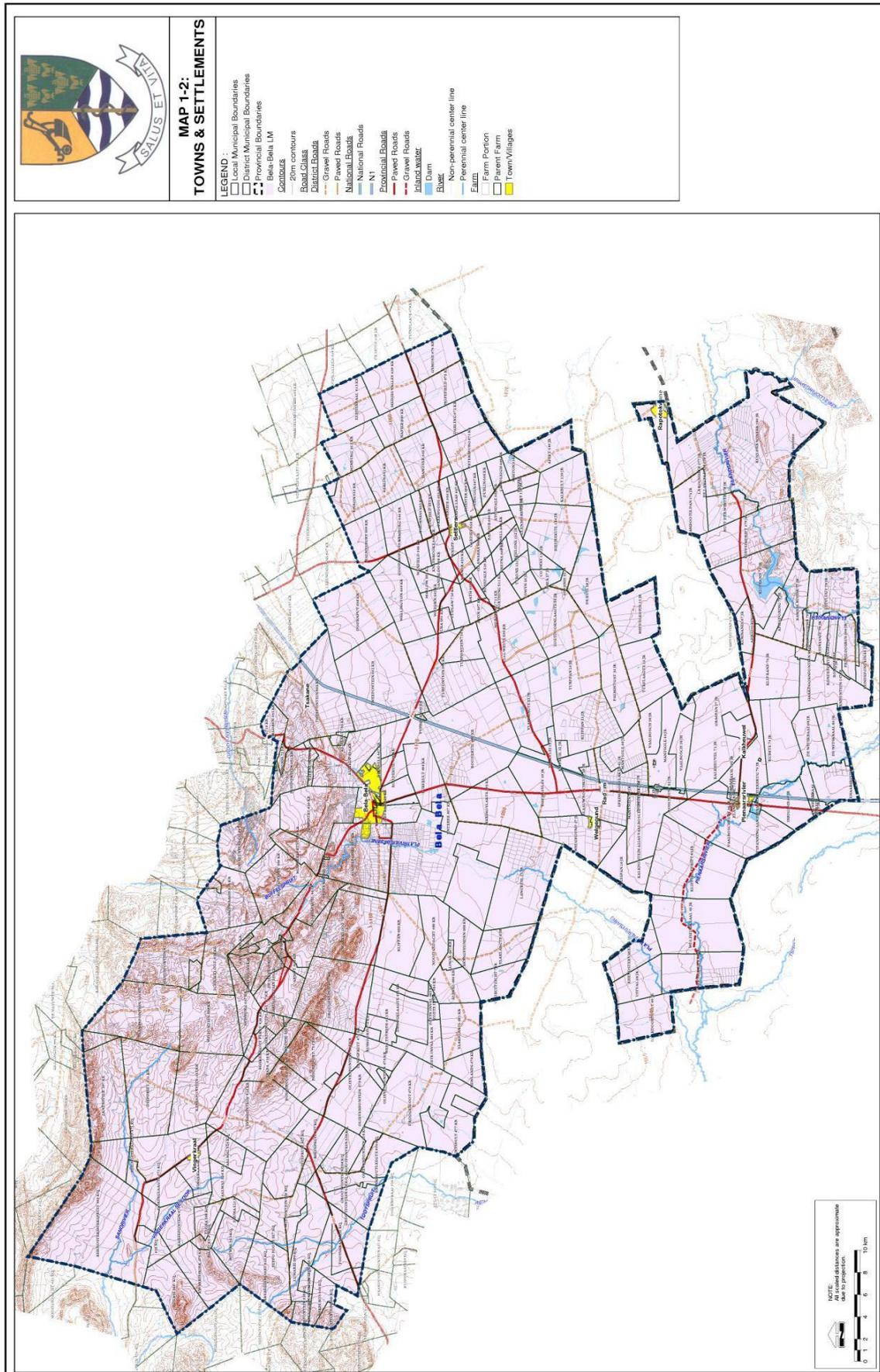


Figure 6 Bela-Bela Local Municipality (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2011)

A district economy in decline

Since the discovery of the hot water springs the town of Warmbaths slowly developed into a reasonable sized provincial town. There were some activities around the springs, though agriculture and mining were the main nodes of the district economy. The results from Ferreira's research confirm this picture of Warmbaths, formed in the late 1980s. The town of Warmbaths was the centre of the surrounding area, whereby the district was economically dominated by the sectors of agriculture and mining. Agriculture and mining were responsible for respectively 33 % and 23 % of the gross geographical product (GDP) of 1990 in Warmbaths. 36,4 % of the employees were employed in the agricultural sector, where mining employed 14,8 % of the employees of the district (Ferreira, 1992).

The agricultural sector played the most important role as the main contributor to the district economy. Within the area there was a clear division in land use between the north-western part, and the south-eastern part. The north-western area consists of about 75 % of the district's surface and was mainly used for natural pasture. The South-eastern area, consisting of the Southern and Springbok plains, is mainly used for cultivated fields and orchards. Within Bela-Bela the role of agriculture in the area was in one way unique since a large percentage of the farmers was in possession of a degree and was farming part-time and in the other way it appeared to be close to the overall national trend of the time that farming was a full-time dedication. The area consisted of about 250 farming units with an average size of 780 hectare, though the sizes varied between 2-13000 ha, with around 43 % of the farming units smaller than 200 ha. The majority of the land (83,33 %) was in personal ownership of the farmer. The area was mainly dominated by 40 large scale farmers, each owning more than 1400 ha of land. This is reflected in the revenue of the agricultural products, which was mainly produced by a relatively small percentage of the farmers; 17 % of the total agricultural area used was responsible for 56 % of the revenues from agriculture. The majority of the other farms (70 %) were considered to be uneconomical, mainly because the farming units were too small. The viable size of a farm in the area was considered to be 450 ha; smaller plots would not be able to function optimally. Next to that was the high rate of part-time farmers not positive for the productivity (Ferreira, 1992).

The most profitable sector in the area was cattle farming, which played an important role; it was responsible for 43 % of the district revenues. This is not a surprise if you consider that 74 % of the farmland is used for natural pasture. Still the natural factors have to be kept in mind, because the capacity of the area is, especially in the winter months, very low. This is mainly due to the high aridity of the area which affects the pasture lands, but mainly the cultivated fields. The aridity in combination with the salinization of the farmland makes it a difficult area to farm. According to Ferreira (1992) Warmbaths was a district in decline, whereby the risk in agriculture was high. A

factor which did improve the performance of a farming unit was the level of education of the farmer; a farmer with tertiary education contributed relatively more than those farmers with a lower education.

Reflecting on the situation of the district economy in the late 1980s, Warmbaths' economy was trapped in the primary sector, which was declining. The second largest employer in the area was the mining industry, enrolling almost 15 % of the working people and combined with agriculture responsible for more than 50 % of the employment in the area. The mining sector did not succeed to stimulate intra-regional diversification and despite sufficient resources the mines were not economically viable and forced to close. Agriculture was still of great importance for the region, where the land prices since 1965 went up explosively due to the investment in agricultural land by the surplus capital of the urban sector together with the indiscriminate subdivision of agricultural land plots. In 1985 almost 36 % of the working force was employed in the agricultural sector, where 88 % of the workers was black (Ferreira, 1992, p. 144). The situation described by Ferreira shows that it continued to be a harsh environment to farm and with the emerging tourism sector the emphasis within the district economy on agriculture continued to decline and the area stood at the beginning of a profound transformation.

Pleasure periphery

Some tourist activity has always been around in the area, though the last twenty years it became typical for the area. Although before 1950 developments were limited due to the presence of malaria in the region, 'Het Bad' was the first resort to be established in the Transvaal. In the following decades small spa resorts started to develop. During the 1980s then Warmbaths started to develop as a tourist region. With the renovation and expansion of the Overvaal Spa Warmbaths into the biggest inland resort in South Africa, the hot water springs were still at the centre of the development and created a strong economic stimulus for the region. Around Warmbaths new private game farms and time-sharing establishments started to develop. Examples are: Mabula Lodge (1985), Mabalingwe game reserve and time-sharing resort (1986) and Bonwa Phala game reserve and trophy hunting resort, all of them still existing today.

The boom of tourism in the 1980s created new actors and sectors in the local economy of Warmbaths, which had an impact on the appearance and interior of the whole area. Warmbaths established itself as a tourist destination and a Chamber of Tourism was founded in 1990. That year the first tourist festival was organised as well. In 1991 Sondela opened as a guest farm and also Carousel, a Sun International Casino, was opened in the neighbouring homeland Bophuthatswana about 30 km from Warmbaths. Entering the 1990s Warmbaths was expected to further specialise as

a tourist destination and to expand the economic activity which it already had in 1991 (Ferreira & Hanekom, 1995).

As a district economy Warmbaths is strongly dependent on the primary core, the region of Gauteng. This region plays an important role in the developments, whereby Warmbaths' place in the pleasure periphery of this metropolitan area is critical. When in the mid-1980s tourism started to boom in the Warmbaths district, it used its position close to the Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vaal (PWV) area, current day Gauteng (Ferreira, 1992). The developments occurred mainly in the north-western part of the area. This is the area towards the Waterberg Mountains, within the agricultural sector mainly used as pasture land. Cattle owners started to change towards the exploitation of nature reserves and game farming and game farms; lodges and golf courses became well-known characteristics of the environment. The proximity to Gauteng area is very important because it is key to the development of the area. The metropolises of Johannesburg and Pretoria are maximum a two hour drive away and with its quiet, Bushveld surroundings a perfect holiday destination close to the city. The area of Bela-Bela is therefore used to create a space for leisure for the urban area of Gauteng and allocated as pleasure periphery. After the research of Warmbaths in the late 1980s Ferreira and Hanekom (1995) concluded that, as a part of the 'pleasure periphery' of the primary core, there was room for development and expansion of the tourism potential which had not yet reached saturation (Ferreira & Hanekom, 1995). At the beginning of the 1990's the Warmbaths area overall was in decline, though the upcoming tourist sector has the possibility to transform the area.

Tourist destination

Currently Bela-Bela is a fully serviced town largely designed for tourism. The town transformed from a quiet rural town towards a rather popular provincial town where tourists are welcomed by a prestigious Waterfront entrance. Bela-Bela is a relatively small and the largest part of the population is due to its social-economic situation not able to use the commercial facilities provincial town. The town is mainly dependent on the visiting tourists, whose needs can be fully accommodated because of the presence of three supermarkets, a shopping area and multiple restaurants and bars. The environment of Bela-Bela, especially in the north-western area, is now predominantly dominated by tourist establishments. These tourist establishments, differing in size, have popped up like daisies in especially the last ten years. This resulted in a wide range of choice for tourists looking for a relaxing Bushveld holiday. The majority of the visitors are predominantly white inhabitants of Gauteng, though the racial composition of visitors is changing.

This change started with the ending of apartheid and the development of tourism in Bela-Bela was very much influenced by the political transformation and the abolishment of racial legislation in the beginning of the 1990s. During apartheid public life was completely racially

segregated and many tourist destinations were prohibited areas for non-whites. The disappearance of racial segregation in public areas made it possible for every race to visit the resort around the hot springs in Warmbaths. This had the consequence that the visitors' population of the Aventura resort (current day Forever Resorts) changed towards a more non-white composition. The opening of the Aventura resort to visitors of every race then led to a drop in the visitor counts of the white population. A considerable part of this population was not ready for racial integration and this group changed to seek for establishments in the Bushveld area around town. However, this continues today since on one particular encounter, a young inhabitant of Bela-Bela said the following: "We [white people] do not go to Forever Resorts, because that is where the Indians go"¹.

The demand for new holiday opportunities led to an increase in the development of tourism establishments aiming to attract visitors who are looking for a Bushveld holiday.² Nowadays Bela-Bela is especially a popular destination for those people seeking the quietness of the Bushveld. This type of holiday strongly connects to the South African culture where weekend trips into the nature with game viewing and braaiing³ are an important part of life. Especially the white Afrikaner population is strongly connected to this lifestyle and this demand is predominantly responsible for the expansion of tourism in the area outside of town. Currently it is still especially the white (Afrikaner) people who enjoy the tourist establishments in the Bushveld. The marketing of the growing non-white segment going on holidays is more focussed on luxury accommodation in town. Although apartheid ended about twenty years ago, race still plays a large role in South African society, also in (tourism) Bela-Bela.

The development of Bela-Bela did not only concentrate on tourism, though next to the hundred touristic establishments more than 16 new residential areas arose. Although it lacks a significant water feature, a Waterfront was developed, characterizing the entrance to the town and creating a snowball effect in further developments. During the time before the worldwide economic crisis in 2008, growth seemed unlimited and the area boomed, especially between 2004 and 2007. Within the new sector of second home development over 5000 plots were created on estates. The development of these sites led to a lot of economic activity too, until the economic crisis had a great impact. For companies and individuals it became more difficult to get a bank loan, therefore investments dropped. This decline influenced developers and most developments came to a standstill with empty houses and undeveloped plots as a consequence. The current situation has

¹ Conversation with a young white male in a local bar, Bela-Bela, April, 2013

² Interview with an experienced local real estate agent 9-4-2013

³ To grill or roast meat over open coals, South African name for barbeque.

become slightly better, new developments are picking up again and the building of a new mall at the Waterfront is expected to return trust and boost Bela-Bela's further development.⁴

Current characteristics

The emergence of tourism influenced the development and growth of several economic sectors, which led to a vast diversification of the economy in the region of Bela-Bela. The changes throughout the years have led to the following profile of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality, presenting the image of current day Bela-Bela. Bela-Bela's current population size, based on the 2011 census, is estimated

at about 66.500 people divided among approximately 18.000 households. The population figures throughout the years show a steady growth. Bela-Bela grew from a population of 34.654 people in 1991 (Ferreira, 1992) to a population of 52.094 in 2001 and 66.500 in 2011 (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013). The

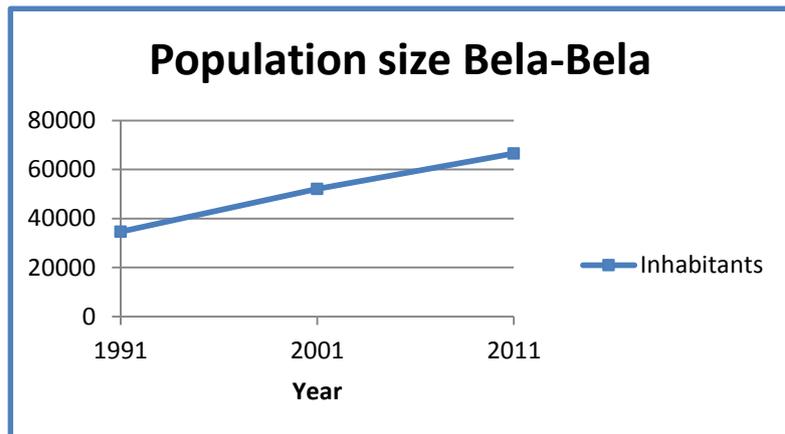


Figure 7 Population size Bela-Bela

population growth can to a certain extent be explained by natural growth, though migration was also of great influence. The construction work and increased economic activity attracted many labourers to Bela-Bela, who then stayed even if jobs were lost.

