



Democracy and Rural Development in Post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract. The research addresses the contentious link between democracy and sustainable rural economic development in post-apartheid South Africa. Historically, in 1994, the democratic state in South Africa inherited a legacy of high economic inequality between the urban areas (*first* economy) and rural areas (*second* economy). Fifteen years into democracy: about 65% of the 48 million South Africans live in the rural areas; and 75% of the rural residents still survive under extreme poverty and are disconnected from the first economy. This paper argues that lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge keeps the rural residents out of the *first* national economy.

Keywords: Rural development, Democracy, Post-apartheid economy

1 Introduction

This discourse analyses the nexus between democracy and rural development in the post-apartheid South Africa. The country suffered over 350 years of colonialism; this historical epoch created and sustained a dual economy in the country. Aliber (2005: 3) succinctly describes the two economies as, “. . . on one hand, there was a globally integrated world of production, exchange and consumption (largely urban), and on the other, a constrained world of informality, poverty and marginalization (largely rural). . .” In 1994, a racially-based system of political power was transformed into a non-racial democracy; and the country achieved macro-economic stability through both monetary and fiscal austerity. However, South Africa still faces a high level of development

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