DE-AGRARIANISATION, LIVELIHOODS DIVERSIFICATION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN RURAL EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This case study of three rural villages in Matatiele district in the Eastern Cape, South Africa examines the extent to which the diversification of rural livelihoods and processes of social differentiation are interconnected. The study combines intensive and extensive research methods to explore livelihoods diversification and social differentiation in the villages of Litichareng, Mutsini and Thaba Chicha. The intensive research consisted of 36 life history interviews, a wealth ranking exercise and a focus group discussion. The extensive research consisted of a survey of 124 households. The study makes use of political economy concepts of class, power and inequality and argues that these concepts enhance the heuristic value of livelihoods approaches which have often been critiqued for under-theorising power and politics. In the contemporary capitalist world, particularly in the global 'South', livelihoods have increasingly become diversified as rural households combine agricultural and non-agricultural sources of income for both survival and accumulation purposes, often straddling the rural-urban divide. In the 'de-agrarianisation' thesis, livelihood diversification has been interpreted as entailing a shift from agrarian livelihood systems to non-agrarian modes of existence in the context of increased urbanisation and industrialisation. These kinds of large-scale processes have been unfolding in rural Matatiele, but this study argues that rural households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural sources of income and emphasises the continued importance of agricultural sources of income in rural livelihood systems. De-agrarianisation is cyclical and not unilinear, as some components of farming have remained important and resilient (homestead garden cultivation and livestock production) while other have declined (dry-land cropping in large arable fields). These shifts in agriculture occur against the background of state-sponsored, large-scale agricultural development schemes introduced to commercialise agriculture and reverse de-agrarianisation and fragmentation of rural livelihoods, but which have largely failed to do so. The challenge for scholars is how to characterise rural households, small-scale farmers, or 'peasants' in the light of highly diversified livelihood systems and their straddling of the rural and urban divide. This study uses a political economy approach and defines rural households that engage in small-scale agriculture as petty commodity producers in capitalism, combining class places of capital and labour and subject to social differentiation. The study argues that the highly diversified livelihood systems characteristic of rural households reflect a 'crisis of social reproduction' as rural households struggle to survive and accumulate. In this study it is argued that rural households are part of growing 'classes of labour' within contemporary capitalism.

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KEY WORDS

De-agrarianisation

Livelihoods diversification

Rural households

Social differentiation

Poverty

Inequality

Class formation

Agrarian change

Matatiele

Eastern Cape

DECLARATION

I declare that *De-agrarianisation, Livelihoods Diversification and Social Differentiation in Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Farai Mtero

Signed: ……..

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1. Introduction: De-Agrarianisation, Livelihoods Diversification and Social Differentiation in Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa.

1.1 Introduction

This study uses a political economy approach to explore the nature and dynamics of livelihoods diversification and rural differentiation in villages in Moeketsi, a small sub-district of the Matatiele District in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The study is located within approaches that explicitly acknowledge the centrality of politics and class analysis to the understanding of rural livelihoods. The increasing centrality of non-farm income to the reproduction and accumulation strategies of rural households is noted by many scholars in South Africa and elsewhere (Ellis, 2000; Bryceson, 1996 and 2002; Neves and du Toit, 2013), and this is another key focus. The study will thus explore the complex ways rural households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural income in the context of de-agrarianisation. It deals with two separate yet interrelated aspects of class formation in Southern Africa, that is, 'the diversification of livelihoods' and 'class differentiation' (O' Laughlin, 1996, 2001, 2002), and explores the interconnections between them.

1.2. Focus of the thesis

This study seeks to understand the nature and patterns of social differentiation within the context of increased diversification of livelihoods predominantly as a result of processes of de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation in the rural villages of Moeketsi, South Africa. De-agrarianisation is defined 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" (Bryceson, 1996:276) while de-peasantisation "is a specific form of de-agrarianisation in which peasantries lose their economic capacity and social coherence, and shrink in demographic size relative to non-peasant populations" (Bryceson, 2002:727). In South Africa, processes of de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation are often identified with apartheid/colonial land dispossession, and specifically the historic process of proletarianisation wherein peasants were divorced from the land in order to supply cheap labour to the capitalist mines and industries (Wolpe, 1972). In recent times the agricultural decline has

come to be associated with the inexorable capitalisation of agriculture, with small-scale farmers or rural producers competing with large agrarian capital in national and global value chains (Neves and du Toit, 2008).

However, there is also a body of evidence showing that decline in agricultural activities has not been absolute. Andrew and Fox (2004) study land use practices in the village of Nompa, in the Shixini area of the Eastern Cape using aerial photographs, archival materials and in-depth interviews and conclude that rather than a simple decline in agriculture there has been a shift in cultivation patterns. Thus while farmers have generally abandoned the cultivation of distant maize fields, there is evidence of increased intensive inter-cropping of maize and other food crops in homestead gardens. Fay (2010) reports similar findings in a study of cultivation trends in Mbashe local municipality's Xhora district in the Eastern Cape. This ethnographic study reveals that there have been long-term continuities in the expansion and intensification of cultivation in homestead gardens manifested in the diversity of crops cultivated in the gardens, in the cultivation of fruit trees, and the intensity of input application. These and other studies reveal a lack of unilinearity in the development of capitalism with no particular endpoint in sight, and in this instance, the lack of a decisive shift from agricultural activities to full proletarianisation in an increasingly urbanised and industrialised economy.

This study will examine diversification of rural livelihoods in Moeketsi villages, Matatiele. The study seeks to understand the extent to which households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods sources for survival and accumulation purposes. It is argued that processes of rural differentiation increasingly become blurred as rural livelihoods become fragmented over time. The study will therefore examine the extent to which livelihoods diversification renders processes of rural social differentiation much more complex than is often acknowledged.

1.3. Background and rationale of the Study

The legacy of apartheid has left South Africa with enduring structural inequality and poverty. Apartheid and its predecessors involved active dispossession that stripped assets such as land and livestock from the black majority while simultaneously denying people the opportunity to

develop new assets by restricting their access to markets, infrastructure and education (Carter and May, 1998:1). Historically, the role of former 'homelands' or designated Bantustans was to supply cheap labour power to capitalist mines and industries, yet here, as elsewhere in the world, they also became "dumping rounds, warehouses for surplus populations whose labour would never be required" (Li, 2009:70). Westaway (2012) discusses some socio-economic features that characterise the former homelands in South Africa. According to Westaway (2012:116) welfare transfers constitute the largest component of household income. In the last decade the government's welfare programme has expanded significantly and covers the rural areas more extensively. Thus, "welfare contributes substantially to the income of the poor, whereas wages do not" (Westaway, 2012:116). Westaway (2012) notes that in 2006/07, only 16% of the rural population between the ages of 15 and 64 were employed which means that 84% of this population were either unemployed or 'not economically active' which has become a euphemism for 'permanently unemployed' (Westaway, 2012: *ibid*). This state of affairs has been compounded by the crisis in the global economy typified by the recent global recession in 2008/09 which saw the South African economy shedding over a million jobs resulting in the decline in the employment rate from 45% to 41 %. The effects of the recession were particularly acute in the marginalised (rural) areas with the employment dropping to below 15% (Westaway, 2012:117).

This occurs against the background of various government interventions meant to stimulate development in the rural areas. The National Planning Commission (NPC) identifies agriculture as the primary economic activity in rural areas of South Africa (NPC, 2011). It is envisaged that this sector has the potential to contribute one million new jobs by 2030 (see NPC, 2011:197). With respect to communal areas in particular, the NPC (2011) notes that agriculture is a traditional livelihood asset to the rural poor especially when other sources of income fall away. While agriculture in the communal areas was undermined during apartheid, state support could see its real potential being realised. The NPC (2011) argues that with proper support and land use in communal areas agriculture has the potential to improve the livelihoods of 370 000 people (NPC, 2011:198). Cousins (2007a:231) argues that "a reconsideration of the agrarian question in the post-apartheid era requires us to frame it in terms of contemporary realities of structural poverty". Drawing from Bernstein's formulation of the agrarian question of labour, Cousins

(2007) frames the agrarian question in South Africa in terms of the 'agrarian question of the dispossessed'.

However, post-apartheid intervention in land reform and agricultural development have been characterised by key continuities as opposed to a decisive break with the past (Hebinck *et al*, 2011). The three legs of the state's land reform programme namely, restitution, redistribution and tenure reform have not always yielded good results. These programmes have had minimal impact in terms of alleviating poverty and facilitating rural development (Hebinck, *et al*, 2011; Lahiff, 2005). Some scholars have argued that the existence of the property clause in the Constitution has maintained racial privilege in land ownership in South Africa (cf Ntsebeza, 2007). Hall (2007) notes that the 'willing buyer, willing seller' principle has constrained land reform especially considering that this demand-led approach makes land reform contingent on the willingness of owners to sell at prices that grant applicants can afford. The high land prices of whole properties offered on the market and the grant size, which limited poorer applicants to R20 000 each, was also problematic (Hall, 2007). In addition, biases in favour of large-scale productive forms as opposed to small-scale farming are manifest in the land post-apartheid land reform programme. This is evident in two simultaneously operating discourses: 'leave existing land use intact', and 'do not subdivide the farm into numerous smaller farms' (Hebinck, *et al*, 2011:229).

Besides land reform, interventions in rural production have also taken the form of large-scale agricultural development schemes financed by government departments and parastatals. In this study, the field site is located in the Eastern Cape Province which has seen the implementation of 'massive' agricultural development schemes. In 2003 the Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP) was implemented. It required rural villagers participating in the scheme to consolidate their small arable fields to allow for large-scale commercial cultivation of maize. After its collapse it was replaced by another 'massive' maize scheme, sponsored by the Accelerated and Shared Growth initiative of South Africa, Eastern Cape (AsgiSA-EC). The AsgiSA maize scheme, like its predecessor, was meant to 'green the landscape' and reverse de-agrarianisation. Neither scheme achieved its intended objectives.

During my preliminary field work in 2010 it became clear that the MFFP had collapsed in many rural villages. It became evident that these massive maize schemes not only existed against the backdrop of the broader processes of de-agrarianisation, and diversification and fragmentation of rural livelihoods, but also that these interventions had little or no impact in terms of halting these large-scale processes. This was mostly because of their capital-centric logic which privileged the expanded reproduction of capital as opposed to meeting the social reproduction needs of participating households. My initial focus was on the differential impact of the MFPP on rural households, that is, to examine the extent to which the agricultural development scheme was accelerating rural differentiation by producing winners and losers. However, I resolved to shift focus and include the wider processes within which these massive maize schemes were being introduced. In this sense, the massive maize schemes became a piece of the puzzle of how to understand in the wider processes at work in the countryside. Accordingly my research now examines de-agrarianisation, livelihoods and social differentiation more generally rather than simply in relation to maize production schemes.

This study aims to make a contribution towards the understanding of agrarian change by situating rural livelihoods within the broader historical, social and economic processes that shape survival, reproduction and accumulation activities in the countryside. The study uses a political economy approach to explore the nature and dynamics of rural differentiation in South Africa's countryside. It has become increasingly apparent that industrialisation and the 'growth' of the 'formal' economy do not necessarily result in the absorption of more people into the formal labour market. Accordingly, "the inherited view that non-agricultural employment automatically replaces (or displaces) employment in farming in the course of modern economic development..." does not hold true (Bernstein, 2007:7). Instead evidence reveals that "non-farm activities and sources of income play an increasing role in the reproduction of households which retain some basis in land and/or farming, to a greater or lesser extent, and/or retain rural residence" (Bernstein, 2007:7). The study will thus explore the complex ways rural households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural income in the context of de-agrarianisation. It deals with two separate yet interrelated aspects of class formation in Southern Africa, that is, 'the diversification of livelihoods' and 'class differentiation' (O' Laughlin, 1996). Scoones (2009:185) argues that "politics and power must be central to livelihood perspectives for rural

development. Politics is not just context, but a focus for analysis in and of itself". Thus, "basic questions of political economy and history matter: the nature of the state, the influence of private capital and terms of trade, alongside other wider structural forces, influence livelihoods in particular places" (Scoones, 2009: 185). Scoones (2009) further argues that "this is conditioned by histories of places and peoples, and their wider interactions with colonialism, state making and globalization" (Scoones, 2009:185). Thus livelihoods are important in understanding the diversity and complexity of household strategies in their reproduction and accumulation activities. Yet it is critical to 'bring class back in' by emphasising and mapping out the tendencies in social differentiation. This enhances the heuristic value of the livelihoods method and allows it to be amenable to the study of the 'traditional' themes of political economy, namely class and societal inequalities.

1.4. Research problem and research questions

This study adopts agrarian political economy as its theoretical framework. Bernstein (2007:1) defines political economy as the "investigation of the social relations and dynamics of production and reproduction, property and power" (Bernstein, 2007: 1). According to Byres, there are three fundamental aspects of political economy vital to the analysis of the agrarian question, namely accumulation, the state and social class (Byres, 1995). Thus, accumulation or expanded reproduction is capitalism's historic mission and central dynamic (Byres, 1995:564). O'Laughlin (2009:199) asserts that "taking account of the dynamics of accumulation means attending to the structure of the economy" and this inevitably implies that "no agrarian question is purely about agriculture or rural life". Thus, 'tendencies at work in the countryside are important yet equally important are implications for accumulation outside of the countryside' (Byres, 1995:567). Similarly, O' Laughlin (2009) argues that "shifting patterns of accumulation in rural areas are related to both contradiction and change in class relations over time and to shifts in global patterns of accumulation" (O' Laughlin, 2009:200).