The unemployment rate decreased from 38,2 % in 1985 (Ferreira, 1992) to 23.8 % in 2009 (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013). The current population consists of a large youthful population, where 68 % is younger than the age of 35. The figure unemployment is comparable to the unemployment rate of the province. The labour force participation rate in the municipality is higher than that of the province, which could be a result of labour migration to Gauteng, particularly among younger adult members of the households. 20 % of the households (37732) are considered by the municipality to be very poor, whereby 1534 households are earning less than R 1100 per month. The poor are central in this research, therefore it is important to highlight who are the poor. It is difficult to compare current figures, because historical statistics are missing and not mentioned in the earlier research on Bela-Bela. Nonetheless, one can still see the influence of apartheid in the division in poverty levels and also in the spatial lay-out of the town. Historically the white population inhabited the centre of the town, whereby non-whites were located in the townships at the outskirts of the town. Today, the scars of apartheid also still determine the public appearance of the town, where

⁴ Interview with an experienced local real estate agent, Bela-Bela April 9, 2013

the large township still houses the majority of the poor population which is predominantly black. The town centre then is still mainly dominated by white inhabitants living in a significantly richer environment. Although increasing, the number of white people living in poverty (5 %) can still be considered very low, where the poverty levels among black and colored households are above 30 % (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013). The majority of the poor living in the urban setting of the

township, located at the outskirts of town.

By looking at Bela-Bela’s economic figures throughout the years one can already form an image of how the area could be categorized and how sectors developed in the area. Comparing the employment figures of 1985 (Figure 6) and 2010 (Figure 7) it confirms that the agricultural sector has lost importance and new sectors have emerged. The image presented by Ferreira was one of a rural South African town where, according to 1985 figures, agriculture was by far the largest employer (36,44 %) in a dry and a

salinising environment. The second largest employer was mining (14,80 %), though the mines were

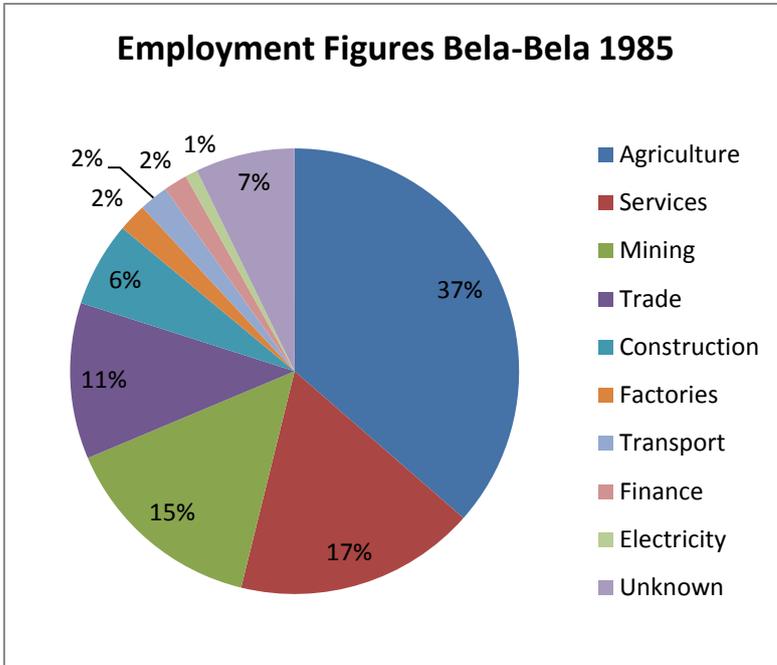


Figure 9 Employment Figures Bela-Bela 1985(Ferreira, 1992)

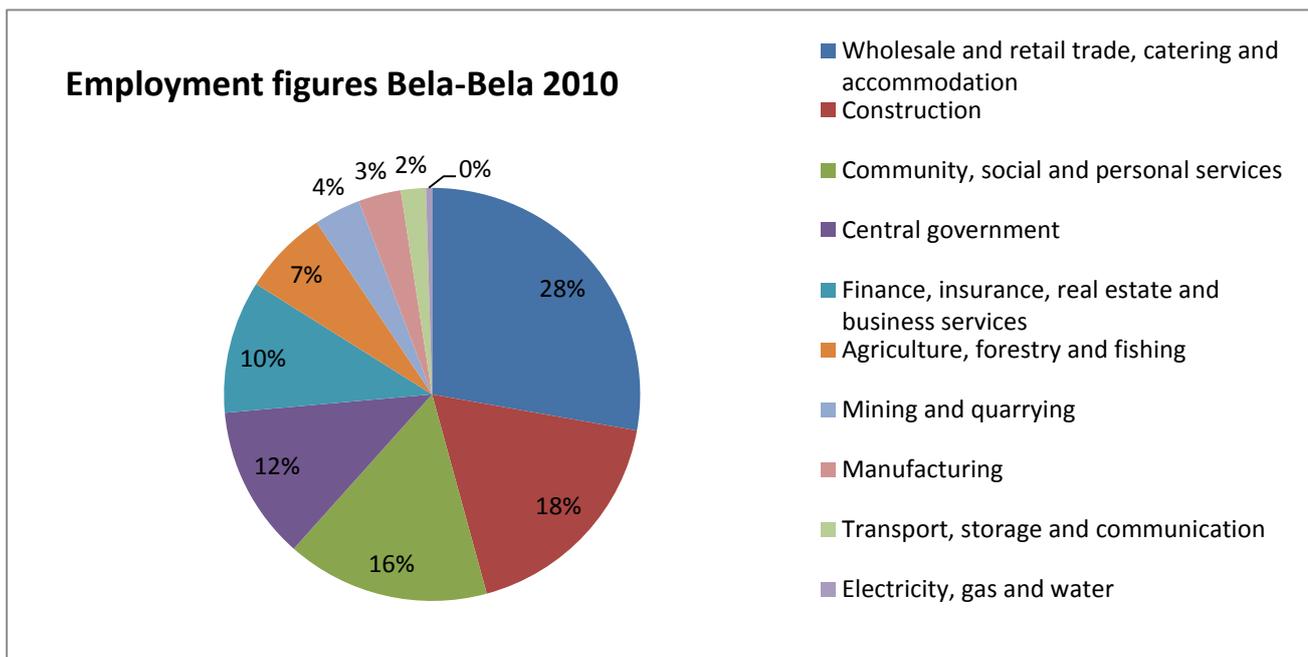


Figure 8 Employment figures Bela-Bela 2010(Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013)

threatened with closure and not regarded as sustainable in the future. Also within the gross domestic outcome the decline of agriculture is very apparent and shows the diminished role of that sector. In twenty years the gross domestic product (GDP) figure of agriculture in Bela-Bela declined from 33 % in 1990 towards 5 % in 2010.

The ability of the agricultural sector to create or even keep jobs decreased in the last decade and according to the government three main reasons can be attributed. The first one is the process of mechanization which reduces the labour necessity. The second reason is the claim that the availability of social grants make it less attractive to work in the agricultural sector, because the social grants would provide a similar income. Finally, the effects of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act 1997 (ESTA), which provides older farm labourers with rights to live in the farm after ten years, would be that farmers are trying to employ less people and avoid ESTA in this way (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2012, p. 95). Currently the largest employment sector with 28 % is the trade, catering and accommodation sector, which includes a large number of popular tourist destinations (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013). The second employment sector is construction with 18 % and the agricultural sector decreased from 36 % in 1985 to 7 % in 2009. Although the agricultural sector has become smaller in terms of employment, it still plays an important role in the area. Some large-scale farming units are still present, though the attention will primarily go out to the present land reform projects in the area.

Within current Bela-Bela tourism is prevailing and the growth of the town and most of the businesses are directly linked to the transformation of the area in a tourist destination. The linkages with the tourist sector provide business opportunities for catering establishments and other hospitality venues, which developed widely in an around town. These facilities depend mainly on visiting tourists, though the area develops also through other sectors. The amount of residents increased the last years because of, for example, pensioners looking for retirement residences. Furthermore is the economic activity in the area responsible for the attraction of more economic activity. For example, former mayor Fanie Mostert opened a Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurant in town, which was then followed by 30 others throughout the country. Due to the business environment of Bela-Bela, the head office maintained to be located in Bela-Bela.⁵ Businesses like these may not use a lot of land, though are very present in the local economy, provide employment differentiation opportunities and co-determine the development of the town and economy. In the wake of the tourism industry wholesalers, construction companies, real estate agencies and business services contributed to the development of the town. Further in this research the question will be discussed to what extent this transformation of the area influenced the socio-economic development

⁵ Interview with Fanie Mostert, Bela-Bela, April 11, 2013

in Bela-Bela and to what extent the nature of poverty has changed. The presence of tourism could have a positive impact on the poor, and when it generates net benefits for the poor it can be defined as pro-poor tourism (Ashley & Goodwin, 2002). Next to that, land reform projects can be competing in the same space.

Conclusion

The district economy of Bela-Bela changed remarkably in the last twenty years. The research of Ferreira in the late 1980s shows an area dominated by the primary sector, with agriculture as the core component. There was a clear division of the agricultural activities between the north-western part (pasture lands) and the south-eastern part (cultivated fields and orchards). At that time some tourist establishments started to develop, especially in the north-western part of the district. The growth of Bela-Bela into a tourist destination exceeded the expectations Ferreira (1992) prompted in her research. The economic activity in the area turned away from the agricultural sector and current day Bela-Bela's economy is now particularly dominated by rural non-farm activities. The emergence of the RNFE in Bela-Bela fits in a more global trend towards de-agrarianisation and post-productivism. Agricultural production shifted largely to the provision of services and non-farm economic activity. Catering and accommodation is now the largest employment sector and the main attention goes out to the development of tourism and tourism related activities. Next to the tourist activities some farmers are still active and the land reform projects carried out in the area are primarily focused on agriculture. The change of Bela-Bela resulted in a shattered landscape, with a patchwork of different economic activities. Although Bela-Bela underwent a major transformation, unemployment and poverty are still widespread and the social-economic situation of a large part of the population maintains to be substandard. The emergence of tourism and connected sectors can create opportunities for pro-poor development, and land reform policies are aiming for this as well. The new sectors and actors all play a role in the land market, whereby land prices are increasing and competition has changed the quiet rural identity of Bela-Bela. The emergence of the new economic sectors has changed the spatial patterns of Bela-Bela. This affected the land use in the area severely and this also has had a profound influence on the access to land for the different actors, which will be discussed more extensively in the following chapter.

2. Spatial effects of a changing economy

The area of Bela-Bela Local Municipality has severely changed in the last twenty years and the previous chapter highlighted this transformation process. The emergence of Bela-Bela as a tourist destination changed the identity of the region and new economic sectors developed in the wake of the growing number of tourist activities in the area. The effects of this change are also visible spatially and the land use in the area and the access to land is influenced by this. The focus of this chapter will be on how the changing economy further affected the area spatially. The discussion of the spatial effects of the change will further explain the situation and reveal the position of the different sectors within the area. Therefore, the following research question will be discussed: *To what extent did land use and access to land change for the different actors in the region?*



Figure 10 Pasture lands in Bela-Bela Local Municipality (Photo Maarten Heetderks)

Within this chapter an image of the spatial effects of the changing economy will be presented, though it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the exact land use patterns. This has several reasons, whereby the main factor is the poor state of the municipal administration in the area. To be able to form an image of the area and describe the land use patterns, an extensive land audit would be necessary. Within the research there was no time and space for this costly process, so other options had to be considered. Some existing information was available, although municipal track records are partly missing, incomplete or inaccurate. According to a former town planner, current available information is not the product of good research (See Figure 11)⁶. Although these critiques are founded and a concrete and a detailed image of the land use patterns is hard to present. The information available will be analysed critically and combined with the research results and observations this should present a valuable image of the area.

⁶ Interview with a former town planner, Bela-Bela, April 10, 2013

The former town planner of Bela-Bela was employed by the municipality for many years during the apartheid years and later, after the political change, he was hired as a private consultant. He was the main source of information when it comes to spatial information, land use patterns and the mapping of Bela-Bela. The town planner acknowledges the transformation of the region, though he warns not to label the area as purely tourist. According to his opinion it is not easy to define the land use patterns in the area, because multiple processes are occurring. These processes will be discussed later on in this chapter. The reality is that many properties are difficult to categorize, because establishments are not purely tourist or purely agricultural. Multiple options are possible: it can be a commercial farm, a game farm, a resort or a combination of the previous. So when can something be defined as tourism? Since the town planner stopped in 2006 there is no knowledgeable town planner active in Bela-Bela and data has become outdated. The sources of information today are the Spatial Development Framework and the municipal valuation roll, though these are according to the former town planner of mediocre quality and the result of incomplete and improper research by the present municipal officials. During the apartheid years, this administration was in an excellent condition. The current state of the municipal administration is a clear sign of a failing decentralisation process.

Figure 11 Former town planner of Bela-Bela Local Municipality

Spatial patterns

Discussing the spatial patterns of Bela-Bela, three different topics will be highlighted. The first topic will be the land use. With the available information will be explained how the land in the area of Bela-Bela is currently used. Secondly will be discussed how the transformation of Bela-Bela has affected the access to land to eventually conclude with an explanation how different processes within the area has led to a competition of transformations.

Land use

The structure of land use in the area can be divided in a tourist part, an agricultural part and a remaining urban and industrialised part. Within Bela-Bela Local Municipality there are three areas where the major tourist activities are situated. This is the Rust de Winter Dam Area, the Forever Resorts and lodges in the vicinity of the town of Bela-Bela and the area situated at the north-western side of Bela-Bela. The Rust de Winter Dam Area is situated in the southern part of the area and

adjacent to Gauteng's greater Dinokeng Game Reserve. The Dinokeng Game Reserve is the first 'Big Five' game reserve in Gauteng located next to an urbanized area and some of the Rust de Winter Dam area has an open connection to the game reserve. The Rust de Winter Dam area is mainly used for nature tourism and the dam also functions as water supply for the surrounding (agricultural) area. The second tourist region is situated in and around town. Here you find the older establishments such as Forever Resorts, directly situated at the hot water springs, and other lodges and resorts such as Klein Kariba and Sondela. Finally, the largest tourism region stretches in a belt towards the north-western side of Bela-Bela and this area is characterised by private resorts, nature reserves and other tourist developments. This also includes eco and wildlife estates which became popular in the last decade (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2011a, p. 102).

