

# Governance and Development in Southern Africa - Development Policy Review Network



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On 13 November 2007, some thirty Dutch and South African practitioners, policy makers and academics, all working on the subject of governance and development in southern Africa, came together for a day of discussions. Although all grappling with similar subjects in their respective professional lives, these three groups of professionals seldom meet each other in forums that are explicitly designed to foster debates and cooperation across the professional boundary lines.

## **The Proceedings from the Third DPRN regional expert meeting on Southern Africa (2007 - published 2010) .**

1. [John Belt and Marja Spierenburg - Public-private partnerships in rural development. Downplaying the role of politics and power relations](#)
2. [Henk Molenaar and Marjoke Oosterom - Negotiating knowledges for development](#)
3. [Anshu Padayachee and Ashwin Desai - Post-apartheid South Africa and the crisis of expectation](#)
4. [David Sogge, Bob van der Winden and René Roemersma - Civil domains and arenas in Zimbabwean settings. Democracy and responsiveness revisited.](#)

5. [\*Paul Hebinck, Derick Fay and Kwandiwe Kondlo - Land and agrarian reform in South Africa: Caught by continuities\*](#)
6. [\*Jan Kees van Donge and Melle Leenstra - Donors and governance in Southern Africa. The case of Zambia, with Zimbabwe as a counterpoint.\*](#)

#### Introduction:

Ton Dietz, the initiator of the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN), envisioned that bringing these professional groups together, with a focus on various regions in the world, would generate more lasting interaction and cooperation between them in the future. The DPRN therefore set out to coordinate a series of meetings, divided into 13 world regions, to bring together practitioners, policy makers and academics to discuss questions like: What kind of academic knowledge do practitioners need in the field? How can policy makers benefit from the practitioners' and academics' insights when it comes to formulating adequate policies? What policies facilitate the most appropriate conditions for academics to do relevant research, and how can policy makers stimulate and guide practitioners in the field? Highly relevant questions in a time when Dutch society increasingly seems to question the net results and relevance of money spent on development. Questions that are therefore of almost existential relevance for all three designated groups.

Harry Wels and his SAVUSA-team (South Africa - VU University Amsterdam - Strategic Alliances) were asked to organize the series of three meetings specifically geared towards southern Africa, together with the Dutch office of SANPAD (South Africa Netherlands research Programme for Alternatives in Development). The first DPRN southern Africa day was held on 23 September 2005 under the provocative slogan 'Hug or hit' (see appendix II for the programme of the day). The second meeting in 2006 focused on '(De)mediatizing southern Africa: HIV, Poverty and the State' (see appendix III for the programme of the day). Both meetings were characterized by interesting discussions and promising new acquaintances. However, the organisers regretted the fact that apart from the yearly DPRN-report, there would be no tangible output of the meetings to reflect the problems and insights resulting from them.

With support from the DPRN, SAVUSA and SANPAD therefore decided to work towards publishing a volume of proceedings from the third and final DPRN

meeting in 2007. The presenters of the day, combinations of people from the three designated groups, were asked to base their presentations on a pre-circulated written paper and then reconsider their work once more afterwards, in the light of the discussions and viewpoints that the presentations and papers would engender during the day. For an optimal result in terms of debates and input for the final papers, Adam Habib was willing to chair and facilitate the day.

We are happy to present you with the resulting proceedings in this book. We hope that they will provide the reader with an overview of the diversity in the southern African field, but that it will also offer best practices and ways in which professionals, whether they be academics, practitioners or policy makers, can work together and stimulate each other. All contributions cover themes that will appeal to academics, policy makers and practitioners alike.

The *first chapter* by Marja Spierenburg and John Belt provides a discussion of the power relations at play in private-public collaborations within the field of development cooperation.

Henk Molenaar and Marjoke Oosterom look at the debate about the potential of local knowledge (also referred to as 'indigenous' or 'traditional knowledge') for development in *chapter 2*. Their chapter analyses the role of various knowledges in development and reflects on the implications thereof for policy making.

In *chapter 3*, Anshu Padayachee and Ashwin Desai study the mechanisms underlying the 'crisis of expectation' that is arising in South Africa as critical questions are being asked about the country's transition and especially about the success of its own macro-economic programmes in terms of poverty and inequality.

In *chapter 4*, Paul Hebinck, Derek Fay and Kwandile Kondlo contest the general idea that land reform in South Africa represents a break with the past by exploring a counterclaim that contemporary land reform policy and practices in fact represent continuities embedded in the practices of state institutions.

The *next chapter* has Jan Kees van Donge and Melle Leenstra disputing the criticism on governance as a development concern, which is often considered illegitimate, irrelevant or ineffective. To do this they make use of four narratives on the relationship between the recipient country and the donor community: election observation, concern with corruption and constitutional reform in

Zambia, and a general overview of these relations in Zimbabwe.

In the *final chapter*, David Sogge, Bob van der Winden and René Roemersma employ a theoretical model based mainly on Habermas's idea of the public sphere, to portray civil society as a space, hence civil domain, rather than a set of organisations and actors, which is how donors and others conventionally see civil society. By means of this model the authors analyse some of the constraints and possibilities of political development, and the prospect for responsive governance, in Zimbabwe.

The publication of this book also gives us the opportunity to acknowledge the support and contributions of people in organizing the three DPRN meetings, and the final one in particular: Saskia Stehouwer and Henk Goede from SAVUSA and Nelke van der Lans and Colette Gerards from the Dutch office of SANPAD. Ultimate credits and thanks must naturally go to the DPRN, especially Mirjam Ros, for making these meetings possible and for their involvement and support, and to the various paper writers, presenters, discussants and participating audiences that made this series of three DPRN Meetings on southern Africa memorable. These proceedings are the tangible proof of that.

Amsterdam, February 2010