Analysis of the state is also an important aspect of political economy. Byres (1995) asserts that 'dominant classes (or classes emerging but not yet dominant) may need state intervention at certain decisive moments and even when they have secured their dominance they may still need the exercise of state power to maintain their position (Byres, 1995:565). Another important

aspect in political economy is class analysis. Byres (1995:564) note that "one cannot understand the roots, the causes, and the dynamics of capital accumulation, without a treatment of class". Thus, there is need for a careful examination of 'class structure, class relationships and conflict' (Byres, 1995:564). Yet Bernstein (2007) cautions that in capitalism the social relations of production and reproduction, property and power are *universally* but not *exclusively* relations of class (Bernstein (2007:1).

Murray (2001) notes that it is imperative to situate livelihoods within the broader 'structural context'. Writing on the methodological problems of 'anthropological political economy' Roseberry (1988:174) argues that one of the fundamental problems in conducting research is the constant theoretical and methodological tension between oppositions like global/local, determination/freedom, structure/agency'. Bernstein (2007:2) suggests four critical questions that can be deployed in the political economy framework to unpack these complexities. According to Bernstein (2007:2) "these questions are not restricted to the global national, their sites of application can extend from households to 'communities' to regional as well as national and global economic formations". Thus, the classic questions of political economy that address the class (and other relations) of production and reproduction are:

1. Who owns what? (social relations of different 'property' regimes)
2. Who does what? (social divisions of labour)
3. Who gets what? (social divisions/distribution of income)
4. What do they do with it, and how? (social relations of consumption, reproduction and accumulation).

Within materialist political economy, the concept of petty commodity production is of particular significance in understanding rural livelihoods, social differentiation and patterns of agrarian change. The concept is particularly useful in that it allows for exploration of the realities underlying 'ideal types' such as 'the peasantry', 'peasants', 'smallholders', etc. These descriptive categories have limited explanatory power. It is not possible, for instance, to understand causal processes of inequality through the use of such a category as 'smallholder', (Cousins, 2010). According to Bernstein (2007:5), "petty commodity producers combine the class 'places' or

locations of both capital and wage labour, hence they have to reproduce themselves as both". The concept of petty commodity production captures the heterogeneity of livelihood and accumulation activities characteristic of the current conjuncture of global capitalism where individuals and households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural sources of income. Thus, it is the inclusivity of the concept of petty commodity that makes it a useful analytical tool since it helps explain the empirical reality of 'diverse forms of livelihood activities' in the era of contemporary capitalism.

As has already been noted, reliance on both agricultural and non-agricultural sources of livelihoods across Africa has intensified with some scholars characterising it as 'a scramble in Africa to re-orient livelihoods' (Bryceson, 2002) in an increasingly uncertain and precarious environment. The research will use a political economy framework since it privileges power, politics and class which are vital to the understanding of how livelihoods (individuals, households or petty commodity producers) are implicated in broader structural processes of change**.** According to Murray (2001:1) the central problem for any livelihoods research is ensuring that 'empirical evidence at the micro-level is related to the analysis of historical, structural and institutional processes'. Through the analysis of rural livelihoods this research aims to:

1. Explore and understand the nature of social differentiation in rural villages of Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha in the Moeketsi area within the Eastern Cape.
2. Assess the role of non-agricultural or off-farm income in the reproduction and accumulation strategies of rural households and the impact of off-farm income on rural differentiation.
3. Examine the responses, survival, livelihood and accumulation strategies that households deploy in the context of declining agriculture and dysfunctional 'agricultural development' interventions.

The four key questions of political economy highlighted in this section may help to answer the above research questions at different levels of analysis. These include the household, local, regional or meso level and the macro scale. I now turn to the issue of research design.

1.5. Research design and methodology

This study combines both 'intensive' and 'extensive' research designs (Sayer, 1992: 243) in seeking to unpack the nature of social differentiation and class formation in the context of diversified livelihoods in rural Matatiele. This study adopts the realist approach to research which stresses the need to be wary of methodological imperialism (Sayer, 1992). One form of methodological imperialism is evident in, on the one hand, a restricted view of social science which privileges the search for regularities and hypothesis testing (scienticism). Advocates of this approach often derogate practices such as ethnography, historical narrative or explorative research, for which there are often no superior alternatives. On the other hand, there is a form of methodological imperialism which tries to reduce social science wholly to the interpretation of meaning. Sayer (1992:4) argues that critical methodology should not restrict social science to a narrow path that is appropriate to only a minority of studies.

Accordingly, this study has drawn on both intensive and extensive research designs and used a range of methods for gathering. Extensive research is primarily about the search for regularities in the belief that large numbers of repeated observations allow us to grasp relations that are significant. In extensive research a population is identified and groups defined taxonomically, i.e., on the basis of shared attributes, and quantitative relations between these variables are sought. Extensive research tends to ignore or does not directly address *causal* groups in which particular individuals (persons, institutions, etc) are actually involved. These are groups or networks of specific people, institutions, discourses and things with which they interact (Sayer, 2000:20). Intensive research traces the main causal relationships into which individuals (not necessarily individual people) enter and studies their qualitative nature as well as their number (Sayer, 2000:20). Intensive research seeks to understand what makes things happen in specific cases. In a more ethnographic form, intensive research seeks to understand what kind of universe of meaning exists in a particular situation.

The preliminary phase of this study was intensive in nature. I carried out interviews with government officials and village people in various parts of the Eastern Cape where the massive maize schemes had been implemented. After selecting a research site (Moeketsi villages) I

conducted a survey (involving extensive research) of 124 rural households, gathering data on demographic features, asset ownership and agricultural production. Asset groups or categories were created (taxonomic groups) as proxies of rural differentiation. I also conducted a wealth ranking exercise, which is participatory in character (and involves intensive research) where villagers discuss their own perceptions of wealth and poverty. This yielded a local set of criteria for wealth ranking. I also conducted 36 life history interviews (also intensive) to explore the trajectories of accumulation and livelihood pathways in the area of Moeketsi. Finally, this research utilised the focus group method. This involved doing interviews with a group of four senior members (2 women and 2 men) from the rural villages to ascertain changes in land use patterns across the years. The overall approach in this research was to utilise these different components of both extensive and intensive research to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of agrarian change in the Moeketsi area.

1.6. Outline of thesis

Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature on the agrarian question. This chapter briefly sketches the main ideas on the classic agrarian question in the Marxist tradition and proceeds to discuss the agrarian question in the contemporary capitalist world. While the historical antecedents of the agrarian question are important, it is equally important to understand the agrarian question within the current conjuncture of global capitalism and imperialism. In this chapter I also discuss the agrarian question in South Africa, primarily focusing on the development of capitalist relations of production in the countryside or agrarian transition. This chapter discusses the challenges of defining or locating rural households in capitalism. I note that defining rural households and small-scale farmers as petty commodity producers properly specifies the historical and structural position of these entities in capitalism. The class-analytic perspective, I argue, achieves this since it defines households and small-scale farmers as petty commodity producers. While there are studies of social differentiation, for instance, in the former homelands, these do not always properly define rural households within the capitalist system as is suggested by the petty commodity production concept. I proceed to note that the class-analytic perspective also provides an important entry point for understanding underlying processes and tendencies within capitalism. However, the contemporary capitalist world is increasingly characterised by ‘intensification of fragmentation of livelihoods’ as a manifestation of a crisis of

social reproduction within capitalism. Livelihoods are diverse and fluid, and this hybridity may be difficult to capture with the rigid or static class categories often produced in class-analytic studies. I suggest that Bernstein's (2010) formulation of 'classes of labour' offers a more plausible means to examine the conditions of existence and reproduction of rural households or petty commodity producers in global capitalism.

Chapter Three reviews the wider literature on rural livelihoods. The livelihoods literature has partly emerged to challenge the functionalist analyses in the Marxist tradition which tend to overemphasise proletarianisation in the analysis of agrarian change. However, in the process the traditional commitments of Marxist analysis, social class, politics, power and accumulation have received little or no attention. However, the livelihoods concept may be strengthened and its explanatory power enhanced if class analysis, politics and power are adequately problematized in livelihoods research. It is also noteworthy that livelihoods diversification has largely occurred as people struggle and negotiate to survive and/or accumulate as a response to the effects of historical and enduring processes like proletarianisation, especially in 'Africa of the labour reserves' (see O'Laughlin, 2002). These processes, proletarianisation and the diversification of livelihoods, should thus not be seen as binary opposites.

The methodology chapter (Chapter Four) outlines the research process of the study, particularly the reasons underlying the shift of focus from examining a massive maize scheme, MFPP and broadening my study to explore de-agrarianisation, livelihoods diversification and social differentiation. I look at the massive maize schemes as government interventions in rural production in a wider context where the processes outlined above are unfolding. The question is the extent to which these schemes are an appropriate response to the decline of agriculture and fragmentation of livelihoods. I also describe the various research tools used in this study, namely the survey method, wealth ranking exercises, life history interviews and focus group discussions.

Chapter Five on the land question in Moeketsi, settlement and land tenure maps out the historical context of the Moeketsi villages. My focus in this chapter is on the existence of large land holders (the surrounding commercial farms, Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and Mariazell Mission) alongside the densely populated villages, which are confronted with land shortages.

This chapter also discusses land tenure issues in the rural villages of Moeketsi. It is shown here that land administration and allocation have been dominated by traditional leadership. I also examine the 'betterment' interventions in the area and their impacts on agriculture. The chapter also discusses shifts and changes in land use practice in the villages in the context of 'betterment' interventions and the resultant alteration of the landscape. Betterment interventions involved the setting up of grazing camps and demarcating arable fields so as to rationalise land use amongst the African population.

Chapter Six examines agricultural development schemes implemented during the during the homeland era and also in the post-apartheid era in the Eastern Cape Province. The focus is on the shifts and continuities evident in these agricultural development schemes. The chapter demonstrates that there are striking similarities in the design of these large-scale agricultural schemes and in the manner in which they have been implemented.

Chapter Seven presents empirical data on agricultural production in Moeketsi villages. Agricultural production consists of livestock production, cropping in larger fields, and the cultivation of homestead gardens. The data show that households have dropped out of cropping in large arable fields and shifted their resources to the cultivation of homestead gardens. The cultivation of homestead gardens remains fairly robust in Moeketsi villages. Livestock production has also remained resilient in a largely constrained environment where there is a shortage of grazing land and stock theft is prevalent. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter suggests that while agricultural production might be in decline, not all components of farming are in collapse. The broader tendencies of de-agrarianisation need to be contextualised so as to see which components of farming are in decline, or remain resilient or fairly robust, as is the case in Moeketsi.

Chapter Eight on livelihood diversification and differentiation presents empirical evidence on rural livelihoods diversification and social differentiation in the villages of Moeketsi. The thrust of this chapter is to analyse diversified rural livelihoods through the lens of social differentiation. In this chapter, the extent to which rural livelihoods, in their diversified form, are implicated in processes of social differentiation is examined. I use quantitative statistical data to identify

different asset categories, life history interviews to map out livelihood trajectories and pathways, and wealth ranking results based on participatory research approaches to examine the relationship and interconnection between diversified livelihoods and social differentiation in the study area.

The conclusion, Chapter Nine, summarises the research findings and discusses the extent to which class formation is unfolding, considering the general tendency for households to not only diversify their livelihoods, but also the increased fragmentation of livelihoods in contemporary settings. In global capitalism the fragmentation of livelihoods has become a common trend as households experience a crisis of reproduction. This is often located in the failure of the generalised capitalist system to provide a living wage. I focus my conclusion on the theme of accumulation in the countryside, specifically 'accumulation from below'. I however, conclude that both 'accumulation from below' and 'accumulation from above' are heavily constrained in this locality. This chapter also provide some lessons for policy.

Chapter 2: Classic agrarian question and the agrarian question in South Africa

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will review the wider literature on the agrarian question in the contemporary capitalist world. I will briefly discuss key ideas on the classic agrarian question and proceed to examine how these ideas are useful in understanding processes of agrarian change in the current conjuncture. This is followed by a review of the wider literature on the agrarian question in South Africa. The focus is on the key ideas with regard to the processes of primitive accumulation and the generalisation of commodity relations in South Africa. The South African transition to capitalism has often been characterised as the 'Prussian' path considering that it unfolded on the basis of the dispossession of the peasants through 'extra-economic' means and subsequent establishment and dominance of large agrarian and industrial capital.

However, the predominance of the 'Prussian' path or 'accumulation from above' in South Africa does not preclude the existence of accumulation from below and by implication social differentiation. I will examine how the concept of petty commodity production is a useful analytical tool for understanding the historical and structural position of rural households in capitalism. Finally, this chapter will discuss the increase in fragmentation of livelihoods in the contemporary capitalist world and how this presents challenges for class analysis. Class-analytic perspectives alone may not be enough to make sense of this complexity. This calls for new ways of studying rural households. The idea of 'classes of labour' and their 'intense fragmentation' as a result of 'social reproduction pressures' under conditions of capitalist globalisation and imperialism seems useful in specifying the conditions of existence and reproduction of rural households in the global South in contemporary times.