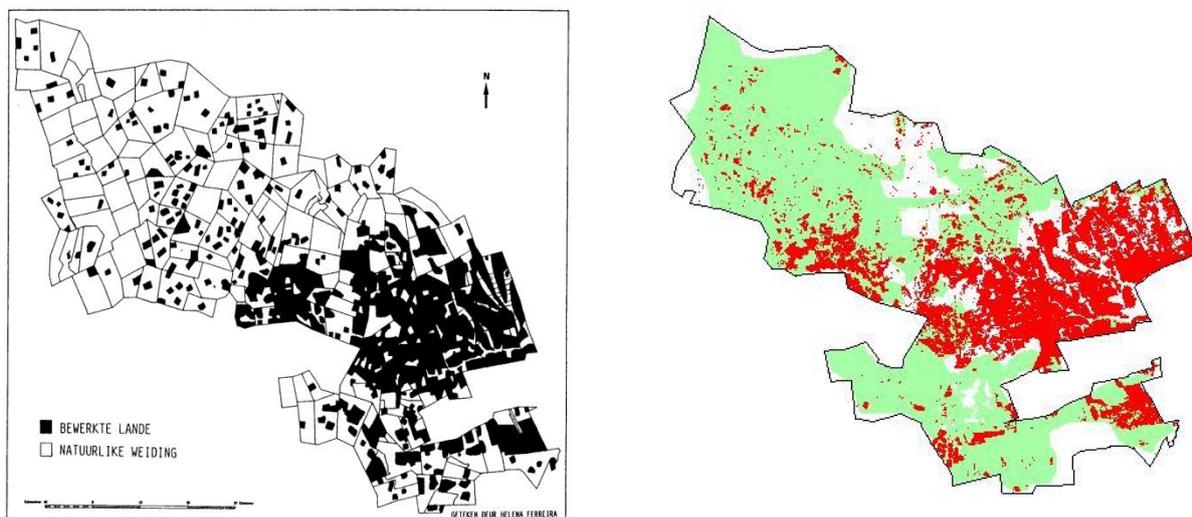


Figure 12 Agricultural pastures Bela-Bela Local Municipality (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2011b; Ferreira, 1992)

The agricultural land use in Bela-Bela is best explained using some maps, though the available maps depicting the land use in the area are limited. Above the best possible, available maps are presented in figure 12. This figure shows the old situation in the end of the 1980s (left) and the situation now (right). Unfortunately the two maps were produced in different times by different people, so the maps are not comparable perfectly. The two maps show the agricultural activity in the area. Both maps look quite the same, though some differences can be observed. The left map shows the cultivated areas (black) and the areas of natural pasture (white). On the right map the cultivated areas (red) are still in the same region, though have become a slightly smaller in the most recent picture. The main difference is the disappearance of natural pasture land, which is predominantly caused by the emergence of tourist establishments. The biggest impact is difficult to see on the right map. The areas of natural pasture which still exist changed from cattle farming towards game farming and tourist activities. Overall the purely agricultural land use has decreased severely and is

no longer defining for the area anymore. The municipality is not really focused on agriculture, though recognises the importance of the agricultural sector in Bela-Bela: *“[the agricultural] sector in many cases is characterized by very poor working conditions and wages are notoriously low with the existence of underemployment. Nevertheless in economic terms the agricultural sector has extensive backward and forward linkages, thereby contributing tremendously towards the overall development and existence of other sectors”*(Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013).

The rest of the land use in the area is categorised as urbanised land, agricultural land and some industrial land. As previously mentioned, agriculture in the area is declining and the official municipal focus is to further develop game farms in the municipal area. *“The idea is not to completely overlook traditional farming and crop planting, but due to the fact that tourism is clearly playing a dominant role in the development of Bela-Bela Local Municipality game farming will be the primary focus in certain areas of the municipality”* (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2011a, p. 103). Although these goals are very clear, the reality is rather different. First of all, the tourist industry in Bela-Bela is predominantly, maybe even completely, managed privately. Furthermore municipal influence is rather small and in many interviews with other actors even mentioned to be adverse for tourist productivity. Municipal service provision for tourist establishments outside of town is substandard, and often completely absent. Although taxes keep on rising, services are declining. This has led to the establishment of a tax payers forum by dissatisfied citizens; in chapter four this will receive further attention.

Access to land

The different types of land use have led to a specific spatial structure, which influences the access to land for the different actors within the area. Hereby is the emergence of the area as a tourism sector of great importance. As highlighted before, the area consists of three major tourist areas, whereby the municipality aims to promote Bela-Bela as a tourist destination. Nonetheless is a an integrated professional approach is still missing. There are no figures, statistics or results which are used to underpin municipal policies. Although the office of Limpopo Tourism is based at the Waterfront in Bela-Bela, there is no track record of visitors and only a meagre list of establishments. Further statistics are missing and for example a bed count is not even included. This makes it difficult to present a lot of data and to underpin statements with objective data. Nonetheless tourism has had a profound impact on Bela-Bela and tourism and tourism related activities is currently responsible for the biggest request to access to land (see Figure 13). The presence of tourism and the conversion of land towards tourist use has had a profound influence on the spatial division of the land, whereby agricultural land is becoming more and more disintegrated because of the presence of tourism and also land reform.

The development of the early tourist establishments, such as described by Ferreira, has led to a snowball effect in the development of the private sector in Bela-Bela. According to the owner of the largest local real estate agency, tourism has determined the development of the town.¹ Since the development of the Waterfront Entrance in the beginning of 1990s the image of Bela-Bela changed and the town really started to develop. This led to a snowball effect where investments followed other investments and the town started to grow. The development of tourist establishments attracted new people to develop in the region and also attracted other business people investing in restaurants and businesses. Fred van Heerden: *“The town developed because some people started to develop. At the end of day there were suddenly fifteen restaurants and a shopping area. The economic crisis which started in 2008 influenced the local economy, though not as severe as it did in the rest of the country, because the tourism sector was already established. Banks stopped financing and this did hurt the real estate agency very much. Despite of the pain we still stay positive and we started with the development of the Verloren Estate, which is a residential estate with second home developments. Although the crisis still influences the developments in the area, we go on, where the rest stands still. This goes also hand in hand with tourism.”*

The attention of the private sector is very much on the development of businesses to attract more people to the area, focussed on the development of the area as a tourist destination.

“Bela-Bela used to be a holiday destination, but now it is also a weekend destination and even a week destination. In the weekend 14.000 vehicles pass the entrance of town per day, developments continue and the shopping mall which is under construction will boost the development of Bela-Bela. The mall will convince people to buy or build holiday houses close to the Bushveld, because shopping is an important element of the leisure time of South Africans. Furthermore we are busy to open two cinemas in town. We will not make money with this, but it will be an extra attraction of the town and create possibilities for people to enjoy their holidays. We will probably be the only town in South Africa with a cinema. Everything which is created stimulates the people to come”

Figure 13 Development of tourism in Bela-Bela

Although agricultural land use is declining and municipal interest is actually minimal, it still plays an active role in Bela-Bela. This is mainly due to the presence of land reform. Land reform is mainly focussed on promoting agriculture among new black farmers. Land reform is barely mentioned by the municipality in the spatial development framework and not integrated in the overall planning of the IDP. This is strange because the land reform programs play an important role in national politics and cover a large surface in the area of Bela-Bela. This means an increasing amount of land is used by

these agricultural projects. The land reform programs are an important factor in the transformation of Bela-Bela, promoting development and an actor in the demand for land too. The next section will elaborate more upon the consequences of the developments for the access to land.

The landscape of Bela-Bela continues to evolve, currently with tourism as the engine of development. Land reform programs are present in the same space and also of great influence in getting access to land, especially for the former disadvantaged people in South Africa. Land reform programs often provide the only possibility for poor South Africans to acquire land, and mostly these land reform programs are focussed on agricultural projects. Analysing the situation in Bela-Bela, over 50 land reform projects are present, which differ from smaller projects to large scale land claims. Apartheid determined the division of land which led to a situation where the white population had access to land and the black population was forced to sell its labour to survive. The legacy of apartheid is still evident in the current situation throughout the country and in Bela-Bela. The distribution of wealth and land is still very unequal and the dominant and rich positions are still in the hands of the predominantly white upper class. The transformation of Bela-Bela did not change these characteristics and the main economic sectors are still dominated by the prosperous part of society.

Nonetheless, the presence of land reform has created a feeling of uncertainty with the traditional land owners fearing to lose their land. This feeling of uncertainty is further fuelled by the State of the Nation address, where the national government enrolled new plans to add more compelling aspects to the process of land reform: *“Firstly, we must shorten the time it takes to finalise a claim. In this regard, Government will now pursue the ‘just and equitable’ principle for compensation, as set out in the Constitution instead of the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle, which forces the state to pay more for land than the actual value. Secondly there are proposed amendments to the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 in order to provide for the re-opening of the lodgement of restitution claims, by people who missed the deadline of 31 December 1998.”*(Zuma, 2013). Within Bela-Bela the land reform programs play an eminent role and further developments could influence the land prices significantly and the tourist establishments could become objects of land claims after the re-opening of restitution claims. This could create opportunities for the transformation processes to integrate, though should be carried very carefully. Experiences from Zimbabwe and also South Africa dampen this optimism and Etienne Fourie, attorney in Bela-Bela, warns for the dangers of the process: *“As a lawyer, I see high corruption on plot prices bought by government where 6 million Rand plots are bought for 60 million with a middleman buying it for 42 million. All in the same day. Furthermore, when the willing buyer, willing seller principle goes away, this will make people afraid to invest in the region”*⁷

⁷ Interview with Etienne Fourie, attorney in Bela-Bela, March 23, 2013

The emergence of tourism and land reform changed the situation in Bela-Bela severely. Looking back at the situation depicted in the end of the 1980s, the area was dominated by (large-scale) commercial farming, with some minor tourist activity. Nowadays the presence of large-scale commercial farms has severely reduced and only some farmers are left. Many of the smaller farms were removed, added to land for tourism or bought by the government to provide as agricultural land reform project. This has led to a situation whereby the landscape of Bela-Bela has become fragmented into smaller agricultural land reform projects, larger land reform programs through land claims, some remaining commercial farms and land which is used for tourism. All the different activities attract a variety of actors seeking access to land. The transformation of Bela-Bela has led to a competition between these different actors, which will be highlighted in the following section.

Competition of transformations

Throughout the years many of the commercial farmers have diversified into game farming, often combining this with a lodge and hunting tours. The main activities have turned away from basic agricultural (food) production. As said, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between farmland and land used for tourism. Farmers have diversified and combine different economic activities, often on the same property. Successful crop and cattle farming in the Bela-Bela area is now predominantly done by large scale commercial farmers, and only a few are still active. These are predominantly situated in the eastern area around Settlers and around Rust de Winter. The agricultural south-eastern part of the Bela-Bela municipality receives 400-600 mm rainfall per year, which makes it a fairly dry area and irrigation on some scale is necessary. The interviewed commercial farmers agree it is a harsh environment and one has to farm more effective due to rising running costs. Due to high fuel prices, high electricity costs and the introduction of minimum wages, farming in the area keeps getting tougher. Farms therefore have severely mechanised, the number of jobs has minimised and one has to be inventive to continue to exist.

The emergence of tourism has diversified the local economy of Bela-Bela and created a new situation with new employment opportunities and new economic sectors providing different kinds of production factors than just agriculture. The transformation of Bela-Bela is discussed broadly already, but if we analyse these processes more extensively, two processes of transformation can be identified. The first one is the transformation in the leisure industry, creating new services and production processes. The second one is the transformation promoted by the government by means of land reform projects. Both processes are competing in the same space, though overlap as well. As said the local economy is still dominated in a way that resembles the historical structure. Through the approval of land claims and purchase of land the government tries to redistribute land and address the persisting inequality. The influence of these land reform policies is two-sided. On the one

hand it creates opportunities for formerly disadvantaged people to get access to land which would be impossible otherwise. On the other hand it influences the land market within the area, creates insecurity among land owners and might have a downward effect on the tourism sector.

Within Bela-Bela one can see different actors seeking access to land, whereby the actors in tourism and land reform are the most important players in the market for land. The process defining the developments in Bela-Bela the last twenty years can be described as de-agrarianisation. Within this process of de-agrarianisation, the agricultural land reform projects are quite striking and seem not to be connected to the current process which Bela-Bela is going through. In this way there are two on-going transformations, competing for a place in the same space. On the one hand the transformation towards a de-agrarianised tourist hub can be seen and on the other hand large amounts of money are invested in the generation of agricultural projects. Unfortunately, the two processes do not strengthen each other, but rather work against each other. The transformation of the former disadvantaged people is limited to the agricultural sector, which is a declining sector facing a harsh environment. The transformation of the area towards a rural non-farm economy (RNFE) is then mainly a process for established land owners and investors. A joint transformation is missing and in this way a two-economy system is maintained, and possibly even strengthened. This frustrates the different layers of society, because real access to valuable land for former disadvantaged people is limited and the white population is confronted with failing land reform projects and increasing insecurity for current land owners.

Conclusion

The use of land in Bela-Bela changed severely. Agriculture was defining for the area, though the transformation of Bela-Bela created a new situation whereby several new actors were introduced in the region. Pasture land was converted into nature reserves and stock farming changed into game farming. The development of tourism meant the establishment of many tourist accommodations and through linkages other businesses developed. Although the exact land use patterns are difficult to define, it is very clear that there are three major tourist areas which are defining for the image and economy of Bela-Bela. Furthermore the land use in the area is still dominated by the agricultural sector. Although the agricultural sector has been in decline and reduced in size in the last years, it still uses a fair amount of land in the region. Within this agricultural sector there is a clear division between commercial farming and agricultural land reform projects. The presence of land reform plays an important role in the area in the use of land and is at the same time also influencing the access to land. Land reform has created the opportunity for formerly disadvantaged people to get access to land in the area. In this way competition emerged between two transforming processes. On the one hand one has the transformation of Bela-Bela into a tourist destination which is

predominantly private sector run and inaccessible for the poor. On the other hand one finds land reform programs focussing predominantly on agricultural production. The process of land reform also includes land claims on land under white ownership, which is creating uncertainty for established land owners. The area of Bela-Bela transformed into an area with a dominating RNFE and can be defined as a predominantly de-agrarianised countryside. Tourism became the main user of land and in the wake of these developments new actors arrived in the further de-agrarianising economy of Bela-Bela. Tourism is prevailing and this sector is still dominated by the large land owners, which are predominantly the traditional rich white land owners. This means that poorer inhabitants of Bela-Bela cannot compete and the power is mainly in the hands of the predominantly white actors, whereby the larger tourist establishments are foreign owned.

Within this process, the agricultural focus of land reform is contradicting to the key focus of the private sector and the municipality on tourism. Land ownership is mainly dominated by the traditional white land owners and further access to land is mainly managed through the free market principle. Here, the more prosperous population is still very dominant, though land reform new possibilities to get access to land for formerly disadvantaged people. The agricultural focus of land reform and the separation from tourism results in two processes of transformation, which rather are competing than collaborating. This competition and the new route of land reform will further influence the access to land in the area. An integrated approach is clearly missing and the present situation is still characterized by the segregation of people and economies.

3. Pro-poor development in Bela-Bela

The overall focus of the research in Bela-Bela is on poverty and within this chapter the attention will shift more directly to poverty. An image of Bela-Bela has been presented and the spatial and economic changes are identified. Although the area underwent a major transformation, mostly aimed at attracting tourists to the regions by (luxurious) tourist destinations, poverty in Bela-Bela is still widespread. The majority of the poor part of society is not able to benefit from the growth of the town and seem to be separated in a second economy. To find out how poverty is addressed in the municipality of Bela-Bela the following sub-question will be answered: *To what extent are pro-poor development initiatives part of the local policy framework?* Hereby the main issues will be the opportunities and the actions focussed on pro-poor development carried out by the municipality in LED initiatives, the assistance of SMME and other social projects. Within the pro-poor development context the land reform projects in Bela-Bela will be explained in more detail. Furthermore, the attention will go out to the tourism sector and to what extent this sector can be seen as pro-poor. First the attention is on the presence of the pro-poor initiatives, in the following chapter the pro-poor effects and outcomes will be discussed.

Local Economic Development (LED)

As highlighted before, the municipality has received an important role in post-apartheid pro-poor policy making. The situation in Bela-Bela requires a thorough pro-poor approach, because poverty levels remain very high. According to the municipal indigent policy 3732 households can be considered very poor, which is about 20 % of the population. This reality is also recognised and addressed by the municipality in several ways. The pillar of the development framework within a South African municipality is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is published annually by the municipality and contains the developments within the municipality and the development plan. It is supposed to be “a management tool for assisting municipalities in achieving their developmental mandates. Every municipality is required by law to develop and adopt its IDP through the legal framework provided” (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013). The IDPs of 2012/2013 and the draft version 2013/2014 will be used to analyse the current pro-poor development municipal framework. Looking at earlier IDPs it is striking that throughout the years the documents are largely the same and new figures are missing. Furthermore there is a gap between the plans and the observed implementation of the policies, which becomes clear looking at the different aspects of the policy framework. An important part of this policy framework is the promotion of LED.

Within Bela-Bela Local Municipality the municipal office for LED strives to support local SMME development. Local LED officer Sephalo Mokgohloa states this as following: *“our role and responsibility is to create an enabling environment through supporting SMME’s with capacity building*

programs that enable them (SMME's) to identify other economic opportunities. The other role which is also of importance to SMME development is to strengthen the relations between the commercial businesses and emerging businesses. ⁸ The municipality targets trainings of SMMEs and tries to educate this target group through workshops and trainings on how to access finance, non-financial support and project management (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013, p. 117). The main partner here is the Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA), which facilitated various skills development interventions (cash flow management, business management courses) to local SMME's and the LED Unit assisted by facilitating a training venue.

According to the municipality the SMME sector has a potential to revive stagnating economies and reduce poverty. Although some information was given by the LED-unit, it was a continuing struggle to retrieve further detailed information about concrete projects within the



Figure 14 A broilerhouse at Rua Naga Pataka

This is in line with the more widespread opinion that the LED office in South African municipalities is often an empty shell. Some projects can be identified and according to the IDP *“there are currently five community economic development projects that the LED Unit of Bela – Bela is supporting in terms of the management of those projects and ensuring that the project beneficiaries are adequately trained”* (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013, p. 107). Four projects have been researched: Dinaletsana cooperative, Legong farming cooperative, Moselane agricultural cooperative and Rua Naga Pataka. These projects though are outcomes of agricultural land reform programs and fall under the supervision of the department of agriculture. Some LED assistance might have been given in the past, though three of them are small LRAD projects, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Only the Rua Naga Pata project has real possibilities to boost the local economy, though the results of the SLAG project at the outskirts of the township are very meagre (See Figure 15). This is a very clear example of the failing LED policies in Bela-Bela. The failing of the policies is related to the inability and inexperience of the beneficiaries,

⁸ Interview with Sephalo Mokgohloa, municipal LED officer, Bela-Bela, March 12, 2013.

but another important factor is the lack of an enabling environment supporting the developments. The specific projects receive some start-up money and assistance in the process, however a more extensive system is needed which enables them to further develop in a sustainable way.

Around 650 hectare of land is owned by the Rua Naga Pataka cooperative and started with 38 beneficiaries in 2007. The goal was to start a successful business with as main component a large broiler house with space for 40.000 chickens. Five years later only five beneficiaries are left and the grounds, broiler houses and farms are severely dilapidated. Only about five hectares is used and the agricultural land which was used for planting maize, peanuts and vegetables is now completely overgrown. The large broiler house with a capacity of 40.000 chickens is fallen into disuse. The only economic activity now is the small-scale sale of around 1000 chickens a month, which are grown in some sheds on the property. Due to internal fights and dissatisfaction the cooperative largely fell apart and now only five beneficiaries are still active on the farm and benefitting from the revenue. Not much profit is left and most of it is used for paying the electrical bills. The main beneficiary Mr. Kgwadi recognises the failure of the project and attributes this mainly on the internal troubles, the lack of funds, and especially the lack of knowledge and the absence of assistance. There is a substantial lack of training for the beneficiaries who received land without further assistance. Currently some work is carried out to clear the dryland from trees, though only with great effort and investments a successful business could develop. Here the LED-unit of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality could play an important role with professional assistance. The presence of 650 hectare of arable land with a large broilerhouse at the outskirts of the township could provide for employment and an opportunity to provide for cheap chicken-meat and vegetables to the township-inhabitants. Unfortunately this is a missed opportunity.

Figure 15 Ruaga Naga Pataka project

Informal trade

A sector which could benefit tremendously from more effective LED-policies is the informal sector. Within Bela-Bela the informal sector is functioning as the earlier mentioned second economy. Due to its informality it is difficult to define the exact size of the second economy, though within Bela-Bela there is a fairly large informal sector which can be divided into two groups. The first group are the hawkers based at the entrances of the township; the other group are the businessmen at the flea market which is located in the centre of town close to the entrance of the hot water springs and Forever Resorts. Within the informal sector there is a lot of room for development, especially with the large number of tourists passing by. The large number of tourists visiting Bela-Bela offer great

opportunities for the flea market to develop. This creates job and business possibilities for local crafts- and salesmen. Despite the visiting tourists, the flea and tourism market looks like a squatter camp. It is dilapidated and very uninviting to tourists.

Robert Hlongwane⁹ is the chairperson of the flea market and he describes the situation for the salesmen as very tough. The flea market is situated on a temporary location for about 6 years in the centre of town. Although the location is situated on a promising position next to the entrance of Forever Resorts, it lacks infrastructure. The municipality has created a new location opposite the Waterfront, where the flea market should be built and housed permanently. This location will contain stalls and infrastructure for the salesmen. The location is at the entrance of town along the central road and will attract tourists. Unfortunately, the further development of the location was postponed after the first preparation developments. Although the municipality already has invested over half a million Rand, nothing is happening at that location right now due to municipal indecisiveness. Reality is that the 36 stand owners at the flea market are struggling to survive on the shaggy looking location, where there is no infrastructure, parking or options to develop for themselves.

Robert Hlongwane has ideas and made his own plans to develop the current structure with own money. However, he gets no permission to build and they are only left with uncertainty for the future. The stand owners are awaiting decisions of the municipality and cannot move on before that. The Business Chamber wants to contribute and they would like to engage with a mentor.



Figure 16 Flea market Bela-Bela (Photo Daan Prinslo)

Guidance, assistance and support by the municipality through the LED office would be of a great value to formalize the flea market and take the opportunities the possible tourist market gives. The lack of development on the site is a problem but not the only reason of the current failure. Most of the entrepreneurs have no basic business skills such as cashflow management. Furthermore, flea

⁹ Interview with Robert Hlongwane, Chairperson Flea Market, Traders group selling Art and Crafts, Bela-Bela, April 11, 2013.

markets tend to offer the same products, also in Bela-Bela and the goal should therefore be to develop a more unique product (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013, p. 118). This should then lead to a more successful and competitive tourist market. Nonetheless this is a fairly small section of Bela-Bela's economy only able to employ a limited number of people. To increase employment of people within South Africa and Bela-Bela, the government has introduced the Community Work Program (CWP) which will be dealt with in the next section.

Community Work Program

In the streetscape of Bela-Bela one often encounters groups of workers in orange overalls working on different projects. These workers are part of the CWP and a very visible component of a pro-poor initiative. This program is a government program which aims to provide an employment safety net, by providing a minimum level of regular work opportunities to participants, with a predictable number of days of work provided per month. This supplements the existing livelihood strategies of participants and provides a basic level of income security through work. It is targeted at unemployed and/or underemployed people of working age, including those whose livelihood activities are insufficient to lift them out of poverty (Dpt. Cooperative Governance, 2011). Within Bela-Bela around thousand people participate in the programme which provides participants with access to a minimum level of regular work of two days a week (100 days a year) at a wage rate of 60 Rand per day. The CWP is a national program, which is coordinated locally and provides some support to the very poorest. This support is nevertheless very minimal and cannot provide a complete support to the livelihood of a family. The effective contribution to the municipal services is still considered to be minimal and could be used for maintenance for the deteriorating municipal services. Next to the CWP, more pro-poor initiatives can be seen within Bela-Bela. Focussing on the larger initiatives, first land reform will be highlighted and later the pro-poor part of tourism will be discussed.

Pro-poor land reform

Land reform policies play a significant role in Bela-Bela Local Municipality. The centre of administration and management of the projects is based at the Department of Agriculture, the Tawoomba research centre, in Bela-Bela. This department is the municipal office of Bela-Bela in the Waterberg district of the Limpopo province. The main source of information at the department was Deputy Manager Agricultural Value Chain Mr. JK Mathabatha, providing information and assisting with the research of the land reform projects. Furthermore plays the Department of Agriculture an important role in the support of farmers running land reform projects. The Department of Rural Development focuses on the development of previously disadvantaged people. This department acquires agricultural land which is provided to previously disadvantaged people who should become successful emerging black commercial farmers. The department of agriculture has received the

mandate to support the beneficiaries, the farmers, and “play a facilitating role to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives (e.g. effectiveness of land reform projects in creating emerging black commercial farmers) and offer supports that might be deemed necessary”(Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013, p. 214).¹⁰

Although the available administration is not fully sufficient, within the municipal borders of Bela-Bela about fifty land reform programs can be identified. There is a clear distinction between land tenure reform and redistribution projects, whereas sizes of the programs differ significantly. Land claims form the basis of the land tenure which is redistributed to people with historical land ownership rights. Within Bela-Bela there are twelve CPAs who have successfully claimed large pieces of land and land is redistributed to communities managing the land through the CPA. Furthermore there are around 40 redistribution projects. These are agricultural land reform projects, predominantly LRAD, where the government has bought farms and farmland to provide black farmers with an opportunity to start an agricultural business. The land reform projects are the most widespread and specific pro-poor initiatives in the area and aim to address the inequality within society and uplift poor people by giving them a chance to develop an agricultural business or be a beneficiary of a communal property associations. Results are mixed and explained more extensive in the next chapter, though first the pro-poor aspect of tourism in the area will be highlighted.

Pro-poor tourism

Since 2009 the municipality presents Bela-Bela as ‘To be a tourist destination of choice in Limpopo Province’, whereby Bela-

Bela should be promoted as a tourism getaway and provide sustained environmental friendliness, economic growth and employment creation (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2013, p. 187). The tourism sector in Bela-Bela is highly competitive because of the abundance of lodges, game farms and other tourist establishments. In and around the town of Bela-Bela did develop over a hundred of tourism related enterprises who are looking for guests, clients and customers. The main economic benefits are primarily earned within the sector; the question is to what extent the poor have access. A two-economy situation is still apparent where the tourism sector is visited by the more wealthy class and economic benefits are leaked by not buying local. There is nevertheless a meaningful contribution to



Figure 17 Railing secondary school, township Bela-Bela (Photo Maarten Heetderks)

¹⁰ Email interview with JK Mathabatha, Bela-Bela, April 29, 2013

the local economy through tourism and it has the potential to make an even bigger contribution in the future if developed to its optimal potential (Bela-Bela Local Municipality, 2011a).

The presence of pro-poor partnerships within the tourism sector is limited in the area, though two establishments show pro-poor initiatives can be a part of the business. Sondela and Forever Resorts play an active role in the community, but managers of both enterprises nonetheless emphasize this is only possible if the establishments make profit. A key factor in the impact is education; both Sondela and Forever Resorts offer training and education. Sondela founded a college for tourism and wild life conservation, currently offering 110 students a unique and well accredited program. Within this program are ten sponsored places for students from a disadvantaged background. Furthermore offers Sondela a writing and reading course for older illiterate workers. Next to that the poor benefit through local economic impact and sponsoring of i.e. a secondary school in the township. Especially Forever Resorts was very active in town, possibly because of its location in the centre of town. In spite of these contributions only a fraction of the actors in the industry could be identified as actors in pro-poor partnerships. Further development towards constant pro-poor policies and partnerships would continue to benefit the poor in a constructive way. The current impact is too much dependent on individual efforts and could benefit from central guidance. The municipality could play a central role here too, though its role is limited.

Conclusion

Looking at the presence of pro-poor initiatives in Bela-Bela one can distinguish between the roles of different sectors in the area. The state has become a key developmental agent and in this context especially the role of the municipality was stressed. The policy framework consists of a considerable amount of pro-poor development plans, though the official documents did not appear to have changed considerably in the last years. A gap between the policy framework and the actual presence of effective programs became clear during the research. Without looking at the pro-poor outcomes, one can already notice the lack of actual running pro-poor programs. Central in the framework of municipal policies is the promotion of local economic development (LED), though the identified programs are an example of failing municipal programs and effective guidance in fighting poverty. The flea market could be a great source of income with the large number of visiting tourists. The flea market is an example of lacking LED policies and merely show missed opportunities for development. The present policies which are implemented are not functioning properly. This has mainly to do with lacking experience of the beneficiaries, but especially an enabling environment is missing the people can connect to.

The most concrete pro-poor initiatives in the area are the land reform projects, aiming to address the inequality within society and uplift poor people by giving them a change to develop an

agricultural business or be a beneficiary of communal property associations. Additional to these activities are some pro-poor tourist activities, but in the end an integrated approach is lacking. Furthermore the size of the initiatives is inadequate for the size of the people. Currently rather dozens of people and their families are reached by the projects and with an indigent population of almost 4000 households this is nowhere near enough. Only the CWP approach is focussed on a large group of people, but income from this program is very minimal. Analysing the overall picture of Bela-Bela, one can conclude that pro-poor development is not on top of the real agenda of the different actors. Concluding one can state that pro-poor development initiatives in Bela-Bela are present to a certain extent, though are not part of the mainstream activities, especially in the sectors which could really make a difference. The segregated development of Bela-Bela causes that the fruits of the successful transformation of Bela-Bela are unreachable for the poor.

4. Reaching the poor

Within this chapter the focus will more deliberately be on the situation of the poor in Bela-Bela and how they are affected by the transformation of Bela-Bela. The change of the political, spatial and economic situation of Bela-Bela had a great influence on the area. Nonetheless 20 % of Bela-Bela's population can still be considered very poor. The exact numbers of the situation in the 1980s are not available, but despite all the developments in the last decades poverty is still widespread. This chapter will highlight the consequences of the change for the poor. The earlier mentioned pro-poor initiatives will be discussed more broadly, especially focussing on the different land reform projects. This chapter will further elaborate on the different element and results of the initiatives to reach the poor. In the following chapter these results will be more broadly discussed to eventually answer the different aspects of the following sub-question: *To what extent did the characteristics of poverty change in present Bela-Bela, and to what extent do the poor benefit?*

In this chapter first the outcomes of the agricultural land reform projects will be presented. Secondly the situation regarding the communal land reform programs will be explained extensively. To complement the information, also the role of commercial farming will be highlighted. Because of continuing social and economic problems, public dissatisfaction is increasing. This has led to the emergence of some civic society movements, which will be the closing part of this chapter. After this rather descriptive chapter a discussion chapter will follow to put the events in a broader perspective. Before that this chapter highlights these events, with first the focus on the redistribution projects carried out within Bela-Bela Local Municipality.