2.2. Karl Marx and the Agrarian Question

In this section I briefly review some of the key ideas on the agrarian question from Marx's analysis of the English path of agrarian transition to the subsequent Marxist ideas on the agrarian question and transition to capitalism in writings by Engels, Kautsky and Lenin. Bernstein

(2006a) notes that the agrarian question begins its career with Karl Marx's analysis of the dissolution of feudal relations and penetration of capitalist relations of production in agriculture in the sixteenth century England. Marx uses the case of England to demonstrate how agrarian capitalism originates from the process of primitive accumulation. What distinguishes Marx's analyses is his insistence that wealth by itself is not capital because capital is essentially a specific social relation (Wood, 2002). This therefore means that the accumulation of capital alone does not result in the development of the capitalist system as is conceived in the earlier writings of classical political economy. In classical political economy, the emphasis was on the 'commercialisation' model which assumes that the prelude to modern capitalist society was a process of prior accumulation. In this process of accumulation, wealth was amassed through commercial acumen and frugality eventuating in a sizeable amount of wealth which allowed for substantial investment to be made (Wood, 2002:35).

According to Wood (2002) it is not incidental that in his analysis of the emergence of capitalism in England, Karl Marx uses the phrase 'the so-called primitive accumulation'. Marx deploys this phrase precisely to dispute the plausibility of the commercialisation model as espoused by classical political economists like Adam Smith. For Marx, 'primitive accumulation' does not simply mean the collection of wealth, the mere quantitative expansion of commerce and wealth. Instead one important aspect is the 'transition or the qualitative shift from one social system with its own laws of motion', "to a very different one with a very different dynamic and very different conditions of existence" (Wood, 2002: 36). According to Wood:

> The essence of Marx's critique of 'the so called primitive accumulation' (and people too often miss the significance of the phrase 'so-called') is that no amount of accumulation, whether from outright theft, from imperialism, from commercial profit, or even from the exploitation of labour for commercial profit, by itself constitutes capital, nor will it produce capitalism. The specific precondition of capitalism is a transformation of social property relations that generates capitalist 'laws of motion': the *imperatives* of competition and profit maximisation, a *compulsion* to reinvest surpluses, and a systematic and relentless *need* to improve labour-productivity and develop the forces of production (Wood, 2002:36-37).

Wood (2002) further argues that the 'real primitive accumulation' is about the transformation of social property relations which subsequently propelled rural transformation and the development

of capitalist relations of production in the English countryside. Most important, in the emergent agrarian relations landlords increasingly derived rents from the commercial profits of capitalist tenants, while many rural producers were dispossessed and became wage labourers (2002: 37).

2.3. Engels understanding of the agrarian question

In his book *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* (1894), Engels observed that the peasant question remained critical in many parts of Europe except in Great Britain and Prussia East of Elbe. Engels (1894) noted that "from Ireland to Sicily, from Andalusia to Russia, and Bulgaria the peasant is a very essential factor of population, production and power". However, in the case of Great Britain and Prussia East of the Elbe, Engels (cited in Byres, 1996) noted that "capitalism had effectively eliminated the peasantry as a significant economic and political force". Peasantries might linger on in these regions, but not, he argued, as an effective force, that would have constituted an agrarian question for Marxist theoreticians and strategists (Byres, 1996:20).

Although the peasants continued to exist in many parts of Europe they were bound to be swept away by the incessant expansion of capitalism. This was also a context where the internationalisation of agriculture was fast developing, marked by the flow of cheap grain from other parts of the world posing serious viability problems for the European peasantry. The main task for the Socialist parties of Europe was therefore to save peasants from the inevitable fate of becoming irrelevant by winning them over to join forces with the proletarians in the cities. It was therefore necessary, according to Engels, that the European peasantry adopt a political response to this emergent agrarian crisis. However, 'the doomed peasant (was) in the hands of his false protectors' – big landowners who 'assumed the role of champions of the interests of small peasants' (Engels, 1950:382). The political party of the urban working class, which had a 'clear insight into the interconnections between economic causes and political effects', therefore had to become a 'power in the countryside' (1950:382) by adopting a programme that reflected the political needs of the peasantry and, in so doing, forming an alliance with the peasantry. That was the road, argued Engels, to political power in both town and the country (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185).

According to Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:185), Engels' emphasis was on "the political implications of the agrarian question – that, in a sense, the emerging internationalisation of the food system as a result of imperialism was undermining peasant livelihoods in Europe". Essentially, for Engels the agrarian question was thus an agrarian question for and about labour and the expression of its agency (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185). Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010) conclude that Engels' concern was not with "the emergence of agrarian capital, rural capital accumulation, or capital more generally as had been Marx's central concern". In fact, these broader, more structural, themes were raised later in the writings of Karl Kautsky and Vladimir Lenin (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185).

2.4. Karl Kautsky's and Lenin's rendering of the agrarian question.

Both Lenin and Kautsky viewed capitalism as "being a simultaneously progressive and dispossessive system" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010) and were primarily concerned with 'the relationship between peasant life and the transformations brought about by the consolidation of capitalist relations of production in societies in which they lived, including the penetration of capitalist relations of production in agriculture' (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185). Kautsky (cited in Banaji, 1976) formulates the question agrarian in the following terms: "Whether, and how, capital is seizing hold of agriculture, revolutionising it, making old forms of production and property untenable and creating the necessity for new ones".

Lenin and Kautsky observed that the development of capitalist relations of production in the countryside, the transition to capitalism in agriculture, "did not conform to Marx's deterministic formulations" (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). It was evident that "primitive accumulation did not render petty commodity production obsolete but small peasant plots continued to exist alongside large capitalist farming" and "served the interests of capital by subsidizing the social reproduction of labour and, hence, lowering wages" (Moyo and Yeros, 2005:19).

For Kautsky (see Banaji, 1976), the continued existence of small-scale farming in a predominantly capitalist environment was not an anomaly. Small-scale farms 'competed' with large-scale farms with superior techniques, by working extremely hard for a return to labour that was below wages and by accepting a total consumption per capita which was below that of a

farm worker (Patnaik, 1979). Small-scale farmers remained resilient under adverse conditions and did not seek alternatives owing to the uncertainty involved in the option of full time wage-work, and also the desire to remain independent producers rather than work for a master. Small-scale farming played a complementary role to large-scale capitalist production especially in a context where the latter was of the 'Junker type'. In this case, owners of the large estates run on a capitalist basis allocated small land allotments to farm workers to assure themselves of an always available labour supply (Patnaik, 1979:409-410).

Lenin (1972) distinguished two broad paths of agrarian capitalist development, that is, capitalism from above (the Prussian path) where a class of capitalist farmers emerges from the feudal landlord class, and capitalism from below (the American road), where the source is a differentiated peasantry (Byres, 2012:14). According to Lenin (1972: 239), with the Prussian path, the feudal landlord economy slowly evolves into a bourgeois, Junker landlord economy, which condemns the peasants into decades of the most harrowing expropriation and bondage, while at the same time a small minority of *Grossbauern* ("big peasants") arises (Lenin, 1972:239). Conversely, with the American road, there is no landlord economy and the peasant not only predominates but becomes the sole agent of agriculture and ultimately evolves into a capitalist farmer (Lenin, 1972:239). Lenin concludes that the American road, or accumulation from below, "secures the greatest degree of prosperity possible for the peasants…". The development of capitalism and growth of productive forces in the smaller farmer path is wider and more rapid than peasant reform carried out the landlord way, through the Junker road (Lenin, 1972:240).

2.5. The agrarian question in the contemporary world

While the classic understanding of the agrarian question may provide insights into processes of agrarian change in the contemporary world, the context in which the classic agrarian questions were posed differs markedly from the current conjuncture. As O' Laughlin (2009:199) argues 'the context of global capitalism in which the contemporary agrarian question is posed is markedly different and so will be the answers'. For Bernstein, (2006a) in examining the agrarian question, there is need for "an agrarian political economy less confined by its historic sources and preoccupations, and more committed to problematizing what is changing in today's

(globalising) capitalism" (Bernstein, 2006a:458). Cousins (2013) notes that in the classical debates the agrarian question is resolved when agriculture is fully capitalist, or when industrialisation has occurred. This is the case whether or not agriculture has undergone a capitalist transition (Cousins, 2013:118). This is problematic considering the existence of rural social formations in countries where neither of the transitions mentioned above has occurred as is the case in many parts of the world. The current conjuncture is also characterised by renewed and expanded capitalist globalisation and the rolling back of the state. These dimensions are important in rethinking the agrarian question (Cousins, 2013:118).

Bernstein's (2006a) formulation where he distinguishes between the agrarian question of capital and the agrarian question of labour has been influential in the debates on the agrarian question in present times. According to Bernstein (2006a) the agrarian question of the Marxist tradition is, in effect, the agrarian of capital. However, "the effect of the profound changes since the 1970s that we term 'globalisation' is that there is no longer an agrarian question of capital on a world scale, nor a 'peasant' question in any helpful sense, even though the agrarian question has not been resolved in much of the 'South'" (Bernstein, 2006a:450). In interpreting Bernstein's formulation Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:264) note that the key issue in this argument is that "the development of the forces of production on a global scale has, in the past 50 years, meant that, globally, agriculture has effectively become 'decoupled' from the process of capital accumulation". This is illustrated by "the extent to which agricultural production is located on the periphery of global accumulation, which of course is driven by manufacturing and services, and particularly financial services, on a world scale" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:264). Accordingly, the agrarian question of capital has been resolved since transnational capital no longer requires access to surplus agricultural resources in order to facilitate accumulation'. There are also 'non-rural and non-national sources of capital that may be used to drive national capital accumulation' (Akram-Lodhi and Kay: *ibid*).

Bernstein (2006a) poses a question that "if there is no longer an agrarian question of capital in the globalising world of this century, might there another question (or questions)?". He proceeds to argue that they may be an agrarian question of labour (*ibid*). With respect to the agrarian question of labour, Bernstein (2006a:453) argues that "from the end of the 1970s (if not earlier),

it makes little sense – at least from the point of view of political economy – to refer to 'peasants' in the world's contemporary capitalism". According to Bernstein (2006a) "if there are agrarian questions of labour in the 21st century, they have little connection with any 'peasant question' constituted in the earlier epochs – the different times and places – of the formation of modern capitalism on a world scale, or indeed with the 'classic' agrarian question" (see Bernstein, 2006a:453-454). The key point here is that "the internationalisation of capital has 'decoupled' transnational capital from national labour regimes, which are becoming more fragmented even as they become less capable of providing a livelihood" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:264).

Byres (2012) questions the argument that the agrarian question of capital has been resolved in the contemporary capitalist world. For Byres (2012:15) "there is a danger of 'world system determinism', whereby one reads from the global a series of conclusions with respect to national social formations without substantive treatment of those social formations". To illustrate his point, Byres draws attention to the examples of China and India. With respect to China and India, it could be argued that "their respective industrialisations have always been contingent upon the need to overcome obstacles to capitalist transformation in the countryside; while the prospects continue to exist, in each case, of agrarian transitions constituting a route to comprehensive industrialisation" (2012:15).

While international capital is undoubtedly important for accumulation and industrialisation, Byres (2012) notes that this does not diminish the importance of domestic sources of accumulation in both large and small economies. Economic activities in the countryside, especially agricultural production, remain an integral part of domestic sources of accumulation. Without a vibrant home market and the contribution of the countryside to the overall economy it is quite difficult to conceive how 'comprehensive industrialisation' can be attained. In his words:

> Then, in large economies, at least, if comprehensive industrialisation is to proceed the necessary accumulation cannot, in any full sense, be external. It must be based largely upon domestic sources, and these, in part, will need to be financial flows from the countryside. The sheer size of these economies means that, within their borders, even global capital will have to confront an agrarian question in all three senses. Moreover, this argument is likely to have some validity, too, in smaller economies where industrialisation has made more limited progress (Byres, 2012:15).

Byres (1986) argues that the transformation of the countryside through agrarian capitalism remains central to the development question in many economically backward countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The contribution of the countryside remains relevant to industrialisation in these countries in spite of the predominance of global capital. According to Byres (1986), "a central distinguishing characteristic of economic backwardness is an unresolved agrarian question. This unites poor countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America…" (Byres, 1986:6). As Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010) note, agriculture still has an impact on the prospects for capitalist accumulation within states and globally.

In a recent systematic review of studies on land grabs, Oya (2013) makes critical points concerning the applicability of the twin agrarian question of capital and labour. Oya (2013) argues that both the agrarian question of capital and the agrarian question of labour remain relevant in examining agrarian change in the contemporary capitalist world. Below I recapture some of his arguments since they bring to the fore some key issues with respect to the relevance of the twin agrarian questions of labour and capital. Oya (2013) cautions that Bernstein's formulation on the agrarian question of capital is often misread. Bernstein (cited in Oya, 2013) argues that global capital is still bypassing agrarian transformations in today's poor countries, giving credence to the point that the agrarian question of capital, on a global scale, has been resolved. Thus, accumulation on a global scale proceeds without industrial transformation taking place in poor countries of the South. What this means is that industrial transformation of the rural South is no longer a *necessary* condition for capital accumulation on a global scale (Oya, 2013).