Struggling emerging black farmers

Over 50 land reform projects are present within the municipal boundaries of Bela-Bela. The projects are mainly situated around the settlements of Radium, Pienaarsrivier and Rust de Winter. Land reform is a sensitive subject within South Africa, especially with the Zimbabwean experience in mind. As discussed, the purpose of land reform is to redress the injustice of apartheid and improve the position of the previously disadvantaged people and alleviate poverty. Land reform intends to be pro-poor by definition and the results of the researched projects in Bela-Bela will be analysed. The discussion will focus first on the redistribution projects, land achieved by the government and redistributed through SLAG, LRAD and PLAS programs. Next to these projects land is restituted to communities after land claims. These projects will be discussed later, because they play a different role and are not only limited to agriculture.

Looking at the redistribution (LRAD) projects in the Bela-Bela district (see figure 14), results and impact of the majority of the farms are very much disappointing. The farms are mostly sized between 21 and 42 hectare and overall barely producing. The ones who produce something only

produce on a small scale and are struggling to survive. The government has invested large amounts of money by buying the farms which were priced between one and two million Rand. More money was invested through recapitalisation of these farms (25% of the farm price) and continuing assistance. Despite these large scale investments little attention is given to the beneficiaries of the farm. The recipients came from very diverse backgrounds and literally none of them had any experience in running a farm, whereby only a part of them already worked on a farm. The majority lacked agricultural education, training and administration skills, and especially capital. Therefore, the farmers often were much dependent on inputs and assistance of the department of agriculture to survive. They also feel dependent and according to some staff of the department of agriculture, most beneficiaries suffer from the dependency syndrome. The land reform projects do not result in black farmers running a successful farm and therefore land reform projects in Bela-Bela are not systematically contributing to the alleviation of poverty. Although the livelihoods of some individual farmers did improve, the real return on investment is very disappointing and land reform performed in this way does not benefit the poor in a sustainable way.



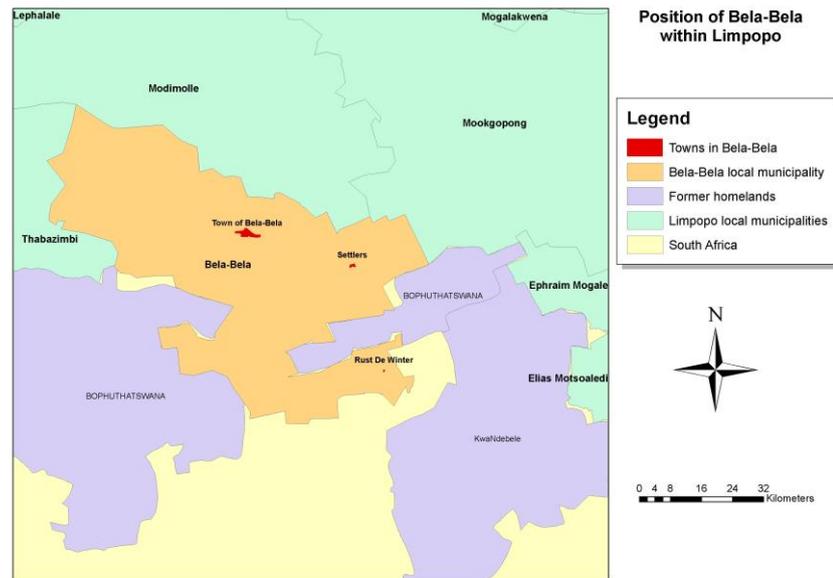
Figure 18 Technical assistant of the Dpt. of Agriculture visiting a LRAD project (Photo Maarten Heetderks)

Agricultural land reform projects	Type	Year	Size ha	Ha used	Price	Nr. of beneficiaries	Participating	Experience	Commodity	Production	Income p/m	Strategic partner	Mark	Remarks
Cyferskull Disabled	LRAD	2003	42	2	?	24	5	none	vegetables	small-scale	8000R	no	4,5	Project for disabled people, dilapidated plot
Dimalatsana	LRAD	2009	86	1	1.8 million	5	2	none	mixed	subsistent	none	no	10	New house, luxury goods, though no production
Ditlo le Dinare	LRAD	2008	21	10	2 million	5	4	none	vegetables	small-scale	25000R	coming	5	Good working business
Duroc	LRAD	2006	42	16	?	2	2	none	vegetables	commercial	30000R	yes	3	Professional business with a partner and commercial contracts
Fepa Sechaba	LRAD	2002	21	2	?	6	1	none	chicken	subsistent	18000R	no	7	
Just Grass	LRAD	2010	42	2,5	2,2 million	6	3	farm job	mixed	subsistent	10000R	no	5	Switches from grass production to chicken, only funding is lacking
Kgogofaala	LRAD	2009	21	2,5	2,6 million	7	2	none	vegetables	small-scale	none	no	4	New house build, farming is starting
Kgomo	LRAD	2010	18	0	2 million	4	1	none	mixed	subsistent	none	no		Became a farmer on doctor's advice
Legong	LRAD	2008	87	87	1,1 million	5	5	none	mixed	small-scale	?	yes	5	
Mahaswa	LRAD	2009	21	18	750.000	3	2	none	vegetables	small-scale	?	no	3	Very old people, living under harsh conditions without electricity
Matlou	LRAD	2009	21	14	1,1 million	4	3	none	vegetables	small-scale	?	coming	4	Very ambitious to grow, funding is lacking
Meisjesvlei	LRAD	2008	68	60	1,8 million	7	7	farm job	vegetables	small-scale	?	no	10	
Moselane	LRAD	2009	42	4	1,8 million	5	3	none	mixed	small-scale	?	yes	7,5	Producing chicken
Rua Naga Pata	SLAG	2007	648	5	650.000	38	5	none	chicken	small-scale	42000R	no	5	Large amount of unused land at the edge of the township
Sindane	LRAD	2008	21	20	?	3	3	farm job	vegetables	small-scale	3000R	no	5	Family cooperating, daughter gets agricultural training
Rust de Winter, Airport	LEASE	1994	150	150	invaded	1	1	farm job	mixed	small-scale	?	yes	variable	White commercial farmer farms on leased land
Rust de Winter, Portion 18	LEASE	1996	26	20	invaded	1	1	none	mixed	subsistent	5000R	yes	2	White commercial farmer farms on leased land
Rust de Winter, P145	LEASE	1997	27	27	invaded	1	1	farm job	livestock	small-scale	?	coming		
Rust de Winter, Portion 18	LEASE	1996	180	20	invaded	1	1	farm job	mixed	commercial	2000R	yes	8	White commercial farmer farms on leased land
Rust de Winter, P789	LEASE	1994	171	36	invaded	1	1	none	mixed	commercial	7500R	yes	8	White commercial farmer farms on leased land

Figure 19 Agricultural land reform projects

Many farms owned by white farmers were bought by the government to redistribute to black beneficiaries. Farmers around Radium and Pienaarsrivier were bought out and land was reformed through redistribution programs. In the area of Rust de Winter the process went rather different; due to its history this area has a distinct position within the municipal boundaries. During the apartheid era, the land around Rust de Winter was bought by the government with the intention to add the area to the bordering Bophuthatswana homeland (See Figure 15). The white (farming) population was evicted, though with

the ending of apartheid the transfer of the land towards Bophuthatswana was not completed. The land remained to be government land, and it fell into disuse and was eventually invaded by black farmers. After years the agreement was made that the land could be



leased by the black farmers, which were already present in the area. These lease contracts were functional until the government decided to introduce the LRAD programme in the area and give the people land titles of the project. However, in the process LRAD was faced out and replaced by PLAS. The introduction of the new lease plans within the PLAS programme was not accepted by the farmers. These farmers argue that they are entitled to the full ownership of the land and now refuse to pay rent. The government therefore, cannot support these defaulters anymore, though eviction is not practically feasible either. Here the government is weak and the department of Land Affairs and Agriculture are looking at each other without taking measures. This has led to the situation whereby the black farmers suffer from a lack of support and in combination with insufficient knowledge and capital they are unable to farm on the land.¹¹

The land is now leased by white commercial farmers, who come in with their material, they prepare and farm the land and share some of the profit with the black land leaser. One of the black farmers, Mr. Mathlangu, summarizes the situation as follows: *“Everybody is dependent on the white farmers. Some are ripping us off, though my partner is very good. Although, if he leaves, there is*

¹¹ Interview with Nkotsana Makaamedi, Deputy Manager Rust de Winter Service centre, April 16, 2013.

*nothing. I would have had no training, nothing to teach my kids and I don't think this is farming*¹² De facto the land in Rust de Winter is back under white control again and often the black farmers do not even work on the land. The farming carried out by these farmers is capital intensive commercial farming, whereby cooperation with the black land owners is minimal. In this way they do not gain any experience and are unable to farm independently in the future. The department of Land Affairs and the department of Agriculture play a role in this situation. The department of Land Affairs allocates the land and the department of Agriculture provides the projects with assistance. In Rust de Winter both lack the power and responsibility to intervene. Currently this status quo is maintained and the problematic land reform status of these lands does not contribute to the development of the individual black farmers. Analysing the agricultural land reform projects, one can say that a sustainable approach is still lacking, because inexperienced and uneducated farmers are deemed to manage a farm. These farmers are not used to the responsibility, especially with the apartheid history in mind where every personal responsibility was denied and own initiative was discouraged. This has led to a situation where land reform projects die on mismanagement, lack of funds and where beneficiaries structurally rely on inputs of the government. Officials of the department of Agriculture define this behaviour and lack of own initiative as the dependency syndrome. Before reaching a definite conclusion on the land reform projects, the communal property associations will have to pass in review too.

Communal land is everyone's land

Differing from the agricultural land reform projects are the communal property associations who own and manage land. Communal property associations arose from the communities claiming land on the fact that their ancestors owned the land before the white settlers invaded the area. It was possible to claim land through the Restitution of Land Rights Act during the period 1994-1998. This was only the beginning, because the period following the actual claims, the settlement of the land claims, was a much longer, more extensive and sensitive period. During an intense process the claims had to be underpinned with proof that the claiming party's forefathers used to live on the land and are the rightful owners of the land. This often led to fierce and sometimes violent protests of the current white owners, whose families sometimes owned the land for generations.

Within Bela-Bela there are currently twelve CPAs who succeeded in claiming land and which have received considerable amounts of farmland, whereby in some claims tourist property is included. Four different CPAs have extensively been studied, providing a diverse image of the CPAs in the area. The organisation and performance of the researched associations differ greatly and this definitely influences the pro-poor outcomes of these land reform programmes. Through a long process, the

¹² Questionnaire with Mr. Mathlangu on farm Portion 18, Rust de Winter, April 16, 2013

CPAs have received formerly white-owned land, which is bought by the government. Sometimes land was not restituted, though was settled with financial compensation. Looking at the four CPAs there is a clear distinction between Bela-Bela CPA and Mashung Mathlala CPA on the one hand and Moretele CPA and Ramurula CPA on the other hand. Bela-Bela CPA and Mashung Mathlala are fairly big associations, participating in different sectors and run by professional management. The latter two are characterized by incoherent management, failing leadership and the absence of a group feeling within the community. Moretele CPA and Bela-Bela CPA will be discussed more broadly in the following sections to present a more extensive image of the different performances of the CPAs.

Moretele Communal Property Association

In 2004, almost 2000 ha of land was transferred to the members of the Moretele community, which consisted of around 300 beneficiaries. All members of that community became officially owner of the land and this process attracted many invaders claiming to be a member as well. The plan of the CPA was to create a board which would manage the land for the community and would control the access to the properties. Next to the land, the beneficiaries received financial compensation for land which could not be acquired by the government. This money was largely divided among the beneficiaries and not invested in the cooperation. Furthermore various cattle owners brought their own cattle onto the property, without further agreements and plans.

Mr. Abiah Ramadi, day to day manager of the farm, emotionally describes the situation ten years after the transfer of the land: *“The celebration of ten year Moretele CPA is next year, I wanted to organise a farmers day, but what is there to celebrate? The farm is in a really bad condition, the property is totally overgrazed, overstocked and the people do not listen.”* The mismanagement of the CPA results in the fact that beneficiaries continue to bring their own cattle onto the properties and there is no control or breeding programme for the cattle. This results in a situation with too many bulls and too many pregnant cows. Quantity instead of quality is chased, without plans for the future. *“The board is actually not functioning, the chairman is a busy doctor who does not work for the CPA, although most of the cattle brought in is hi. Furthermore there has been no General Annual Meeting for 2 years, beneficiaries do not get any information and the management style is very bad, as well are people’s attitudes.”* Ramadi continues that the approach of the government to land claims was not right and it should be better defined who is a beneficiary, now there are too many people make claims out of nowhere, and offspring creates splintering. It would be easier to manage if the benefits were limited to households.

Currently Moretele CPA is facing many challenges due to mismanagement, the lack of community cohesion and individuals prioritizing own interests. This resulted in a situation where there is no functioning board or functioning leadership and the farm is. The original idea at the start

of the CPA was to build a successful agricultural business, but people without any knowledge just started to graze their own cattle and wood was cut down firewood. The idea behind this process is that community members see the communal land as their land, so they can use it. The property of Moretele CPA did depreciate severely, the area is overgrazed, overstocked and fences are broken. The nature conservation board is about to present their final report with the compelling advice of removing all livestock from the farm and let the land recover for two years. This would be a harsh measure, though a last resort. Something has to be done acknowledges Ramadi: *“Bringing cattle here is animal abuse; sometimes I have the idea of calling the RSPCA.”*

The struggle of the communities to govern the communal land is not a surprise. The land claims are based on ancient land ownership and the present members of these communities are often living scattered and do not form a knit community. Furthermore has apartheid policies always dissuaded these people from owning land and therefore they lack experience. The lack of group cohesion, experience and mismanagement has led to the overexploitation of resources. Looking at the research experiences at Moretele CPA and Ramurula the critiques of the white opposition in the area are confirmed. In this way land reform does not decrease inequality and the pro-poor contribution is minimal. Based on these experiences land reform turns out to be a South African tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1968), whereby governance and control is missing. To successfully overcome these problems and manage the common pool resources (CPR) collective action is needed, which often is organised from the bottom up (Ostrom, 1990). This seems not to be the case and currently the effect of land reform on pro-poor development then could be interpreted as mainly negative. In the following chapter this will be analysed more extensively, but before that the image of the CPAs will be complemented with the story of Bela-Bela CPA. This CPA is a remarkable example of an integrated outcome of the collaboration of land reform, commercial farming and tourism and has a structural pro-poor influence. The next section presents an extensive case study of the Bela-Bela Communal Property Association. According to the book about the CPA which is yet to be published this can be perceived to be the best land restitution and development model in the country (Nawa, 2013).