What is often missed in Bernstein's formulation is the qualification, *necessary*, meaning that this does not discount the possibility of some form of industrial transformation happening within social formations in the South. Nevertheless, the recent land grabs do not necessarily constitute "a dramatic structural shift in the relation between (agrarian) capital and labour in Africa" (Oya, 2013:1553). According to Oya "...a toning down of the impressionistic portrayal of global capitalists investing in land in Africa could *potentially* provide support for Bernstein's point that global capital is still bypassing agrarian transformations in today's poorest countries, if not enough attention is given to other processes of rural class formation taking place before the rush" (Oya, 2013:1554). Oya proceeds to argue that:

> [...t]he focus on land grabs has shed light on what is going on under the radar, namely a steady and in some cases rather accelerated process of capitalist accumulation at a smaller scale than usually catches the media's attention, whereby 'national capitals' are assuming an important role alongside and sometimes in joint ventures with global capital (Oya, 2013).

According to Oya (2013:1554) this has important implications for 'agrarian questions of capital' rather than the rising interest of global capital in farmland. According to Oya (2013:1554), "it shows that processes of class formation in the countryside are underway, often blurring the boundaries between the rural and the urban, since many of these 'national capitals' straddle the rural-urban divide". In this review, Oya (2013) calls for more rigorous application of these concepts in different contemporary settings. In his words there is need for more:

> ...attention to the twin agrarian questions of capital and labour through more in-depth and rigorous research on socio-economic impact, from survival at the one hand of the social spectrum to accumulation at the other end. Given the neglected importance of 'national capitals' in these processes and to their interaction with classes of labour in rural Africa...more attention [needs to] be paid to the 'internalist problematics' of the agrarian question to use Bernstein's terms (Oya, 2013).

Following Bernstein, Cousins (2007a) suggests that the agrarian question of capital was resolved in South Africa through 'accumulation from above' (Prussian path) as is evident from the highly concentrated, massive scale and productive capacity of capitalist agriculture in the country. For Cousins (2007a:231), what confronts us today is 'an agrarian question of the dispossessed' and this "requires us to frame it in terms of contemporary realities of structural poverty". Cousins (2007a) describes the nature of the challenges with respect to the 'agrarian question of the dispossessed'. This author notes that "the linkages between rural and land-based livelihoods and formal and informal jobs in small towns and urban areas are still important but massive job shedding from the core economy means that contradictory trends are evident" (Cousins, 2007a:231). Thus, "on the one hand, the functional articulation of wage income and rural production is reduced, and people look to farming and resource harvesting. On the other hand, cash is still needed for the purchase of agricultural inputs and assets such as livestock…" (Cousins, 2007a:231). For Cousins, the 'agrarian question of the dispossessed revolves around constituting a 'new' class of emergent petty commodity producers from within the ranks of the desperately poor (Cousins, 2007a:232).

In my own study, the agrarian questions of capital and labour provide important entry points in understanding the nature and trajectory of agrarian change. For instance, the large-scale state-sponsored agricultural programmes meant to achieve agrarian transformation usually involve interventions in rural production by a constellation of state capitalist enterprises, agribusinesses and other contractors as well as consultants. In essence, the nature of these interventions may be seen as 'accumulation from above' wherein different 'classes of capital' (Bernstein, 2010) are involved in the extraction of surplus. Interventions in rural production are transformative and the only question is the nature of that transformation: whether it entails improvements in the livelihoods and accumulation prospects of the targeted beneficiaries or accumulation imperatives by large capitals take precedence. In line with Oya's (2013) argument, it is rather appropriate to approach these agrarian questions with rigorous empirical evidence. The agrarian question of labour is equally important. As has already been noted, the 'centering of labour' (Li, 2011) as the basis for understanding socio-economic impacts of large-scale agricultural investments is important in examining the nature of accumulation in the countryside.

In addition, there is merit in Bernstein's (2001, 2006a, 2010) characterisation of some rural households and other small-scale petty commodity producers as constituting 'classes of labour' under conditions of imperialism or global capitalism. In my own context, it is evident that rural households increasingly diversify their livelihoods, combining both agricultural and non-agricultural income sources and straddling the rural-urban divide. These debates constitute some of the conceptual parameters that guide my analysis of rural livelihoods in the rural villages of Moeketsi. I now turn to the agrarian question in South Africa.

2.6. Primitive accumulation and capitalist development in South Africa

The process of primitive accumulation which Hall (2012:1188) aptly defines as the way in which capitalist social relations are created and reproduced has been central to understanding the agrarian question in South Africa. There is a body of literature on South Africa which explores what Li (2007) terms the "the transformational sequence of appropriation-displacement-exploitation-accumulation". In *Capital*, Marx identified these processes as necessary for the expansion of capitalist social relations in the countryside and the attainment of industrial

transformation. Bernstein (1996:4) notes that despite instances and forms of commoditisation evident in South Africa's colonial history, the most decisive development that shaped the trajectory of the country's capitalist development is the 'minerals revolution'. The 'minerals revolution' followed the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s in Kimberley (in the Northern Cape) and intensified in the 1880s when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal. However, the exploitation of gold was to be the most decisive in determining the trajectory of South Africa's capitalist development[1]. According to Bernstein (1996), the geological conditions of gold mining, specifically, the low grade ores in deep and widely-dispersed deposits, necessitated high rates of exploitation of labour and large investments of capital.

In this period, the different fractions of capital – agrarian and mining capital – thus coalesced in their pursuit of cheap labour. The rapid economic expansion of Transvaal and the subsequent population increase "created an enormous home market for capitalism" (Morris, 1979:7). As a result, there was not only enhanced growth in various sectors of the economy but this phase of capitalist expansion created an impetus for massive commodity production in the countryside (Morris, 1979:7). Both mine owners and potential (or actual) commercial farmers demanded a qualitatively increased supply of labour, and a supply that was cheap, under conditions where the majority of the potential black labour force retained its access to independent subsistence in rural reserves (Legassick, 1977:178). According to Legassick (1977:177):

> As a result of the mining of gold (dominated by metropolitan capital) the South African ruling alliance of merchants and farmers was transformed into what Stanley Trapido has termed the alliance of 'gold and maize' –the Chamber of Mines and the emerging capitalist farmers in the highveld. Simultaneously the centre of gravity of South Africa, economic, political, and cultural shifted from Cape Town to the Transvaal.

The discovery of minerals was thus a defining moment in South Africa's capitalist transformation. The creation and reproduction of capitalist social relations is hinged on "the relationship between labour and capital, the social relation of production that constitutes the

[1] For instance, Morris (1979) notes that the impact that the discovery of gold had on social relations, particularly in the Transvaal was stupendous, reflecting, more than anything else the, the immense shock of a social formation suddenly penetrated by a massive insertion of imperialist monopoly capital.

distinctive character of capitalism" (Brass, 1994:257). Consequently, the creation of 'free' labour, in a double sense, became an integral component of the emergent capitalist apparatus. According to Brass (1994:257) "the designation of the freedom of wage labour has a double aspect: labouring subjects ("direct producers") are "freed" from access to the means of production that secure their reproduction". Subsequently, the separation from means of production means that the direct producers "are (and must be) free to exchange their labour-power with capital for wages with which to purchase subsistence" (Brass, 1994:257). These two aspects of wage labour capture the difference between capitalism and pre-capitalist modes of production. According to Brass (1994:257):

> The first aspect signals a moment of *dispossession* of pre-capitalist producers, part of the process of primitive accumulation. Dispossession is the condition of the formation of a class of free wage labour which is the second aspect, or moment of *proletarianisation* (Brass, 1994:257).

Brass (1994) further notes that the key difference between the pre-capitalist mode of production and the capitalist system is that extra-economic compulsion is critical to the exploitation of labour in pre-capitalist modes of production. Conversely, in the capitalist mode of production, proletarians are owners of the commodity labour-power which they exchange with capital under the "dull compulsion of economic forces" (Brass, 1994:257).

2.7. Perspectives on the agrarian question in South Africa

This section examines the different perspectives on the agrarian question or transition in South Africa. The analysis of the agrarian question in South Africa has seen the emergence of various strands of thought. These are the radical political economy perspective and neo-populists. The radical political economy perspective has within it diverse views on the nature of capitalist transformation in South Africa (see Wolpe, 1972; Morris, 1979; Keegan, 1986; Bundy, 1988). However, the common denominator within the radical political economy perspective is the proletarianisation thesis (Neocosmos, 1989). The neo-populists argue that small-scale farming is technically more efficient than large-scale commercial farming hence the agrarian structure dominated by large-scale commercial farms is unsustainable. In South Africa, the neo-populist views are often identified with Lipton's work on 'two agricultures' (1977).

2.8. Radical political economy perspective

Levin and Neocosmos (1989) assert that there are important and significant differences within the radical political economy framework. They distinguish between the more "structuralist" political economists (e.g. Wolpe, Morris) who emphasize the broader and structural processes of capitalist transformation and the more "relativistic historians" (e.g. Bundy, Keegan) whose emphasis is what Murray (1989) characterizes as the 'view from below'. However, the radical political economists subscribe to the proletarianisation thesis. Thus, the predominant thinking in this literature is that "the peasantry in Southern Africa had, *on the whole*, been systematically proletarianised during the colonial period (at the latest by the 1930s)" (Neocosmos, 1993:26). The historic process of proletarianisation, largely through coercive legislative measures, ensured a steady supply of cheap labour for the mining industries (and white settler agriculture) in both South Africa and Rhodesia (Neocosmos, 1993:26).

Wolpe's (1972) preservation and dissolution thesis has been widely cited in explaining South Africa's transition to capitalism. Neocosmos (1987:37) notes that Wolpe's arguments consist in basically asserting that South African capitalism "historically and structurally 'conserved' certain aspects of the indigenous mode of production and 'dissolved' others because it was in its interests to do so". According to Wolpe:

> In the earlier period of capitalism (approximately 1870 to the 1930s), the rate of surplus value and hence the rate of capital accumulation depended above all upon the maintenance of pre-capitalist relations of production in the Reserve economy which provided a portion of the means of reproduction of the migrant labour force. This relationship between the two modes of production, however, is contradictory and increasingly produces the conditions which make impossible the continuation of the pre-capitalist relations of production in the Reserves. The consequence of this is the accelerating dissolution of these relations, and the development within South Africa, towards a single, capitalist, mode of production in which more and more of the African wage-labour force (but never the whole of it) is 'freed' from productive resources in the reserves (Wolpe, 1972:432).

For Wolpe (1972), as capitalist penetration intensifies, shifts in the social formation occur and these are evident in the transfer of the exploitation and contradictions between the different modes of production (pre-capitalist and capitalist mode of production) to the relations of

production within capitalism. Wolpe's (1972) 'preservation' and 'dissolution' thesis was followed by criticism for a number of reasons. Neocosmos (1987) asserts that Wolpe's formulation adheres to a descriptive dualism and gives primacy to the interrelation between modes of production. The articulationist agreement implies that each mode of production cannot reproduce itself without the other. This contradicts the modes of production concept since a mode of production constitutes a self-reproducing totality. Therefore, without such a self-reproducing quality, the mode of production cannot constitute a totality and is of little heuristic value.

Cooper (1993) argues that the preservation and dissolution thesis constitutes Marxism without class struggle. For example, "wage rates and the structure of migration are reduced to derivatives of capital's requirements...while the struggles of workers to shape the timing and conditions of labour and cultivation are ignored" (Cooper, 1993:101). In this case "function becomes cause, and we are ill-equipped to understand how migratory labour was obtained, the complexity of the relationship between the spheres of production and reproduction, the problem of disciplining and socialising workers" (Cooper, 1993:101). Neocosmos (1987:38) argues that another shortcoming in the preservation and dissolution thesis is that class divisions and other social cleavages (gender, patriarchy, seniority, etc.) are seen as secondary to the sectoral divisions between the modes of production.

Morris (1979) has conceived the generalisation of capitalist social relations in South Africa's countryside in terms of paths of transition to capitalism. Morris (1979:11) argues that in South Africa the dominant tendency in the countryside was the development of 'capitalism from above'. This was evident in the "transformation of large 'feudal' Boer capitalist farms into Junker Boer landlords". Morris (1979:11) further notes that, in the South African context, the transition to a capitalist landlord economy was augmented by sustained state intervention alongside "what still appeared to be feudal political and ideological relations of domination/subordination in the countryside to expropriate the African squatter peasantry and grind them into a rural proletariat" (Morris, 1979:11). However, it must be pointed out that the transition to capitalism through the 'Prussian' path was never a foregone conclusion. The dominance of the Prussian path in the South African social formation was only a result of class

struggle, hence the victory of one class over another in the transition to capitalist social relations. Morris (1979:77) argues that there remained a possibility for capitalist development to be based in varying degrees on the African peasantry. According to Morris (1979: 12):

> There were two possibilities here. Either the poor, middle and landless peasantry could arrest the development of capitalist landlord economy by sweeping away Junker Boer landlordism and through a democratic revolution, redividing the land. Or, alternatively, a rich peasantry could emerge at the side of Boer Junker landlordism within the confines of the Prussian path. The facts of the matter in the end however were that Boer landlord capitalist economy prevailed entirely outside the Reserves. There was to be no place allocated to the African peasantry outside the Reserves except as a rural proletariat (Morris, 1979:12).

Contradictions within the dominant classes (e.g. the Boer Junkers and imperialist capital) did exist as is exemplified by the Anglo-Boer war. Yet, contradictions between dominant fractions of capital always unfold against the background of a primary contradiction in the emergence of capitalist social relations, that is, the class struggle between the dominant and the dominated (Morris, 1979:61). It is for this reason that after the Anglo-Boer war, imperialist capital, through various interventions, played a major role in resuscitating the Boer Junkers. The resuscitation of the Boer Junkers after the Anglo-Boer war contributed to undermining the economic base of the African peasantry and possibilities for emergence of alternative paths to the Prussian path in capitalist transformation in the countryside (Morris, 1979).

From a more relativistic perspective, Keegan (1986) offers 'a view from below' to analyse capitalist transformation in South Africa. Keegan (1986:196) focuses on the arable districts of the Southern Highveld, in the Orange Free State[2] to critique the Prussian model especially its unproblematic application in examining the transformation of rural South Africa. Keegan (1986:196) observes that in the classic Prussian case "the feudal aristocracy itself took charge of capitalist production forcibly turning serfs into labourers". In the South African context, the paradigmatic Prussian model is problematic. In its original sense, the Prussian model also assumes that there is "an evolutionary, internal transformation of the land owning class into a class of capitalist farmers, by a sustained and self-generating process of accumulation" (Keegan,

[2] Keegan notes that in this area the capitalisation of agriculture had proceeded furthest and the exploitation of the soil was most intense by 1914 (Keegan, 1986:186).

1986:196). Also, the tendency to equate the landlord-tenant (labour tenancy) relationship with explicit capital-wage labour relation in the context of rising industrial capitalism and urban markets relationship is not sustainable. The tendency has been to assume that labour tenancy would evolve and merge into explicit wage labour (internal proletarianisation).

For Keegan (1986), in the South African context sharecropping does not assume the 'quasi-feudal' relationship associated with the pre-capitalist past. Sharecropping in the early stages of South Africa's industrial case was essentially a compromise between whites and blacks. One the one hand, the whites, while controlling most of the land, lacked sufficient capital to acquire equipment. One the other hand blacks who had the labour, resources and skills to fully exploit the land had limited control over the land. The 'seigneurial' image of sharecropping where the wealthy, exploitative land owner controls a large impoverished tenantry as was the case in Europe, Latin America or Asia does not neatly fit the South African experience (Keegan, 1986:198).

Keegan (1986:196) also argues that "capitalist farmers of the Highveld in the twentieth century were not exactly descendants of the landowners of the mid-nineteenth century". The point here is that, for Keegan (1986:196) "the old Boer landowner and extensive pastoralist of the 1860s was more likely to be amongst the victims of the industrial revolution than amongst its beneficiaries". A huge proportion of capital invested in agricultural enterprises was imported from elsewhere, mostly accumulated in non-agricultural activities. As a result, the progressive farmers of the 20th century were more likely to be new settlers of British or colonial origins as opposed to the old Boer land owning class. What this means is that capital accumulation was not necessarily self-sustaining and did not proceed in an evolutionary trajectory (Keegan, 1986:196-197).

In his thesis, Bundy (1988) argues that far from being traditional and backward, the South African peasantry responded positively to the markets opportunities that arose with the emergence of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. These 'peasants' would eventually be transformed into "a reservoir of cheap, right-less and largely migrant labourers" (Bundy, 1988:3), a process which spelt an end to the initial period of prosperity. Bundy (1988:239) notes that "after 1870, mineral discoveries and the economic changes that they generated created

conditions that permitted a rapid spread of peasant production, but that also set in train forces that ultimately inhibited and suppressed peasant production". As industrial capitalism mainly in the form of mining flourished, a home market developed offering opportunities for the African peasantry to participate in the enlarged market. According to Bundy:

> There was a virtual 'explosion' of peasant activity in the 1870s which affected the lives of the great majority of the Cape's Africans, and the rise in productivity most clearly observable before 1870 in the Ciskei was repeated in the Transkei. Moreover, for smaller numbers of Africans, access to capital and to larger land holdings, and the successful adoption of new productive techniques, among other factors, created a class of small commercial farmers and large peasants, who by any index, responded vigorously and effectively to the new economic activities (Bundy, 1988:67).

The African peasantry flourished in its response to economic opportunities and pressures to the extent that it surpassed most white pastoralists-cultivators, taking advantage of their ability to use land more efficiently than their white counterparts. However, this initial period of prosperity was undercut by the adverse state interventions meant to prop up white farmers while dispossessing the African peasant of their means of production. The 1913 Land Act was particularly devastating in the way it dismantled and constrained peasant production. Bundy (1988:240) notes that, "this cluster of political and economic forces, evident in the years, 1890 to 1913, underlay a series of legislative pressures upon the peasantry. Access to land was made more difficult; taxes, rents, and other fees were raised; the control of various forms of 'squatting' was intensified".

The expansion of the peasantry soon set in motion processes of socio-economic differentiation in the countryside. This became evident in the emergence of a small but relatively well-off group of farmers. As Bundy observed:

> all peasants were food producers but not all food producers were peasants. One is confronted with another class much smaller in numbers, but individually more powerful; one meets with increasing frequency in the seventies and eighties African 'progressive farmers – men whose mode of production was more capitalist than peasant. They were men who had consolidated early peasant success or who invested income from other sources in agriculture; they were often conspicuously 'loyal' to the colonial government. Their farms – almost always in land they had purchased outright and held as individual proprietors – might be quite large and were distinctive for the amount of re-investment of

> capital in the shape of fencing, walling, irrigation, improved stock breeds, and for the adoption of mixed farming (Bundy, 1988:92).

The continued expansion of the capitalist sector and increased demand for cheap labour as well as pressure from the white farmers eventually saw the once-prosperous peasant sector being dismantled and entering a state of decline. However, some shortcomings have been identified in Bundy's thesis of the rise and fall of the South African peasantry. Lewis (1984:4) argues that Bundy's thesis is "not located within any theoretical and historical understanding of the dynamics of precapitalist modes of production in Southern Africa". Specifying the mode of production of a particular social formation requires one to clarify the underlying relations which produce particular social structures. To illustrate, 'the form of separation of direct producers from the means of production and the manner in which these relations persist over time' may generate insights on the mode of production (Lewis, 1984:3). However, Bundy's formulation of "the 'rise' of the peasantry is not related in any systematic way to its origins in the pre-capitalist mode of production" (Lewis, 1984:3). Consequently, not much in Bundy's work is revealed about how these productive units were polarised. The residual effects of the class structure of the pre-capitalist mode of production are not addressed. The extent to which the ability of individual households to participate in emerging produce markets of the colonial economy is mediated by the class tendencies of the previous mode of production is not clear (Lewis, 1984:8).

Beinart (1982) focused on the impact of the broader processes of capitalist expansion on the rural homesteads in Pondoland. Beinart's (1982) study documents changes in the structure of rural homesteads, the re-organization of production and shifts in power within these homesteads as migrant labour became entrenched amongst the Pondo in Transkei. The predominance of migrant labour resulted in generational tensions between older and younger men mainly over the control of wage income and the cattle purchased from it. Younger men became less reliant on the older generation for marriage cattle and could easily mobilize resources to build their own homesteads (Beinart, 1982).

The above perspectives explore the complexities associated with capitalist development in the countryside. However, these perspectives have often been criticized for not adequately dealing with the process of rural socio-economic differentiation. There is a general failure in these

studies to transcend the creation/destruction of the peasantry framework of analysis (Levin *et al*, 1994). Some scholars within the Marxist school of thought have argued that it is important to acknowledge the significance of the historic process of proletarianisation in the development of capitalism. However, it is equally important to realise that proletarianisation does not exclusively define the conditions of existence and reproduction of rural households or peasants. Alternatively, rural households or the so-called peasants in capitalism may be conceptualised as petty commodity producers combining class places of labour and capital and also subject to differentiation (see Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985; Levin and Neocosmos, 1989; Bernstein, 1986; Neocosmos, 1993 Levin *et al*, 1994; Cousins, 2010).

2.9. Neo-populist perspective on the agrarian question

The neo-populist perspective which uncritically argues for the existence of the family farm has also made some contributions to the debate on the agrarian question in South Africa. Levin, Russon and Weiner (1994) argue that the neo-populist perspective has tended to homogenise black rural areas by portraying them and their inhabitants as victims of a rapacious system of racial oppression. This, for the neo-populists, has "distorted the market mechanism and prevented the emergence of communities of egalitarian, utilitarian small-scale producers, who would, all things being equal, compete with and often outsmart inefficient large-scale producers" (Levin *et al*, 1994:235). Bernstein (2009:68) argues that "advocacy of the intrinsic value and interests of the small producer, both artisan and 'peasant', as emblematic of 'the people' arises time and again as an ideology, and movement, of opposition to changes wrought by the accumulation of capital". According to Bernstein (2009) "this tendency is evident in both the original epicentres of such accumulation (North Western Europe, North America) and those other zones exposed to the effects of capitalist development through the integration in its expanding and intensifying world economy, from the 19th century Russia to the South of today". Some of the advantages often mentioned in defence of the small family farm include the deployment of family labour in farming (lower supervision and transaction costs) and the factor endowments/comparative advantage of poor countries (plentiful labour, scarce capital). These advantages are also supported in conjunction with arguments about equity (the employment and income distribution effects of small scale farming) (Bernstein, 2009:69).

In the case of South Africa, Lipton's work has been widely associated with the neo-populist view of the agrarian change. According to Lipton (1993:374), 'small-scale family farms are more labour intensive than large farms and thus provide more jobs per hectare per unit of output'; conversely, 'large farms tend to require more capital per hectare and/or per unit of output'. In the South African context, black farmers have produced much more, especially per unit of input, than is generally acknowledged. Any deficiencies in the performance of black farmers may be attributed to lack of incentives and social injustices and not bad farming (Lipton, 1977). South African black farmers did not prosper because of the overt political measures taken to coerce blacks into working for whites, rather than producing on their own account. Also, the discriminatory allocation of economic resources which rigged the market against blacks acted as a disincentive to farming. Thus, it was not worthwhile for black farmers to put more inputs and efforts into farming (Lipton, 1977).

For Lipton (1977), Wolpe's (1972) widely-accepted argument on the existence of reserves is fallacious since it discounts the relevance of the concept of opportunity. The assumption in Wolpe's thesis is that the marginal product of labour is zero. What this means is that there are no competing employers and the worker consequently has no choice. The worker has zero opportunity cost, both in relation to output on the land and in relation to other jobs (Lipton, 1977). According to Lipton (1977) 'the existence of the reserves has not reduced the bargaining power (opportunity cost) and led to lower wages for blacks'. In fact, "South African blacks (partly because they had land, partly because they had alternative jobs) did not come forward to work on the mines". In the main, "recruits came from among poorer black outside South Africa, who had lower incomes, lower opportunity cost and therefore less bargaining power". Lipton (1977) notes that "within South Africa it was the poorer blacks who went to the mines, not those whose domestic product meant they could 'afford' to work for less". In this respect, ownership of land is not a disadvantage; but not having enough land and not being able to develop it is (Lipton, *ibid*).

Levin and Neocosmos (1989:233) note that implicit in Lipton is the notion of individual and rational choice. According to these authors:

> ‘Choice’, like ‘viability’, in the abstract implies homogeneity, and overlooks the fact that different classes and different individuals make choices for different reasons. The development of capitalism restricts and shapes possible choices: those who sell their labour-power, like those who accumulate, do not elect to do so in a voluntaristic manner. Social classes have a social life independent of the individuals who belong to them. They are not constituted by individuals whose decisions incidentally coincide (Levin and Neocosmos, 1989:223).

What is more problematic with Lipton’s thesis is that she acknowledges that ‘black areas are agriculturally deficient’ owing to ‘social injustice and state intervention that subvert the operation of the free market’. Yet her solution to this does not seem to go beyond encouraging black farmers to produce labour-intensive commodities under free market conditions. However, it is not possible to follow this path of capitalist development without intervention by the state (Levin and Neocosmos, 1989:233). The problem with the neo-populist perspective is that it does not specify the position of these small-scale family farms in capitalism. Small-scale farms in this view are a homogenous and undifferentiated category. The failure to adequately problematise rural socio-economic differentiation is a limitation to both the radical political economy and the neo-populist perspectives in South Africa. On the one hand, the radical political economy perspective tends to privilege the linear proletarianisation thesis. One other hand, the neo-populists see the family farm as homogenous and undifferentiated hence they cannot account for the existence of these productive units in capitalism.

2.10. The concept of petty commodity production

The previous section reviewed literature on peasants in the context of capitalist transformation in South Africa’s countryside. These different perspectives are, to a large extent, attempts to gain an understanding of ‘the conditions of existence and reproduction’ (Neocosmos, 1993) of rural households in the face of the transformational processes associated with transition to capitalism. However, some of these perspectives are not rigorous enough to understand the place of rural households, both in history and the current conjuncture. The history of proletarianisation in the ‘Africa of labour reserves’ (Amin, 1976) and the reality of intense capitalisation of agriculture under global capitalism renders such concepts as the ‘peasant mode of production’, and ‘peasants’ irrelevant.