Bela-Bela Communal Property Association

In April 1998, late Mr. Matsaremane Andries Mabuella claimed around 14.000 hectares of land concerning multiple farms located in the Bela-Bela Local Municipality. The claim dates back to the history of land expropriation in the area, whereby white settlers expelled the ancestors of the claimants. After a period of preparation, the claim was gazetted by the Land Claim Commission in 2003. The land claim involved multiple farms with different economic activities, including some highly developed properties. This made the claim very complex and led to many protests of the then

owners, who feared to lose their land and had concerns about the future of the businesses. On the claimed land you would find highly specialized industries and game farms with thousands of time-share holders. After extensive consultation, the claiming party came to the conclusion that the exploitation and management of the game farms and lodges would be very difficult for the inexperienced community. In order to protect the local economy and working environment, one decided to settle for financial compensation for a considered amount of land. Not all land was restored at the same time, though in total the community received around 6000 hectares of (game) farmland and for the unrestored land financial compensation of 95,000 Rand was given per family. The claiming party, which was now under the leadership of late Mr. Mabuela's son Lefa Barrington Mabuela and consisting of 250 households, finally settled and finalised the claim in March 2012.. The finalisation of the land claim was just the beginning for the community. The exploitation of the restored properties is a great challenge, where many land claims after restoration have gone wrong. Bela-Bela CPA has an exemplary position and can be defined as a specific success story. This has several reasons, though the two most important factors of success are the solid leadership of the community and the profound partnership the CPA is engaged in with dr. Snyman. These factors of success will be further discussed in detail below.

When the land claim was gazetted in 2003, the community was called together by the Land Claim Commission to explain the land claim to the different parties. The land claim of the Bela-Bela community triggered a wide range of protest and opposition of the white land owners in the area, especially by some conservative farmers. These land owners were now forced to sell their land and this caused quite a stir in the area. Some of the land owners were descendants from the earlier settler colonialists, though others purchased the land later and were not connected to the past of expropriation (Nawa, 2013). The land owners opposing the land claim then gathered in protest groups and furthermore lawsuits were opened against the validity of the land claim. The research by the Land Claim Commission even faced active obstruction by protesting land owners and evidence was disguised. Reports were filed that ancestral graves on the claimed properties were disposed in order to prevent the historical underpinnings of the land claim. Thus, the transformation process did not go without a struggle, whereby the two groups were strictly opposing each other. One of the land owners was an exception and this dr. Dirk Snyman started to play a key role in the further process. *"During the in-loco inspection of my land, I conveyed to the government that I was not there to fight the process, but to rather seek a win-win situation for all parties. I pointed out that there was a piece of land, Bonwa Phala, which belonged to a wealthy American man. I knew at the time what he was a willing seller contrary to all the other land owners who were not."* (Nawa, 2013)

This new situation was not automatically accepted by both parties. Snyman's decision to cooperate with the community was not understood by the white land owners, though partnering with a white man was also found to be difficult by the community.¹³ Nonetheless, a partnership was formed whereby Bela-Bela CPA's property and property of dr. Dirk Snyman was merged into an operating company. The community of the plays a key role and bears the main responsibility. Dr. Snyman: *"The CPA owns the land. Because the CPA land is owned by so many members, they may not trade as a commercial entity. This is to protect the individuals who make up the CPA and who are all joint owners of the land. According to government's model, we thus formed an operating company called Mahlohomolo Investments (Pty) Ltd. I have a 48% share in that company and Bela-Bela CPA has a 52% share. I am the chief executive officer of the company and Lefa Mabuela is the chairman. Because the CPA has a majority share-holding, it has more directors on the board. The company leases the land from the community and any future profits will be split pro-rata."*(Nawa, 2013)

The fact that the community united as a group is key in its success and is predominantly determined by the solid leadership of Lefa Barrington Mabuela. The present day community is scattered in and around the area of Bela-Bela and therefore difficult to govern as a community as such. Expectations of the land claim were very high and a lot of community members expected high revenues right away. These expectations necessarily had to be tempered and it was important for a sustainable future of the CPA it was going to be governed properly. After long information sessions about the land claim and extensive discussions with the community, there was decided to give a mandate to the newly established board of the CPA and within this board Mabuela received a further executive mandate. This resulted in a management structure whereby the farm management is separated from community issues. The community is informed through community programs and the obligatory Annual General Meeting (AGM). The executive mandate Mabuela received, means that he bears great responsibilities, though he is an intelligent and educated man and within the faithful community Mabuela plays also a religious leading role. As a dedicated member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) Mabuela interprets his leading role as God given and throughout the community this is disseminated too. The established partnership and the powerful leadership has resulted in a fully functioning company with results which will be highlighted in the following section.

The original land claim of 14.000 hectares eventually resulted in the Bela-Bela CPA owning about 6000 hectares of land within a company, with several different farming sections. One of the main properties of the CPA is the fully restored Bonwa Phala lodge and nature reserve. Next to the restituted land, 46 million Rand was given as financial compensation of which 40 % was distributed to the community members and 60 % was used for the restoration of Bonwa Phala and the further

¹³ Interview with Lefa Barrington Mabuela at Bonwa Phala, Bela-Bela, March 20, 2013

exploitation of the company. The settlement of the land claim and the establishment of the company resulted in a one of the few black owned game farms in South Africa and a previously disadvantaged community structurally benefitting from the land claim as an income earning business. The benefits are not directly paid out in cash to the community members, though several different concrete pro-poor outcomes can be identified.

The establishment of the company was of great importance for the results of the land restitution program. The foundation of the company was laid in a business plan, which was formatted by an external agency in cooperation with the CPA, dr. Snyman and government officials. The plan contains the long-term approach to the business and aims to ensure a sustainable future for the program. For the community, the plan also has a great leading function because many community members do not have any experience with doing business. Mabuela explains: *“Many members of the community had the expectation of printing money, now the land claim was settled. There is a lack of knowledge and understanding with the beneficiaries and the business plan keeps them under control and explains the long-term thinking a company should have. This makes clear for the beneficiaries why the CPA is buying a tractor for a farm instead of handing out money to the beneficiaries.”*¹⁴ The idea behind the plan is to establish a sustainable and multifaceted company with very clear pro-poor goals. To ensure sustainability it has to stay financially healthy, only then dividends will flow back to the beneficiaries. As highlighted before, the Bela-Bela area is a harsh area to farm and within the tourism sector competition is high, though the CPA benefits from the knowledge and experience of dr. Snyman and his staff. Currently the company is operating different farms, consisting of several crops, cattle and game and the exploitation of Bonwa Phala. Although the running costs are very high, business is carried out in a professional way and the community is directly benefitting from the land restitution.

An important part of the operation is the link to the community and the beneficiaries literally bear the fruits through the community food programme. Since 2010 every household of the community receives a monthly food package consisting of 12,5 kg maize meal, 4kg of meat and depending on the harvest season 4 kg sugar beans or a selection of mixed vegetables. The distribution of the packages happens every beginning of the month through two outreach points or delivery. This offers also an opportunity to get in touch with the community members and inform them about future developments within the CPA. One of these future plans is expressed by Mabuela: *“Our future plan is to establish Bela-Bela Investment Trust whereby each household will hold a unit trust. Whenever there are dividends in the company, they will be distributed equally to the*

¹⁴ Interview Dr. Snyman at Maatla (farm on border with Northwest, former Bophutatswana) on 22/3/2013

households. When the business flourishes, households will collect cash instead of food parcels,” (Temo News, 2012)

Next to the direct contribution to the community members, there are multiple different activities and programs contributing to development within the community and within the greater Bela-Bela area. Examples are the ‘Dimakatso Children’s Home Centre’ and the ‘Are Aganeng old age home’. As a community of previously disadvantaged people, Bela-Bela CPA has an extensive social focus. In cooperation with dr. Snyman the company is not only focussing on profit making, but also tries to optimise its social impact. Because most of the elements of the company were already functioning before the restitution with own staff, there was no immediate room for community members to be hired as staff. Furthermore, many community members live far away and are not trained to immediately participate in the business.

This lack of education within the community led to a learnership program, which was started to train and educate young people for the business. The learnership program is a training of eight months in cooperation with the Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AGRISETA). Although the majority of the community consists of elderly people, they have a clear focus on the youth and make an effort to invest in a sustainable future. Dr. Snyman acknowledges the importance of this training, because farming is losing interest among the younger people and educated farmers are needed. About 12 youngsters participate in every program and dr. Snyman hopes to be able to add six of them to the existing staff at one of the farms. The higher ambition of the learnership program is to train someone who can eventually manage the CPA.



Figure 21 Participants of the learnership program (Photo Bela-Bela CPA)

Role of commercial farming

Next to the land reform lands there are still some traditional commercial farmers left in the area. The landscape of Bela-Bela in the southern and especially the eastern part of the area is still dominated by vast fields of farmland. Although declining in numbers due to the harsh conditions and the continuing land reform programs, some large scale commercial farmers are still active in the area. Especially the area around Settlers, which is traditionally a farmer's area, is characterized by highly mechanized commercial farming. Where around twenty years ago farming mainly depended on the large scale deployment of black workers, now farms have become mechanised companies. An example of such a farm in the Bela-Bela area is 'van der Walt Landgoed'. The (white) farming family has been around since the 1950s and established the farming company 'van der Walt Landgoed' in 1996. Together with his brother manages Johan van der Walt the fully equipped and mechanised farm, which extends about 6000 hectares. The process of mechanisation is an on-going process which started after the establishment of the company. Van der Walt emphasizes the growing importance of education in the professionalizing business. Due to the mechanisation of the agricultural company, the demand for unskilled labour is much lower than it used to be. This explains, next to the decline of the sector as a whole, the decline of the employment figures in Bela-Bela. The employment opportunities that are around require some level of education. At van der Walt Landgoed only graduates are hired and farming has become a real professional business. That last point is emphasized by van der Walt, who points out that overall, the difficulty of farming is being underestimated, especially by the planners and beneficiaries of land reform.¹⁵

Farming in Bela-Bela is a professional and harsh business, whereby one has to be inventive to survive. A good example of an inventive commercial farmer is Mike Bosch, one of South Africa's most respected Beefmaster and Boran (cattle) breeders who started to breed a new sort of highly resilient indigenous chicken. These Boschveld chickens are one of a kind, very resilient, ultimately free range and sold throughout Africa. According to Bosch farming is business and business is tough. As with his own new breed of chicken, only the strong survive in Africa ((Farmer's Weekly, 2011) which also seems to be the case in Bela-Bela. The story of Mike Bosch is also interesting due to another experience he had regarding land reform. He sold his land to the government in 2011 after a land claim. He bought new land and moved his business, though is still farming on the land he has sold to the government. Due to its successful business on the claimed land, the government was interested to take over the business too. The government appointed two black future farmers to do this. Mike Bosch supposed to be the teacher, but he did not accept the two appointed farmers, because they did not have any agricultural education. Until today Mike Bosch is still farming on that

¹⁵ Interview with Johan van der Walt, van der Walt Landgoed, Settlers, April 11, 2013

farm waiting for the government to send new persons with a degree in agriculture. The most recent plan is to start a learning school for 40 students to produce new farmers with a degree and with experience. Bosch will then be the teacher and the government will assist with funding. Until so far, the process with the government has been very troublesome and it is not only limited to this case. Failing policies have led to a more widespread public dissatisfaction, further highlighted in the next section.

Public dissatisfaction

The municipal government plays an important role within South Africa and received key responsibilities in the development process. Since the political transformation in 1994, the governing party ANC has become more and more criticized for being corrupt and failing to meet the needs of the people. Unfortunately this is also the case in Bela-Bela and political fights between two factions within the ANC-government of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality determine the local political field. According to citizens of all social-economic layers of society, the municipality is failing and corrupted to the bone. This results in development opportunities that are not used to its full potential and different civil society movements, which are described in this section, are therefore protesting the current affairs. Within this section these civic society movements will be shortly mentioned to provide an image of what is going on within the municipal border.

The main criticism of the established civil society movements is the failing governance of the municipality, which is often completely absent. An example of this is the state of public services just outside the town of Bela-Bela. This area, where the majority of the tourist establishments are located is the main attraction of the area, though public services are pretty much absent. In spite of the importance of the appearance of the area, roads are not maintained, garbage is not collected and resort owners are forced to practically run their own village. Despite rising municipal taxes, there is no sign of any municipal activity and citizens request more action. Therefore, citizens now started the Tax Payers Forum which already consists of 7300 members. This forum aims to end the stalemate in the municipality and put attention to the lack of service delivery. Annex B shows the letter of the Forum, where they address the problems within the municipality to the minister.

The dissatisfaction of the population of Bela-Bela is not only limited to one part of society, but the public unrest can be felt throughout all layers of society. As the freedom party, the ANC traditionally has a large support base in the poor black community. Nonetheless, also within the township, people are starting to lose their trust in the government. Fed up with unfulfilled promises, rising corruption and continuing inequality the 'Enough is Enough' movement was established. The 'Enough is Enough' movement is a grassroots protest movement which was founded recently in the township at the bottom of the social-economic ladder. The movement is now looking for members to

map the public frustration and will then raise this to the municipal governance. A feeling of social consciousness is developed within the society of Bela-Bela whereby the failing municipality, lacking pro-poor policies and high corruption is no longer tolerated. This is a striking process, because a new phase within the transformation process could be coming. Since the end of apartheid, much improvement was expected though development is still lacking. People are getting tired of waiting for the government and start to develop pro-active behaviour. In this way the poor start to protest against the fact that they more and more segregated from the main economy. Within Bela-Bela the characteristics of poverty have changed, though it seems not to be in a positive way. In the following chapter this will be discussed more broadly.

Conclusion

The results of the pro-poor initiatives in Bela-Bela are very mixed. The research especially focused on the effects of land reform in the area of Bela-Bela because these projects are the most present and concrete initiatives to reach the poor. Due to the extensive analysis of a large number of land reform projects one can conclude that currently the agricultural land reform projects do not contribute to the alleviation of poverty in a systematic way. The situation in Rust de Winter illustrates the impotence of current policies to substantially contribute to the support of black farmers. The agricultural land reform projects face many problems, whereby inexperienced farmers struggle to manage the smallholder farms. Overall one can argue that the real return on investment is very disappointing and land reform performed in this way does not benefit the poor in a sustainable way. Next to these projects the communal land reform projects have been described. Also here the results are mixed, whereby a lot of things are going wrong. On one hand the effect of land reform on pro-poor development then could be interpreted as mainly negative, but on the other hand the performance of the Bela-Bela CPA provides an exemplary role within the area. That case study shows the result of an integrated approach with a central focus to the pro-poor aspect. The main difference between the CPAs is the different approach to its leadership.

Governance of communal lands connects to a wider discussion, whereby Hardin (1968) and Ostrom (1990) dominate the academic discussion. Within the next chapter this subject will receive more attention, focussing on the successes and failures of the CPAs and other land reform projects in Bela-Bela. Concluding this chapter one can state that in spite of some successes the overall the poor are failed to reach in a sustainable way and slowly protest is growing to raise these problems in a more organised way.