Formulations such as ‘peasants’, ‘the peasantry’, ‘peasant mode of production’ also essentialise peasants and view them as remnants of earlier historical epochs and modes of production (Bernstein, 2001:26). The ‘articulationist’ argument, for instance, holds that the “persistence (and ‘exploitation’) of peasant production on a significant scale is part of, or especially representative of, the subordinate (and ‘exploited’) ‘backward’ capitalist economies of the imperialist periphery” (Bernstein, 2001:27). A more plausible approach is one that investigates “the constitution and reproduction of peasantries through the social relations, dynamics of accumulation and division of labour of capitalism/imperialism, without any assumption of either anachronism or ‘backwardness’” (Bernstein, 2001:27).

In the context of Southern Africa, the proletarianisation thesis became predominant in the narrative of capitalist transformation. The emphasis on proletarianisation in mapping out the nature of capitalist transformation in the countryside has often been formulated in a way that assumes an incessant, unilinear process that ultimately leads to the inclusion of the ‘peasants’ as proletarians in the capitalist industrialized economy. However, the triumph of ‘accumulation from above’ by way of the ‘Prussian path’ does not discount the existence and possibility of ‘accumulation from below’ (Neocosmos, 1993). For instance, Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985:175) argue that Marx’s account of peasant proletarianisation is much more sophisticated than is usually maintained. The interpretation of Marx’s account of capitalist development as one of linear proletarianisation of the peasantry derives from the tendency to conflate capitalism with industrialism. This practically amounts to confusing a social relation with an essence of technology. Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985:175) argue that “what is fundamental to capitalism as a mode of social production is a historically specific antagonistic social relation between capital and wage-labour”. The process of proletarianisation is a reality yet it does not exclusively and fully explain the conditions of existence and reproduction of rural households in the countryside. According to Neocosmos:

> …my point is that it is theoretically and empirically illegitimate, as well as politically disastrous, to elevate the proletarianisation process above all other aspects of the historical development of capitalist relations in the rural areas of Southern Africa. Nor for that matter is it accurate or theoretically correct to restrict a conception of capital

> accumulation to accumulation from above, despite the fact that this process may dominate, and to ignore accumulation from below (Neocosmos, 1993:26).

Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985) discuss the challenges of characterising or locating, historically and structurally, peasants within capitalism. These authors argue that within the capitalist system small-scale productive forms may be defined as petty commodity producers. Their point of departure in unpacking the concept of petty commodity production is an understanding of the capitalist system. Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985:156) define capitalism "as generalised commodity production founded upon the contradictory relation between capital and wage-labour. Capital and wage labour are two sides of the same social contradiction and among other things, individually represent functions, class places or class bases indispensable to capitalism" (Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1995:156). Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985:177) note that Marx's conception of petty commodity production in *Theories of Surplus Value* is far more satisfactory in that it identifies the structural position of petty commodity producers under capitalism in a manner that transcends notions of "primitivism, peasantness, impoverishment or cultivation according to a simple reproductive logic". Instead, there is emphasis on the combination in petty commodity production of the functions of both capital and wage-labour within a single individual or household. According to Marx (cited in Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985:177):

> The independent peasant or handicraftsman is cut up into two persons. As owner of the means of production he is the capitalist, as labourer he is his own wage-labourer. As capitalist he therefore pays himself his wages and draws his profit on his capital; that is he exploits himself as a wage-labourer, and pays himself in the surplus value, the tribute that labour owes to capital.

Bernstein (2001:29) notes that once the historic process of 'primitive accumulation' or 'forcible commercialisation' occurs this soon gives way to 'the dull compulsion of economic forces'. According to Gibbon and Neocosmos (cited in Bernstein, 2001:29):

> [To] suggest that a social formation is capitalist by virtue of being founded on the contradictory on the contradiction between wage-labour and capital is not to assert that all – or even the majority of – enterprises in this social formation will conform to a 'type' in which capitalists and wage-labourers are present... what makes enterprises, and more generally social formations, capitalist or not, is... *the relations which structurally and historically explain their existence*... what has to be shown in order to 'prove' the capitalist nature of such social formations is that the social entities and differences which

> form [their] social division(s) of labour... are only explicable in terms of wage-labour/capital relation.

As a result of commodification, capitalist penetration and the internalisation of capitalist social relations (commodification), as noted above, 'peasants' are constituted as petty commodity producers within capitalism. In Africa and Asia these processes had occurred by the end of the colonial era (see Bernstein, 2001:29). Bernstein (2010:103) is in agreement with the view that small-scale farmers in contemporary capitalism are essentially petty commodity producers combining the class "places", or locations, of both capital and labour. To illustrate, in farming capital is in the form of land, tools, seeds, fertilizers and other chemicals while labour, on the contrary is the form of families and households. Bernstein (2010) further argues that the combination of class places in individuals/households is a "contradictory unity". According to Bernstein (2010:103) these class places are not distributed evenly within farming households. This is a result of such factors as the gender division of property, labour, income and spending. There is also an inherent contradiction between the need to reproduce the means of production (capital) and to reproduce the producer (labour). In other words, petty commodity producers have to, on the one hand, direct income (including from borrowing) towards the replacement and fund of rent. On the other hand, other imperatives are the need to distribute income towards the funds for consumption and generational reproduction (which are often gendered) (see Bernstein, 2010:103).

Petty commodity producers also tend to differentiate as a result of the 'dull compulsion of the market'. Within capitalism some petty commodity producers "manage to accumulate productive assets and reproduce themselves as capital, engaging in expanded reproduction" (Bernstein, 2010:104). These may be characterised as emerging capitalist farmers and correspond to Lenin's "rich peasants". Bernstein (2010:104) notes that some peasants are "able to reproduce themselves as capital on the same scale of production, and as labour on the same scale of consumption (and generationally)". This may be characterised in Marxian terms as simple reproduction and this category of petty commodity producers corresponds to Lenin's middle farmers (Bernstein, ibid). Finally, "those who are struggling to reproduce themselves as capital, hence struggling to reproduce themselves as labour from their own farming and subject...to a

simple reproduction squeeze" are poor farmers and correspond to Lenin's poor peasants (see Bernstein, 2010:104).

What is clear is that within capitalism some individuals and households or small-scale farming enterprises (petty commodity producers) "manage to gain and retain control over the means of production while others (usually the majority) lose control" (Neocosmos, 1993:43). Unlike the classic peasants, petty commodity producers increasingly operate in precarious socio-economic conditions and have become multi-occupational drawing livelihoods for both reproduction and accumulation from agricultural and non-agricultural sources, often straddling the rural and urban divide. As Bernstein argues:

> ...the great majority of 'peasants' of today are not exclusively engaged in farming but combine petty commodity production...with a range of other economic activities. That is to say, they rotate between different locations in social divisions of labour constituted variously by agricultural and non-agricultural branches of production, by rural and urban existence, and by exchange of labour power as well as its combination with property in petty commodity production (Bernstein, 2001:31).

Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:178) also view small-scale farming or 'peasants' under capitalism as petty commodity producers. They note that these 'small-scale petty commodity producers' operate in precarious and volatile conditions which pose a threat to the viability of these activities. For Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:178) the 'small-scale petty commodity producers' exist on the basis of "allocating small stocks of both capital and labour... operating as both petty capitalists of little consequence and as workers with little power over the terms and conditions of their employment" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:178). In the light of these pressures, petty commodity producers are part of the growing ranks of 'classes of labour' (Bernstein, 2010) who are increasingly experiencing downward pressures on their reproduction, survival and accumulation endeavours in the contemporary capitalist world.

2.11. Rural Social differentiation in the Transkei

Having introduced the concept of petty commodity production I now briefly turn to the theme of social differentiation. Previous research on rural social differentiation in the former homelands exists. Yet, not all of these studies not always been successful in terms of defining the structural

position of rural households in capitalism. Peters (2004) makes pertinent remarks on the subject of social differentiation in Africa in general. According to Peters (2004) researchers across Africa are generally in agreement on the reality of social differentiation. Yet there is no single interpretive model for its analysis. As noted in the section on the definition of petty commodity production the challenge lies in specifying, 'historically' and 'structurally', the position of rural households in capitalism. In the case of South Africa there are studies which have emphasised social differentiation in the countryside. Scholars increasingly noted that in spite of the predominance of the 'Prussian' path and the historic process of proletarianisation, the rural population cannot been seen as uniformly oppressed and undifferentiated (Neocosmos, 1993).

In Mabua, Matatiele, Eastern Cape, Spiegel (1990) finds that time of settlement for households has an influence on differentiation. Those who had long been settled in the area had managed to develop complex social networks through which they were able to find employment and also to ensure their rights to village resources (Spiegel, 1990:145). Segar (1984:15) argues that "poverty in the South African rural periphery (or anywhere else) is not a uniform state"; thus "pockets of wealth can exist in generally depressed and impoverished areas...". Based on empirical evidence from St. Paul village, Matatiele Eastern Cape, Segar notes that that one key factor dividing the 'haves' and 'have-nots' was access to cash income. However, it was apparent in this study that while land alone was not sufficient for securing a family's livelihood, cash income was (Segar, 1984:11). The research revealed that households with access to land but with no material resources including cash could not cultivate their fields and gardens. In contrast, households without fields but with resources in the form of cash or invested cash (e.g. tractors or oxen) tended to engage in fairly lucrative sharecropping arrangements.

Redding (1993) presents evidence of differentiation in Mthatha, Transkei, based on the existence of a small class of capitalist farmers or a middle[3] peasantry. While colonial expansion destroyed the thriving African commercial farmers and the rich peasantry, this process was not absolute. A small number of peasants may have survived this process. Redding (1993:514) argues that a

[3] Redding's definition of the middle peasantry is problematic. In his formulation, the middle peasants are a 'middle' class in the sense that they were caught in the middle between the poverty and political exclusion of the majority of Africans and the relative prosperity and political inclusion of much of the white population (Redding, 1993:514). Some of these Africans were middle in the sense of being entrepreneurs and employers, but most were clerks, teachers, and policemen and their class position may be called petit bourgeois (Redding, ibid).

small number of Africans continued to farm in the reserves and often combined agriculture with commercial jobs and small businesses. Innes and O' Meara (1976:77) also note that the establishment of the Bantustans also provided conditions for accumulation on the part of state bureaucrats and their clients. After the departure of the white farmer who had settled in some districts of the Transkei (e.g. Mt Fletcher, Maclear, Ongeluksnek and Indwe) some black farmers were settled on these farms. This existence of this class of black commercial farmers had the possibility of promoting sustained accumulation.

Some studies have used the concept of 'household developmental cycle' to understand differentiation in the labour reserves (Spiegel, 1980, 1982). The argument for 'the developmental cycle' perspective on rural differentiation emanates from the observation that "the structural relation of a family and its members to the system of migrant labour and to domestic productive resources changes over time as a result of the internal dynamics of household structure" (Ferguson, 1994:132). For, instance a household which seems to be wealthy and prosperous at one time may in later years slide into poverty when the breadwinner is no longer employed in the mines owing to old age. Access to remittances by a household hinges on the ability of household members (especially men), to obtain wage employment. Being employed also depends on the age and health of the prospective worker (Ferguson, 1994).

The studies highlighted above form part of the body of evidence confirming the differentiated nature of the rural population. However, as has already been suggested, their challenge lies in specifying the structural position of rural households in capitalism. I now turn to the class-analytic perspective which has been utilised by some scholars to examine rural social differentiation in contemporary capitalism.

2.12. Class-analytic perspective and social differentiation

In trying to grapple with the challenges highlighted above, some scholars have utilised the class-analytic perspective which conceptualises rural households, smallholders or small-scale farmers as petty commodity producers in capitalism combining class places of capital and labour (Neocosmos, 1993; Levin *et al*, 1994 and Cousins, 2010). These studies have yielded typologies which identify different class categories which rural households fall into depending on the

degree of their access to wage labour and their utilisation of agricultural resources. Working in the class-analytic tradition, Levin *et al* (1994:243) also develop a typology of households. They identify socio-economic classes which essentially refer to "the structural position which agents occupy in the social structure of production and not perceived social identity". Levin *et al* (1994:243) note that "the socio-economic classes which constitute these categories are produced by social relations entailing processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus as well as social relations of land ownership, access to and engagement in wage labour". In their typology, there are the petty bourgeoisie, petty capitalists, worker-peasants, allotment-holding wage workers and the rural proletariat (Levin *et al*, 1994:242).

Cousins (2010) also conceptualises rural households and small-scale producers as petty commodity producers and uses the class-analytic perspectives to create a typology. In his schema, Cousins (2010) identifies six categories of households namely, supplementary food producers, allotment-holding wage workers, worker-peasants, petty commodity producers, small-scale capitalist farmers and capitalists whose main income is not from farming. The strength of the class-analytic perspective is in examining the underlying processes and tendencies which have an influence on the structural or class position of households. However, the contemporary capitalist world is characterised by an increase in the complexity and fluidity of the strategies rural households deploy in their quest to survive and accumulate. The class categories often identified in class-analytic perspectives tend to be rigid and static in the light of livelihood complexity and hybridity. The hybridity and complexity of the survival and accumulation strategies of rural households is captured in the livelihoods perspective.