5. Learning from success and failure

The research has shown the extensive change of the rural municipality of Warmbaths into the popular tourist destination of Bela-Bela. This process of transformation is still continuing and consists of many different elements. Since 1994 the political field changed drastically from apartheid's minority rule towards a democratic South Africa governed by the freedom party ANC. During the same period South Africa underwent the political transformation, Bela-Bela was faced with many processes influencing the situation economically, politically, socially and spatially. Compared to the situation described by Ferreira in the beginning of the 1990s, the emergence of tourism and the land reform programmes are the most remarkable processes in the area. Previously the competition of these two processes was highlighted; an integrated approach was lacking and social segregation was visible, still mainly along racial lines. The history of settler colonialism and apartheid has marked South Africa until today and the transformation towards the aspired free and equal society is a slow and continuing process. Land reform policies aim to contribute to the transformation process, though many projects struggle to perform and the current state of affairs generates a lot of public dissatisfaction. Within this analytical chapter the successes and failures of the communal land reform programs will be discussed. Furthermore the changed characteristics of poverty will receive further attention. Within the changing nature of poverty, the concepts of old and new poverty will pass in review and will be put in a present perspective.

Governing the commons

In the previous chapter the communal property associations (CPAs) have been described extensively and mixed outcomes of the different projects were uncovered. Two extended case studies showed different outcomes in Bela-Bela. Hereby there was a clear division between a failing project (Moretele CPA) and a successful project (Bela-Bela CPA). Moretele CPA serves as an example for the failing communal land reform programs in Bela-Bela, but also in South Africa. Lots of common land is restituted through land claims to black communities, but these programs often fail. The main reasons for failure are lacking management and control of these communal lands. Also Moretele CPA faces many problems and shows how these programs perish through mismanagement, lack of knowledge and leadership. This has led to an overgrazed and overstocked property, whereby there is an abundance of free riders among the beneficiaries. In this way the communal land reform programs turn out to be a South African tragedy of the commons. Hardin (1968) describes that common resources will be depleted due to the pursuit of self-interest of the individual owners, although they understand that the depletion has negative consequences for the long-term interest.

Hardin argues that an authority is needed to deal with the conservation of the common resources. Ostrom (1990) agrees that an institution for undertaking and managing collective action is

needed or otherwise the common pool-resource will fail. However she argues that in practice these institutes for collective action are constituted through bottom-up collective action. This group will then organise and set rules to manage and control the common resources (Ostrom, 1990). Looking at the factors of success of the Bela-Bela CPA, this line of thinking is not applicable in Bela-Bela. The organisation of the Bela-Bela CPA has a very hierarchical structure and is built upon the strong leadership of Lefa Barrington Mabuela and the dedicated partnership of dr. Dirk Snyman. The CPA has formed a company with a professional business plan which has prevented the community members to intervene and invade land for personal use. The strong leadership and authority imposed from above is the key factor to success in this case and has prevented that Bela-Bela CPA would also turn into a failing project. Analysing the communal land reform programs one can conclude that without control, collective action within Bela-Bela is mainly expressed in expressing personal interests and free-riding behaviour. Although Ostrom's line of thinking is widely accepted as the main process in respect to governing the commons, this does not seem to be the case in Bela-Bela. Here the communal lands turn out to be a tragedy of the commons, unless there is strong leadership. The reasons for this occurrence within Bela-Bela, could be explained from a South African historical perspective.

Within Bela-Bela there is a lack of bottom-up organised collective action to prevent communal land reform projects from failing. Furthermore, successes are achieved when there is strong leadership. These features could be linked to the legacy of apartheid, which impact is still being felt. The 300-year history of settler colonialism created a highly unequal situation in South Africa and the system of apartheid further determined the unequal situation within the country. Although apartheid should not be blamed for all the current social and economic problems in South Africa, the present population is still suffering from this past. The beneficiaries benefitting from the communal land reform grew up in a system where every personal responsibility was denied and own initiative was discouraged. In this way they were not raised to think proactive and take their own responsibility. Therefore, bottom up collective organisation could be limited within Bela- Bela and do land reform projects thrive on strong leadership. This strong leadership causes the programs to succeed, but most of the beneficiaries are still dependent on an institute. This could explain the presence of the earlier mentioned dependency syndrome, whereby beneficiaries structurally rely on inputs from outside and lack own initiative. This should not be blamed on the legacy of apartheid completely. Mbeki (2011) argues that the post-apartheid government also plays an important role here. Since the end of the apartheid the ANC government has strengthened the dependency syndrome, because they created the idea that the government will provide the poor with housing, electricity and other social services. Only, the ANC neglected to inform the poor that one has to pay

for these services which caused that the masses constantly expect the government to provide them (Mbeki, 2011).

The new generation, which is born in a democratic system, now starts to get tired of this attitude and furthermore rejects the continuing corruption. The Enough is Enough movement in the township of Bela-Bela is a clear example of a bottom-up initiative starting to rise. This movement is predominantly directed at the failing municipality and requests change of which the poor can benefit too. Collective action on a large scale may be still



Figure 22 Baetemedede Food Project

lacking, but a small food project in the township shows what is possible if people work together. The Baetemedede Food Project is a private project, whereby 17 elderly people cultivate a two hectare plot of communal land to provide about 135 people with some food. People start to support each other if other options are ruled out. As mentioned before the (municipal) government has large developmental responsibilities, however the government is largely failing. The current developments within Bela-Bela are predominantly dominated by the private sectors whereby tourism is prevailing and pro-poor development is lacking. The next section will focus more on what this means for the characteristics of poverty. Because of the segregation within the system the poor tend to fall outside the main economy. This will receive further attention and the influence of the change on the characteristics of poverty will be analysed more extensively.

Characteristics of poverty

To understand the current characteristics of poverty first the situation before the end of apartheid will be highlighted again. The strong and oppressive state system was very determining and the non-white population was seen as inferior and considered to be predominantly a supply of cheap labour. This resulted in a situation where the white population was in charge of politics, business and determined the life of the black population. This resulted in a black population which was systematically held poor and underdeveloped. The labour intensive sectors of agriculture and mining were the main employers in Bela-Bela, employing mainly low skilled black workers. Due to the politically controlled impossibility of black workers to develop further than low skilled employment, poverty was widespread. The non-white population was forced into a subordinated position, tied in the lower working class. The current situation in Bela-Bela differs substantially from the apartheid era. Many developments have taken place, though about 4000 households, which is about 20% of

the municipal population, can still be considered very poor. The continuation of poverty is very problematic and the political transformation and growth of Bela-Bela apparently could not solve the socio-economic challenges. That poverty is still around stands without a question, though the nature of poverty is different and the fall of agriculture and the rise of the RNFE created new opportunities and possibilities for those who are able to reach that part of the system. Development became a key issue for the post-apartheid municipal government and in this way the role of the state changed severely. Expectations started to rise due to the promises of prosperity, though pro-poor outcomes of municipal policies are limited. Furthermore, the competition of the two transformations within Bela-Bela shows a two-folded identity where tourism is prevailing as a business for the more prosperous population and land reform projects are struggling to sustainably benefit the poor. This has created a situation whereby development is still segregated and the black farms are rather creating holes in the economic landscape, than contributing to structural pro-poor development.

This process of de-agrarianisation of the area fits in a more global trend within the Rural South. Rigg (2006) describes the emergence of a RNFE within the Rural South and within this theme he distinguishes between two types of poverty, old and new poverty. As discussed in the theoretical framework these two types of poverty are linked to the economic participation of the poor. In the way he presents it, old poverty means the disintegration of the poor in the economic system who are due to their poor and meagre lives are unable to participate in the economic system. With the change in the Rural South a new situation develops whereby the poor receive access to the economic system, though due to their poverty are forced into a subordinate role. The poor are integrated, though on very unfavourable terms.

The transformation of Bela-Bela has many links with the description of the change of the Rural South by Rigg. The emergence of tourism is a key part of the de-agrarianisation process and he also emphasizes on the possible influences of the implementation of land reform projects. The elitist position of tourism and the predominantly failing land reform projects within the area put Bela-Bela in a distinct position. Although the process of de-agrarianisation fits within Rigg's concept of the changing Rural South, the position of the poor is contradicting to this general image. Within Bela-Bela the situation has developed whereby one can argue that the current situation of the poor is rather old than new. It seems that in the apartheid era, the poor were in a position whereby they were actually part of the mainstream economy, though treated very unequally. Nowadays one can identify a clear disconnection between the rich and the poor whereby failing agricultural land reform projects only create holes in the economic landscape. Furthermore is the pro-poor focus of tourism more or less absent. A segregated development of two economies created an image of a population whereby the poor are disconnected from the mainstream economic activities and possibilities. In this way one

can conclude that the transformation of Bela-Bela has created rather a situation whereby old poverty is the new perspective for the poor.

Conclusion

The endurance of poverty in Bela-Bela is still very apparent and, in spite of the transformation the area has gone through, a large part of the population can still be considered very poor. The emergence of tourism has created economic development, though this has not resulted in an equal distribution of wealth in the area. The emergence of the RNFE and the further de-agrarianisation of the area resulted in some economic possibilities for the poor and some trickling down of revenues, though development is predominantly focussed on those directly involved. To a certain extent one can still distinguish a two-economy situation. The transformation of Bela-Bela has had a profound influence on the area, though inequality within the population still continues and poverty is still widespread. Within this chapter a more extensive analysis has been presented on the governing of the communal lands and the changed characteristics of poverty.

The communal land reform programs in Bela-Bela provide example of failing and successful projects. The failing programmes uncover an example of a tragedy of the commons. Contrary to Ostrom's (1990) expectations, this is not tackled through collective action but Bela-Bela CPA shows a different approach. The approach of this land claim has two striking elements which are key to its success. These elements are a combination of strong leadership and a professional business approach. The professional approach is established through a business model, which is then also followed by all participants. This is especially made possible by the good organisation of the CPA, which has a strong leader who well-informs the community. The mandated leader of the CPA makes decisions on behalf of the community and free-riding is therefore avoided. In combination with the professional organisation and administration of the partner, this has resulted in a well-functioning company established through land reform governing the communal lands. Collective action within Bela-Bela is limited and the dependency syndrome maintains to be present, however the establishment of civic society movements show a growing number of people protesting the current state of affairs.

This growing unrest among the poor is also linked to the changing characteristics of poverty. Due to the by the state imposed inferiority of the non-white population during apartheid, poverty among the black population was widespread. In this way the poor black population was forced into a subordinated position within the economy. Nowadays a system has developed whereby there is a clear disconnection between the development of the rich and the development of the poor. In this way one can conclude that, according to the definition of Rigg (2006), the transformation of Bela-Bela has created rather a situation whereby old poverty is the new perspective for the poor.

Conclusions

The research in Bela-Bela Local Municipality focussed on the role of poverty in a transforming landscape. An extensive image of the area of Bela-Bela has been presented. The structural changes due to the major transformation of the last twenty years have been highlighted and the profound influence of this change on the spatial, economic and social situation of the area has been discussed. This conclusion will link back to the main research question and the different subjects raised by the sub-questions, in order to form a comprehensive picture of the area. This image of the area is then linked to the changing characteristics of poverty. In this way the research outcomes can be placed in a wider perspective, connecting the described situation of Bela-Bela to the theoretical framework.. As closure some final recommendations and complementary critiques and hopes of the research will be given.

Comparing the area now with the area in the late 1980s one can see clear structural changes in the economic position of Bela-Bela. The area of Bela-Bela was used to create a space for leisure for the urban area of Gauteng and allocated as pleasure periphery. Bela-Bela developed into a popular tourist destination and more and more farmers turned away from agriculture towards predominantly tourist activities. The economic identity of the area changed towards an area dominated by non-farm activities. The increased economic activity attracted a lot of people so that Bela-Bela developed into fairly large provincial town, fully serviced for the inflow of tourists. Although Bela-Bela underwent a major transformation, unemployment and poverty are still widespread and the social-economic situation of a large part of the population maintains to be substandard. Next to the tourist activities, land reform plays an increasingly important role in the area. A situation arose whereby the land reform projects are rather separated from the main economic developments. This resulted in a shattered landscape whereby activities are developing rather next to each other than with each other.

This shattered landscape is also depicted in the spatial patterns of the area. The spatial effects of the transformation especially affected the north-western region where pasture land was converted into nature reserves and stock farmers converted to game farmers. Tourism is currently mainly situated in three areas and despite of the decline of the agricultural sector, land identified as agricultural land is still widespread. Within the agricultural sector one can distinguish between the commercial farmers and the land reform projects. The change of the economic structure has resulted in a situation whereby land patterns are disintegrated. The presence of commercial farmers has decreased severely and smallholder land reform projects form holes in a landscape dominated by large-scale properties. Land reform is for the poor black population about the only way to achieve access to land. However, the land reform programs are in no way linked to the tourist development

of the area. In this way the poor are unable to participate in the growing rural non-farm economy, because it lacks of an integrated approach. Although land reform now provides a way to get access to land for the previously disadvantaged people, within Bela-Bela it is not effectively contributing towards an integrated development of the area. In this way one can identify two transformation processes, which are again rather competing than collaborating. A more integrated approach would contribute to more effective pro-poor development, which is rather necessary and still insufficiently present in Bela-Bela.

A main actor which could contribute to this integration is the local municipal government, who became the key developmental agent in post-apartheid South Africa. Looking at the municipality in Bela-Bela, the government is troubled by internal political conflicts and the gap between the policy framework and the actual policy implementation is rather impressive. The lack of present pro-poor initiatives is very apparent and the promotion of local economic development linked to the tourist sector falls short very clearly. Effective LED projects are predominantly failing and the state of affairs concerning the flea market shows very clearly what is lacking. Opportunities are not utilized and the presented policy framework lacks implementation. Furthermore is an enabling environment missing, which could help the projects to grow without municipal assistance. The widespread presence of poverty within Bela-Bela requires a profound pro-poor approach, though the municipality is not at power to fulfil its developmental role. Furthermore, within the tourism sector, pro-poor initiatives do not form a structural part of the business plans and are predominantly dependent on the whims of the owners. In Bela-Bela some pro-poor initiatives are carried out, but lack the much needed integrated approach between different sectors.

Currently within the pro-poor development framework, land reform is the sector with the most apparent pro-poor initiatives. These predominantly agricultural projects have a clear aim to address the inequality within the society and to benefit the poor. As said, the connection of the land reform projects with the tourist sector is rather competing than collaborating. There is a clear focus on agriculture and these smallholder farms are struggling to survive and actually do not fit in the economic landscape with commercial farms and the also very commercially arranged tourist establishments. Because of inexperience of the project beneficiaries, mismanagement and a continuing lack of funds the projects are severely underperforming. This has even led to the return of white commercial farmers on black controlled land in Rust de Winter. White commercial farmers de facto control the land again and this symbolizes the failing of the land reform projects and furthermore does not contribute to the development of the black farmers. The segregated development of Bela-Bela and the struggling performance of the land reform policies present a rather negative image of the transforming landscape of Bela-Bela.

Within this complex transformation process, communal lands restituted through land claims also play a role. The governance of these communal lands faces communities with severe challenges and most communal property associations (CPAs) fail to govern their communal lands. The main issues in this question are a lack of control and leadership, mismanagement and free-riding behaviour. This is depicted by the Moretele CPA, which is now completely overstocked and overgrazed due to the pursuit of personal interests of individual members. Nonetheless one can also distinguish a bright case study which can serve as an exemplary role for the continuing transformation process within Bela-Bela and South Africa. The cooperation of the white large land owner and the black community of Bela-Bela CPA in a joint venture shows how land reform can contribute to development and also shows the possibility of putting pro-poor development in a central position in the business. The company was established after a lengthy land claim process and faced large-scale protest of the white land owners, though now shows the success of a black owned, diverse company. The management of the joint venture is carried out very professionally, focussing on profit making with a clear pro-poor focus. This clear pro-poor focus is lacking within the tourism sector, and its success is envied by many other land reform projects within Bela-Bela.

The governing of the communal lands in Bela-Bela is quite unique and is not in line with the prediction of the earlier discussed Ostrom. Contrary to bottom-up organised collective action, communal projects in Bela-Bela succeed with strong leadership and hierarchical control. Where many projects turn out to be South African tragedies of the commons, some projects are successful. Bela-Bela CPA is a striking example of this and the fact that this happens in cooperation with a white large landowner might still be linked to the South African history of apartheid. Due to the history many of the black beneficiaries of communal land programs were not raised to think proactive and take their own responsibility. In this way, bottom up collective organisation could be limited within Bela- Bela and thrive land reform projects on strong leadership. The extraordinary situation of Bela-Bela also emerges in connection with the literature on the change in the Rural South.

The emergence of the rural non-farm economy and the process of de-agrarianisation of the can be seen in a more global perspective. Rigg (2006) observes these processes within the Rural South and argues that this leads to a new type of poverty. Instead of old poverty, whereby the poor are not integrated in the system, the poor suffer now from new poverty; meaning that they are integrated, but on very unfavourable terms. The transformation of Bela-Bela has clear linkages with this theory, but the current poverty situation seems rather different. The development of Bela-Bela created a segregated society whereby there is a clear disconnection between the rich and prosperous part of the society and the poor. The rich benefit from the economic developments of the area and dominate the mainstream economy. The poor however, are forced into a position whereby they are disconnected from the main economy and are compelled to live simple and

meagre lives. In this way one can argue that during the apartheid area they were actually part of the mainstream economy, though treated very unequally. Nowadays one can identify a more defined second economy to which the poor are condemned. In this way one can state that the major transformation of Bela-Bela into a popular tourist destination not necessarily had a positive influence on poverty. Currently the poor are rather forced into a position segregated from the first economy and face problems linked to the characteristics of old poverty. Nonetheless some processes are showing positive developments whereby the cooperation within the Bela-Bela CPA is a remarkable example. It can function as example for other land claims and promote cooperation of the different people within the South African transformation process. This transformation process is a laborious process, which will continue to take time, though the land reform program of the Bela-Bela CPA shows how the South African cake can be divided in a more equal and sustainable way.

Although time and funds were limited during the research, the hope is that this research created new academic knowledge of the area of Bela-Bela and can function as a sequel of the research of Ferreira conducted in the late 1980s. Complementing this research a letter of recommendations is presented in Annex C to make a contribution to the local development process. Here the current state of affairs at the land reform projects is discussed and recommendations are made to work towards a better and sustainable system. Hereby are monitoring and evaluation of the land reform and LED projects very important. Furthermore is cooperation between the beneficiaries, and the establishment of more strategic partnerships, needed. Next to that should one work towards a more integrated approach, whereby other municipal (LED) policies could connect to the tourist developments in the area. More recommendations can be found in the annex and hopefully this can contribute to a more clear pro-poor focus of the local development framework of Bela-Bela Local Municipality.

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Appendices

Appendix A, Questionnaire land reform projects



Universiteit Utrecht

Date of Survey:

Farm:

Dear,

My name is Maarten Heetderks and I am a master's student at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. I'm part of a South African-Netherlands partnership for alternative development research project between the Universities of Stellenbosch and Utrecht.

I am currently in the stage of data collection for my research in Bela-Bela where I will be investigating how the region's rural areas have changed over the past 20 plus years from a predominantly agricultural-base to a post-productivist countryside. In doing this I will be mapping land use changes, I will be reviewing successful and failed LED and land reform projects and I will investigate the impact of rural tourism on poverty reduction.

Your cooperation is very much appreciated and results and recommendations of the study will be presented to the Department of Agriculture of the Bela-Bela Local Municipality. For further information my contact information can be found below.

With kind regards,

Maarten Heetderks

m.j.heetderks@students.uu.nl

079 919 3673

Section A: Project characteristics

1. Type of land acquisition:
2. Start of the project (year):
3. Size of the project: ha
4. Category: Smallholder / Emerging / Large scale
5. Number of beneficiaries:
6. Number of beneficiaries actively participating:
7. Name of main beneficiary:
8. Age:
9. Nationality:
10. Gender:
11. Level of education: Primary school / Highschool / University / Agricultural

12. Former job:
13. Commodity:
 - If mixed give detail:
14. Total area arable land: ha
15. Total area grazing land: ha
16. Irrigation area: ha
17. Total currently used: ha
18. Water available? Yes? What source?
19. Available energy:
20. Available equipment:
21. Ownership of the land before the project:
 - Did you buy the whole farm?
 - How was the land used?
 - How was the land transferred?

Section B: Project results

22. How was funding achieved?
23. Have you received additional non-state support?
24. Did you buy additional land?
25. Where is the farm used for? Subsistent farming / small scale selling / commercial selling
 - Where do you sell your products?
 - How much and how often do you sell your products?
 - Do you have any selling contracts?
26. Function on the farm:
 - With how many are you working together in this function?
 - Do you receive more assistance?
27. How many employees work on the farm:

	Bela Bela	Limpopo	Former Bophutatswana	Different RSA	Non-RSA
Permanent fulltime					
Permanent parttime					
Seasonally					

Different					
------------------	--	--	--	--	--

- Has this changed? Why?
 - What is the average wage of an employee?
28. How many households live on the project site?
- Did that change? Why?
29. How many people live on the project site?
- Did that change? How?
30. How many people are supported by the farm income?
31. What is the estimated total netto income of this land reform farm per year?

Rand

- How has this changed in the last couple of years?
32. Could you specify your primary and secondary source(s) of income and the percentage of that of your yearly income:

Primary source of income	%
Secondary source(s) of income	%

33. What are the 3 main successes of the farm, why do you think that?
- Succes:
 - Succes:
 - Succes:
34. What are the 3 main challenges of the farm, why do you think that?
- Challenge:
 - Challenge:
 - Challenge:
35. What further state support do you receive?
36. Are you engaged in a partnership with a mentor?
- How is this going?
37. Do you think there is any support lacking?
38. On a scale from 1-10, how succesful do you perceive this land reform project?
39. Did your life improve after participating in the land reform project?

Section D: Diversification characteristics

40. Do you perform other non-farm activities?
- Yes? What?
41. Is there any touristic activity on the farm?
42. Are you planning to create any touristic activity on the farm?
- Yes? What?
43. Do you feel the influence of the touristic sector in your area?

Have you any further remarks?

Space for personal remarks of the researcher

Thank you!

Appendix B, Letter Tax Payers Forum



BELA - BELA

TAX PAYERS FORUM

BELASTINGBETALERSFORUM

Chairperson/Voorsitter 082 788 0960

E-mail/pos erpie@senco.co.za

P.O. Box/Bus 1684

Bela Bela 0480

4 March 2013

The Minister
CoGTA
Private Bag X9123
Cape Town
8000

BELA BELA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Honourable Minister

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this letter is to bring to the attention of the Minister, the desperation of taxpayers and the local community in Bela Bela resulting from an apparent stalemate in the municipal council. The Bela Bela Taxpayers' Forum kindly seeks your guidance in resolving the issue in order for the council to operate efficiently and deliver its services to the community.

2. BACKGROUND

This letter is written on behalf of the Bela Bela Taxpayers' Forum with 7 300 members in the greater Bela Bela municipal area.

The Forum is a non-political organization and confers with councillors and members of the public who share the goal of making Bela Bela a better place for all irrespective of race or political affiliations.

Please consider the following situation:

- a. It has been reported in the media that the Bela Bela municipality is among the nine most underperforming municipalities in the Country.
- b. It appears that the municipal council has reached a complete stalemate as a result of infighting between council members of the ANC. Council meetings are being scheduled but councillors don't attend these and when they do, the political infighting is such that they are sometimes unable to agree on the agenda.

- c. Community members, affected by lack of service delivery, are so frustrated that they break up meetings and in one instance, the police had to protect the physical well-being of councillors.
- d. The net result is that important operational decisions are not being effected by the municipality which has a serious and adverse effect on service delivery and the general morale of the community.
- e. The mayor and some of the councillors seem to be genuinely concerned about their obligations towards the community but it would appear that a faction exists with its own destructive agenda and members of this faction appears to be very determined to disrupt and destabilize the council.

3. REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bela Bela taxpayers' Forum humbly requests the Minister to intervene as a matter of extreme urgency and thoroughly resolve the conflict created by the stray faction to allow the council to proceed with its obligated functions.

4. CLOSING

The Bela Bela Taxpayers' Forum requests the Minister to officially acknowledge this imperative correspondence and take decisive action to resolve this issue as it continues to have an adverse effect on the community. The situation has the potential to escalate into mass action that could result in public violence, vandalism and loss of lives among the affected members of the community and said councillors.

We humbly await the Minister's official guidance and recommendations.

Yours truly,



P.L. Raath (Pr. Eng)
Chairperson

Copies:

1. Presidential hotline: president@po.gov.za
2. MEC for Local Government Limpopo: MacheteMT@coghsta.limpopo.gov.za
3. Secretary General of the ANC: dswanepoel@anc.org.za

Appendix C, Letter of recommendations Bela-Bela Local Municipality

Introduction

This letter of recommendations is a corollary of the research conducted in Bela-Bela Local Municipality in March and April 2013. My name is Maarten Heetderks and I have conducted the research as part of the Master program International Development Studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. Within South Africa, the University of Stellenbosch cooperated with the research and provided assistance in preparation of and during the fieldwork in Bela-Bela. The research was conducted in about six weeks and focussed on the current development situation in Bela-Bela. Dr. Sanette Ferreira researched the area at the end of the 1980s and the outcomes of this research were published in her PhD thesis *'A spatial analysis of the district economy of Warmbaths, Transvaal'* (Ferreira, 1992). Based on that research I came to Bela-Bela for my master research, thereby looking at how the area has changed during the last twenty years and which influence tourism and land reform have on the area.

This letter of recommendations is a brief document addressed to the stakeholders who actively participated in the fieldwork, which is especially the department of Agriculture at Tawoomba Research Centre. Regarding the department of Agriculture, the research is predominantly focused on the land reform projects in the area, though the other aspects important in Bela-Bela will be mentioned as well. This letter of recommendations is presented as an annex within my master thesis *'Poverty in a transforming landscape. Research in Bela-Bela Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa'*. The master thesis contains the complete research results and provides a further insight in the situation in Bela-Bela. Within this letter, first a short summary of the research will be given, then the recommendations will be presented and the letter will end with a short conclusion.

Summary of research

The aim of the field work in Bela-Bela was to get an extensive image of the current situation in the municipal area, thereby meeting and interviewing as much stakeholders as possible. The focuses within these interviews were the current development situation and the situation of the poor within Bela-Bela. During the research I have spoken to a lot of different stakeholders and people with various roles and functions within society. It became clear that Bela-Bela underwent a major transformation during the last twenty years and the area developed into a popular tourist hub. This has attracted a lot of economic activity and development opportunities in and around the town of Bela-Bela. Nonetheless is poverty still widespread and therefore more pro-poor development is wanted. The presence of tourism created new development and job opportunities, though only a limited amount of people can benefit from these direct effects. Pro-poor initiatives within the tourist sector are still lacking and not part of the general framework. Some initiatives are carried out within

the area, though these are not a structural part of the policies. Tourism is still a sector from which the more prosperous benefit and where the poor have difficulties to get access to.

Access to land for the poor is predominantly limited to the (agricultural) land reform projects. These projects are guided by the department of Agriculture and the results of these projects are very mixed. The inexperienced black farmers struggle to manage the emerging smallholder farms. The farmers tend to fall back to state support and they lack the agricultural knowledge and capital to compete with the white commercial farmers in the area. The aim of land reform to decrease inequality and promote pro-poor development is not reached and could be executed much better. Within Bela a situation has developed where tourism and land reform are two processes of transformation which are rather competing than collaborating. Next to these transformation processes, the political situation since the end of apartheid changed severely too. The current political municipal situation is rather troubled and during the interviews many people were very disappointed with the performance of the municipality and the current state of the public services. This was expressed by the more prosperous commercial farmers, tourist establishment owners and local entrepreneurs, though also by the poor from the township who were setting up a protest group. Within Bela-Bela, the municipality currently cannot bear the responsibility as a developmental agent. Currently the poor lack the ability to bear the fruits from the economic development of Bela-Bela and the poor seem to become more and more disconnected from these developments. These are the main outcomes of the research, which are described more extensive in the master thesis. The next section focusses on the recommendations for further development which are mentioned pointwise below.

Recommendations

- It is important that land reform projects are being monitored and evaluated through a structured system which is accessible for both government officials and beneficiaries.
- Farmers of land reform projects should continuously be informed about their rights and duties in order to receive (more) assistance.
- To avoid the creation or persistence of the dependency syndrome, pro-activity should be promoted among the farmers.
- The amount of help should depend on the performance of a project. Binding rules should make sure that if you perform, further assistance will be given.
- It is crucial that farms have a sustainable future to increase the probability of success land reform projects should only become available to trained and experienced farmers.
- Within the area there is a lot of experience among (white) commercial farmers. More active cooperation with these farmers through honest strategic partnerships should be promoted.

- The different land reform projects should share equipment and cooperate to reduce the costs of purchase and maintenance of costly products. Furthermore a technician with technical knowledge should be available to repair broken equipment.
- Both the planning and the implementation should be realistic. If the goals are too high, disappointment is easy. Opportunities should be viewed realistically.
- The state owned land in Rust de Winter should be brought back under state control, rent should be paid to the rightful claimant and exploitation of the black farmer should be excluded. It is crucial to build partnerships between the different actors.
- Bela-Bela has a large tourist sector, but land reform is rather competing than collaborating with this sector. One should aim to have a more integrated approach of these two sectors and promote effective LED policies.
- Attention is needed to create a better enabling environment for the different projects.
- There is a considerable amount of public unrest about the failing municipality and lacking public services. There are a lot of ideas and initiatives within the population. These people are an important source for the municipality. Public and private initiatives should be promoted through programmes and then used by the municipality.
- An inter-departmental coordination is needed to improve the overall pro-poor focus of the municipal policies and to integrate land reform in the policies within the general framework.
- All sorts of corruption should be prevented. When corruption is observed it should immediately be addressed.

Conclusion

The presented recommendations are the outcomes of my research in Bela-Bela. During my stay in Bela-Bela I have been able to speak to many different actors, see many actors and establish an extensive image of the area. The created image is formed by my experience as a Dutch Master student International Development Studies while visiting the area. My field visits to the land reform projects with the department of agriculture provided me with a profound picture of the state of the projects and the state of affairs within the department. Further visits and interviews led to a more extensive image of the municipality as a whole. I did not have any previous experience in researching South African municipalities, so as a foreign student I could research from a fresh perspective without prejudices. The situation in Bela-Bela is far from being perfect and many policies lack efficiency in reaching the poor. Nevertheless, I have come along motivated officials and there are many opportunities for improvement. Hopefully these recommendations can assist in this process.

Maarten Heetderks

October 2013

Utrecht, Netherlands