The livelihoods perspective has been criticised for not adequately problematising power, politics and by implication (social) class. However, if properly contextualised or historicised and if power and political dynamics as well as processes of class formation are explored livelihoods analysis may offer rich insights into processes of agrarian change and the emerging rural social structure. Bernstein's (2001, 2006a, 2010) formulation of 'fragmentation of classes of labour' is a useful way of examining rural households considering them in terms of their 'historical' and 'structural' position in capitalism while taking into account the hybridity and fluidity that has come to characterise their survival and accumulation strategies.

The current conjuncture is thus characterised by the "intensification of the fragmentation of classes of labour" wherein "the growing classes of labour pursue their reproduction in increasingly precarious conditions" (Bernstein, 2006b:403). According to Bernstein (2006b) "households that farm typically combine farming with working for wages and a range of precarious 'informal sector' (survival) activities subject to their own forms of differentiation and oppression along the lines of class, gender, generation, caste and ethnicity" (Bernstein, 2006b:403). Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:278) characterise this tendency as "fragmentation without full proletarianisation as livelihoods strategies reconfigure". Thus, "it is now common for rural livelihoods to be constructed from a plethora of fragmentary and insecure sources: petty commodity production in farming, to be sure; but also through the sell of temporary and casualised waged labour, both on and off-farm" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:179). In the following chapter, I review the wider literature on rural livelihoods.

2.13. Conclusion

This chapter briefly sketched the key ideas on the classical agrarian question. I then examined the contemporary debates on the agrarian question particularly highlighting some of the key arguments by Bernstein and how these may be useful in examining agrarian change in the contemporary capitalist world. I also discussed the South African literature on agrarian transition and capitalist development. The section on the agrarian question in South Africa has identified some of the key arguments by the radical political economists and the neo-populists. One of the key limitations in this literature is the prominence of the proletarianisation thesis while rural social differentiation is not adequately examined and problematized. This has been to a large extent rectified by the class-analytic perspective which adequately problematises the structural location of rural households in capitalism. However, in recent times there is increasing complexity and fluidity in the way rural households construct livelihoods. It is in capturing the fluid nature of livelihood construction that the class-analytic perspective tends to be limited. Drawing on Bernstein's (2006a) formulation of the agrarian question of labour, I suggest that the 'classes of labour' concept may have more explanatory power in examining the incessant fragmentation of livelihoods as rural households face a crisis of reproduction under capitalism and imperialism.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Rural Livelihoods

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the wider literature on rural livelihoods. The chapter briefly discusses the definitional aspects of the livelihoods concept. The chapter attempts to problematise rural livelihoods by highlighting some of the arguments on the need to seriously consider class analysis in livelihoods research. These perspectives argue that Marxist forms of analysis which privilege social class, power and politics remain relevant and may enhance the analytical power of the livelihoods method. The chapter reviews empirical livelihoods studies which have grappled with the themes of livelihoods diversification and social differentiation and their interconnection. In this chapter, I also re-emphasize that the concept of petty commodity production is useful in specifying the historical and structural position of rural households, small-scale farmers and 'peasants' in global capitalism. I also note that the incessant fragmentation of livelihoods under conditions of global capitalism and imperialism may be understood as the fragmentation of classes of labour experiencing a social reproduction crisis occasioned by the failure of the capitalist system, globally, to provide a living wage.

3.2. Rural livelihoods: definition of concept

The study of rural livelihoods has a long history and some of the earlier studies include the work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Zambia. However, it was only in 1992 when the term 'rural livelihoods' was popularized through the Chambers and Conway Working Paper for the Institute for Development Studies (see Scoones, 2009). It is also around the same period that the livelihoods framework was widely adopted by various actors in the development industry. Scoones (2009:175) notes that the Chambers and Conway 1992 working paper became the basis of what later came to be known in the 1990s as the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). According to Chambers and Conway (cited in Scoones, 2009:175):

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.

The assumption is that people draw on different livelihood assets, which are filtered through structures and processes and become livelihood strategies in pursuit of various livelihood outcomes (Hadju, 2006:57). According to Hadju, these outcomes not only include monetary outcomes but also other outcomes, for example, a sense of being empowered to make better choices (Hadju, 2006:*ibid*).

The appeal of the livelihoods framework was its ability to challenge the dominance of orthodox macro-economic policies which had invariably failed to bring about development. Scoones (2009:172) argues that livelihoods approaches have fundamentally challenged single-sector approaches or mono-disciplinary perspectives to solving complex rural development policies. Livelihoods analysis cuts across the more conventional approaches to looking at rural development which focus on defined activities, for instance, agriculture, wage-employment, farm-labour and small-scale enterprise. One of the main challenges with conventional approaches in theory and policy was their top-down approach and failure to allow for ordinary voices. However, livelihoods approaches have been praised for their focus on complex local realities which are seen as an ideal entry point for participatory approaches to inquiry, with negotiated learning between local people and outsiders (Scoones, 2009:172).

3.3. Problematizing rural livelihoods: challenges and possibilities

In this study one of the key themes is the importance of understanding rural differentiation and the tendencies in class formation. However, studying rural inequality is often complicated in the light of the multiple sources of livelihoods which rural households draw on for survival and accumulation. The wider literature on rural livelihoods acknowledges the diverse nature of livelihood sources amongst rural households (Ellis, 2000; Bryceson, 1996, 2002). However, one of the key weaknesses in most livelihoods studies has been the neglect of class analysis and social inequalities (Scoones, 2009). In this chapter I review some of the key debates on rural livelihoods. My emphasis is on the need to understand rural livelihoods within the context of rural inequality. This means that it is not feasible to see access to livelihoods (success or failure on the part of individuals or households) as based on the capacity of individuals or households to capitalize on livelihood sources at their disposal. Instead, construction of livelihoods is mediated by power structures, relations of inequality and exploitation. Some of these arguments will

become apparent in Chapter Eight which presents the empirical data on rural livelihoods, diversification and differentiation.

As Bernstein (2006b) notes, the diverse and contradictory nature of rural livelihoods in contemporary capitalist countries requires a new analytical language and approach. Livelihoods research confronts numerous challenges and some of these include the question of reconciling the local and global, or grappling with different levels of analysis, namely micro-, meso- and macro-scale (Murray, 2001). Others have noted the tendency in livelihoods research to overlook basic questions of political economy, for example, social class, power and politics (O' Laughlin, 2001, 2002; Scoones, 2009). In spite of some these challenges, the rural livelihoods concept provides an important avenue for examining the nature of socio-economic changes in the countryside. This study situates rural livelihoods within the political economy framework and uses the petty commodity production (PCP) concept to understand the diverse reproduction and accumulation strategies rural households employ in the context of global capitalism. I argue that the PCP concept provides the analytical tools needed to grapple with the aforementioned challenges in the study of livelihoods in contemporary capitalism.

While the livelihoods framework has some limitations, these may be overcome by deploying these methods in a nuanced and careful manner. If used in a grounded manner and situated within an appropriate theoretical framework, livelihoods methods can potentially yield rich insights into the dynamics and trajectory of socio-economic change in the countryside (O' Laughlin, 2001, 2002; Scoones, 2009). Scoones (2009) notes that there are areas of emphasis or new priorities critical to re-energizing livelihoods research, namely politics, scale and dynamics.

For Murray (2002:5), a grounded livelihoods analysis needs to study the poor in relation to the experience of other social classes. It is for this reason that it becomes imperative to put social relations at the centre of livelihoods analysis and for these social relations to be situated in a particular historical context. In terms of social relations, one may highlight the social relations between men and women, between rural and urban households and the institutions of the market and the state (Murray, 2001:1). Scoones (2009:185) asserts that "it is not enough to examine local-level power dynamics but the focus on power and politics must be extended to include an analysis of wider structures of inequality". It is important to emphasize "basic questions of

political economy and history, for instance the nature of the state, the influence of private capital and terms of trade – alongside wider structural forces –how these impact, shape livelihoods in particular contexts" (Scoones, 2009: 185).

In the context of Mozambique, O'Laughlin (1996, 2001, 2002) illustrates that the historic process of proletarianisation and the increased diversification of contemporary livelihoods are not necessarily separate processes which can be conceived as binary opposites. The 'proletarianisation/livelihoods opposition' may be overcome by detaching the "concepts of livelihoods from the micro-economic language of possessive individualism and strategic gaming" and "reclaiming them for a Marxist terrain of class struggle" (O'Laughlin, 2001:6). Reclaiming livelihoods methods as suggested by O'Laughlin (2002) requires adopting the appropriate theoretical tools. The materialist political economy approach and its emphasis on how capitalist social relations are created and reproduced through commoditization arguably offers more plausible insights into the nature of social change in the countryside. As Bernstein and Woodhouse (in Peters, 2004:284) argue, "understanding processes of commodification allows the focus of analysis to extend beyond that of individual livelihoods to detect trajectories and dynamics of social change".

3.4. Rural livelihoods, de-agrarianisation and diversification

According to Scoones (2009), diversity is the watch word in livelihoods research. Ellis (2000:14) draws a distinction between diversity and diversification. According to Ellis (2000), "diversity refers to the existence, at a point in time, of many different income sources, thus also typically require diverse social relations to underpin them". Diversification is essentially about "the creation of diversity as an on-going social and economic process, reflecting factors of both pressure and opportunity that cause families to adopt increasingly intricate and diverse livelihood strategies" (Ellis, 2000:14). According to Ellis (2000:14), "both diversity and diversification may be taken overall to mean multiple and multiplying income sources". Yet in the rural development context these terms often mean "diversification away from farming as the predominant or primary means of rural survival" (Ellis, *ibid*). Thus, "the expression 'highly diversified rural livelihoods' typically conveys the idea of rural livelihoods in which own account farming has become a relatively small proportion of the overall survival portfolios put together by farm families" (Ellis, 2000:14-15). The phrase 'rural livelihoods diversification' therefore refers to

"the process by which rural households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and improve their standard of living" (Ellis, 2000).

Dolan (2004:645) argues that the tendency in the development literature has been to depict diversification into off-farm income favourably whether households diversify as an economic necessity (responding to shocks, vulnerability and poverty) or choice (e.g. for further investment, savings and accumulation). The reality is that households are differentiated and hence not similarly placed to exploit new opportunities. The capacity of households to exploit available opportunities is often dependent on resource endowments, accessibility to markets, and the ability to mobilize social networks. The composition and internal dynamics of households also come into play (see Dolan, 2004:645).

The process of diversifying livelihoods has often been understood in terms of de-agrarianisation. De-agrarianisation has been more pronounced in recent decades and has at times been seen as inexorable. Bryceson (1996) has provided the most systematic analysis of the trends of de-agrarianisation in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Bryceson (1996:99), de-agrarianisation is "a process of economic activity reorientation (livelihood), occupational adjustment (work activity), and spatial realignment of human settlement (residence) away from agrarian patterns". Also closely related to de-agrarianisation is the process of de-peasantisation. According to Bryceson (2000:1), de-peasantisation refers "to a specific form of de-agrarianisation in which peasantries lose their economic capacity and social coherence and demographically shrink in size". In the South African context, Neves and du Toit (2008) outline some of the underlying causes of de-agrarianisation. They note that "the historical legacy of structural underdevelopment alongside more contemporary developments such as increased monetisation, the penetration of corporate retail, and rising barriers to the participation of smallholders in agro-food commodity chains" are some of the key processes driving de-agrarianisation in South Africa (Neves and du Toit, 2008:10). In addition, "the decline of the rural agricultural economy also reflects, and contributes to, complex changes in the social arrangements and cultural precepts that supported agricultural production in the past such as collective work parties and the pooling of draught animals" (Neves and du Toit, 2008:*ibid*).

However, in recent times, various empirical studies have highlighted the continued importance of land-based endowments in the construction of livelihoods amongst rural households (McAllister, 2000; Andrew and Fox, 2004; Hebinck and van Averbeke, 2007 and Fay, 2010). McAllister (2000) has argued that maize yields in the former homelands are often underestimated. This author notes that most studies do not consider the fact that a sizeable amount of green maize is used for household consumption before the harvest of dry maize (McAllister, 2000). McAllister (2000:9) also argues that maize is seldom grown alone since small-scale farmers usually practice intercropping whereby a variety of crops are planted in the spaces between maize plants. In such cases, trying to measure yields in terms of amount of maize per hectare becomes difficult and meaningless. In addition, looking at the field or garden when the maize plants have started to grow creates the impression that the land is badly farmed, especially when the broadcast planting method has been used rather than a mechanical planter which produces neat rows (McAllister, 2000:9). From his research in Shixini village, Eastern Cape, McAllister (2000:10) observed that 'the term harvest is culturally specific' which makes it difficult to respond to questions like 'How much maize did you harvest…'. According to McAllister (2000:10), by 'harvest' people in Shixini usually refer to the amount of maize taken in from the fields at harvest time (around May and June), threshed and stored for later use.

In some localities of the Eastern Cape there is evidence that households are shifting resources from the cultivation of distant arable fields as households invest their resources in the cultivation of homestead gardens (Andrew and Fox, 2004; Fay, 2010). These studies note that homestead gardens are within the vicinity of the homestead which makes them easy to fence and protect from roaming animals. The distant arable fields are vulnerable to roaming animals and there are usually no cash resources to fence these arable fields. Ainslie (2005) notes that livestock numbers in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape are today similar to those of the 1930s, and thus are much more constant than portrayed in the literature. Hebinck and van Averbeke (2007) present empirical evidence from Koloni and Guquka, in the Eastern Cape which shows that there has been a transformation of livelihoods with an increasing shift from production to consumption. However, they also argue that there are less visible patterns of using land that remain an important aspect of rural livelihoods namely, grazing livestock in the fallow fields and gathering of herbs, grass and woody plants for various purposes (Hebinck and van Averbeke,

2007:339). In addition, their study shows that crop production has not been abandoned completely since about 10 to 20 per cent of the available arable land in Guquka and Koloni is planted with maize and other crops. They conclude that the three main contemporary uses of land in Guquka and Koloni are growing, grazing and gathering (*ibid*.). These studies show that it is important to differentiate which aspects of agriculture are in decline instead of seeing all agricultural activities as homogenously in decline. Yaro (2006:155) argues 'a totalizing de-agrarianisation thesis creates a lopsided analysis of rural livelihoods' because it directs attention to non-agricultural activities without "thorough consideration of contextual factors accounting for livelihood adaptation".

3.5. Empirical research on contemporary rural livelihoods

Among the challenges confronting rural livelihoods research is the failure of some studies to factor in politics and power. This means that relationships between social classes and ensuing inequalities are often ignored. However, some studies on rural livelihoods have, to varying degrees, attempted to account for the historical and structural processes as well as the social relations of inequality that permeate livelihoods in particular settings. Thus, according to Scoones (2009), livelihoods research encompasses a broad church and within the livelihoods paradigm some studies have grappled with the themes of politics, power and social difference.

Neves and du Toit (2013:94) argue that rural livelihoods in contemporary South Africa are "marked by continuities with the past and more contemporaneous changes". Rural livelihoods have been shaped by historic processes of proletarianisation and de-agrarianisation (emanating from colonial land dispossession,) as well as "more recent developments such as the ascendancy of supermarket retail and expansion of state social assistance in the past two decades" (Neves and du Toit, 2013:94). These authors identify four constitutive domains which are central to understanding contemporary livelihoods in South Africa. Firstly they note that rural areas not only confer land-based endowments but also provide crucial locales for social reproduction and sites for recuperation, retreat, retirement and risk mitigation in relation to urban locales and labour markets (Neves and du Toit, 2013:94). Secondly, small-scale survivalist economic activities, both farm and off-farm are critical in the construction of rural livelihoods. Thirdly, rural livelihoods in South Africa are increasingly shaped by a system of state cash transfers that

intersect with rural markets, agrarian activities and livelihoods. Also important is how "culturally inscribed precepts and practices of mutuality and social reciprocity shape rural livelihoods. The networks of exchange channel the earnings – from urban labour markets, informal sector activity and state cash transfers – to others" (Neves and du Toit, 2013:94).

However, rural households are not similarly placed to exploit and leverage resources from these four domains. There is differential access to resources in these four domains. According to Neves and du Toit (2013), "social differentiation is both a constitutive condition and a consequence that can recursively generate the conditions of its own perpetuation". Neves and du Toit (2013) assert that "differential patterns relative to the four key domains…do not simply pattern social differentiation between economically marginalized rural households; they influence differentiation between households that are economically marginalized and those that are not" (Neves and du Toit, 2013:109). The authors further note that the four domains "invariably refract larger and enduring processes of racialised dispossession, accumulation and vulnerability". It is also noteworthy that "while processes of rural differentiation unfold synchronically in the present, they have historical trajectories for rural areas, households and individuals" (Neves and du Toit, 2013:109).

In the case of Madibogo, North West, South Africa, Francis (2000:48) observes that the most significant inequality between households in the area, and one from which other differences follow concerns access to a regular income. In Madibogo, access to regular income usually took the form of wage earnings, remittances and access to state transfers. As a result, households with access to cash income tended to follow different livelihood strategies from their counterparts with no access to regular income. The case of Madibogo also reveals differences in income and in livelihood related activities between households with access both to land and to the means to work it and those (the large majority) who lacked these resources. Besides access to cash income, land access and the ability to work it, access to information networks, support networks, access to the state and the ability to enforce sharecropping contracts were vital to the welfare of households in Madibogo (Francis, 2000:48). On the basis of these dynamics, Francis (2000) identifies a typology of households which is essentially reflective of positions between which households may move rather than static groups. In Francis' (2000) formulation, there are three groups/positions:

1. Households which have experienced income growth since the 1970s, or which have accumulated land, access to land or capital equipment (10 households). Three of these households seem to be moving towards the second category.

2. Households whose income is relatively stable and/or which are managing from month to month (twenty three households). Twelve of these households contain one or more members receiving a pension. Six households in this group seem to be moving towards the third group.

3. Households which are falling into greater poverty, which are obviously not coping (six households)

Francis (2000:49) argues that households have moved between these categories in response to various contingencies and changing conditions, for example, shifts in the local and national economies. The developmental cycle of the households also had an influence on their position within this schema. For instance, there was a significant movement of households in the 1960s and 1970s particularly by households of ex-farm workers who arrived with very little material possessions and obtained jobs upon their arrival. Some of the households struggled in position 3 until one or more members of the household got their pensions. In addition, households seemed to be vulnerable to structural and household developmental cycle related factors that limited their ability to find work (Francis, 2000:49).

In Qwaqwa, Slater (2000) identifies some of the structural changes or what Murray (cited in Slater 2000) characterized as 'processes of transformation in the larger economy that frame differentiation' of rural livelihoods. The structural changes in the broader economy involved the movement of people from white farms settling in rural Qwaqwa. The early immigrants brought cattle and capital and most had the privilege of having larger, better located sites and having closer relationships with chiefs. Most of them capitalized on the relative lack of amenities in the villages and established businesses. While some immigrants were on an upward trajectory of accumulation some of others remained trapped in a life of poverty and lack of services in rural Qwaqwa. De-industrialization in the 1990s also eroded the differences between town and country as employment opportunities became increasingly scarce in the Qwaqwa area. The de-industrialization and attendant lack of economic opportunities saw a rise in the reliance on

informal sector activities and state welfare transfers. The restructuring of local government structures also resulted in the erosion of traditional authorities and the benefits they extracted by exploiting their subjects for labour and other forms of taxation. Consequently, the advantages emanating from proximity to chiefly power became less central in the survival and accumulation strategies of households (Slater, 2000).

van Averbeke and Hebinck (2007:294-297) use the livelihood typologies to obtain an aggregate picture of the type of livelihoods that exist in Guquka and Koloni, Eastern Cape. In their study setting, six types of income sources were considered in developing the livelihood typologies. These types of incomes sources are remittances, wages and salaries, social grants, petty trade, agriculture and self-employment. The authors considered an income source to be dominant if it contributed at least fifty percent of total household income. The following categories were identified in their sample:

Wage earner: these were homesteads deriving their livelihoods mainly from jobs both within the confines of the villages and outside of the villages. Van Averbeke and Hebinck (2007:294) argue that labour power, knowledge and skills are the key resources for wage-based livelihoods. The typical jobs in the two villages included, security guards, teachers, workers in agriculture and manufacturing, nurses and drivers.

Petty entrepreneurship: In the case of Guquka and Koloni the petty entrepreneur livelihood label captures households that make a living from petty trade, casual labour and odd jobs. These activities constitute the non-agricultural rural economy. In addition, household members were also engaged in house building, repairs, brick making and casual works such as preparing land for others, etc.

Farmer homesteads: in both villages, there was evidence of households trading in home grown crops, vegetables and livestock. Producer homesteads sold these crops mostly to fellow villagers.

Diversifiers: van Averbeke and Hebinck (2007:296) argue that the label diversifier is a 'default label'. The label *diversifier* merely refers to households deriving income from at least three different types of sources with none of these sources being dominant (see Van Averbeke and Hebinck, 2007:294-297).

The authors follow Ashley (in van Averbeke and Hebinck, 2007:297) in distinguishing between pull (positive) diversification and push (negative diversification). The former denotes diversification that typically leads to asset accumulation or improvement of living standards. Negative diversification is adopted out of necessity often in response to shocks or a negative downward trend in the economy. In Guquka and Koloni, the negative or push form of diversification tended to predominate (van Averbeke and Hebnick, 2007:297).

Scoones *et al'*s (2010) study of livelihoods of newly resettled farmers in Masvingo, Zimbabwe is illustrative of how to deploy livelihoods analysis to understand long-term processes of change. Scoones *et al* (2010) build on previous research on livelihoods to formulate livelihood typologies and pathways which approximate the thrust and trajectories of socio-economic change amongst the newly resettled farmers in Masvingo[4]. In their own study Scoones *et al* (2010:227) identify different livelihood strategies which they link to the categories of 'dropping out', 'hanging in', 'stepping out' and 'stepping up'. Within these broad categories, different livelihood strategies are evident and the strategies are often associated with identifiable classes. For instance, they locate in the 'hanging in' category, the asset poor farmers, and those pursuing straddling livelihoods (petty commodity producers), along with survival diversification (peasant-workers) and keeping the plot (not really a livelihood strategy at all, but insurance for the future) (Scoones *et al*, 2010:227). In the stepping up category, Scoones *et al* (2010:227) identify *hurudza* (successful farmers) and semi-commercial farmers many of whom can be defined or characterized as an emerging rural petit bourgeois, alongside rural entrepreneurs (successful worker-peasants) and those who are accumulating 'from above' through patronage connections (Scoones *et al*, 2010:227).

These studies grapple with the analysis of livelihoods diversification and social differentiation and attempt to explore the interconnection between these two processes. Thus, while rural households increasingly diversify their livelihoods this process seems to be differentiated. The political economy approach with its emphasis on class relations and inequalities may offer useful

[4] Scoones *et al* (2010) build on Dorward generic livelihood typology which forms a basis for understanding "the dynamic changes and wider aspirations of households" (Scoones *et al*, 2010:226). Doward identifies households that are 'hanging in' (surviving, but poor – including crisis and survival strategies), 'stepping out' (diversification away from agriculture, both locally and through migration). In addition there is the dropping out category which consists of destitute households reliant on different forms of social protection, and often in the process of exiting (Scoones *et al*, 2010:226).

analytical tools for examining the interconnection between livelihoods diversification and social differentiation. Scoones *et al'*s (2010) livelihood typology attempts to examine livelihoods diversification and exploring the relationship between livelihood strategies and identifiable class categories.

3.6. Rural Livelihoods in Global Capitalism

For Bernstein (2005:82), "the patterns and contradictions of change concerning labour, land and reproduction in modern African history, with all their specificities of time and place tend to defy any simple empirical generalization". Yet one generalization that can be made with confidence is that poverty and insecurity have increased, and standards of well-being declined for the great majority of African people in recent decades (Bernstein, 2005:83). This increasing trend is 'an outcome of, among other things, the deteriorating conditions of reproduction through both farming and wage labour, and the numerous ways they are combined' (Bernstein, 2005). The crisis of reproduction is manifest in the multiplicity of livelihood strategies and their tendency for households to transcend the conventional boundaries of town and country, formal and informal economy. Alongside this, different interpretations of the diversity of rural livelihoods and their differentiated nature have also emerged. As Peters observes:

> While researchers recognize social differentiation across Africa, they do not agree on a single interpretive model. Many studies distinguish among rural populations according to landholding size, income, type of livelihood strategy (such as degree of farm production compared with wage labour) or combinations of these, while some use terms such as 'peasants', 'peasant labourer', or 'peasantariat' and so forth to capture the variability (Peters, 2004:283).

For Bernstein (2006b:399), critical questions on the conditions of existence of rural dwellers may be obstructed by the use of such terms as "peasants" and "peasant societies" which may be misleading and anachronistic in the context of global capitalism. Grappling with these vital questions calls for another analytical language and approach to the political economy of agrarian change (Bernstein, 2005:399). There is a need to go beyond the descriptive formulations such as "peasants" and deploy concepts that shed light on the social relations of production and reproduction, property and power under conditions of global capitalism (Bernstein, 2006b). The incessant and widespread diversification of livelihoods is in an outcome of the new phase of economic globalization which has seen the rapid concentration, centralization and mobility of

capital. The flipside of these large-scale economic processes has been the increased 'intensification of fragmentation of labour' (Bernstein, 2006b:403). In this instance, the growing classes of labour pursue their reproduction in increasingly precarious conditions. Households that farm typically combine farming with working for wages and a range of precarious informal sector ('survival') activities, subject to their own forms of differentiation[5] and oppression along intersecting lines of class, gender, generation, caste and ethnicity (Bernstein, 2006b:403). Accordingly, the petty commodity production concept has more relevance in analysing rural livelihoods in the current conjuncture.

It is apposite to refer to O'Laughlin's (2001, 2002) critique of recent views on livelihoods and class in Southern Mozambique. The tendency has been to think that the Marxist emphasis on 'class' and 'proletarianisation' is at odds with the livelihoods research. Livelihoods perspectives have burgeoned in recent decades almost 'crowding out' the classic themes of Marxist analysis, namely accumulation, class and proletarianisation. In her words:

> [r]ural life in Southern Africa today cannot be understood by an analytical approach that treats history only as context for individual choice. The colonial past, constructed through class struggle by workers and peasants as well as capitalists and colonial bureaucrats, lives on in the contradictory realities of proletarianisation (O' Laughlin, 2001:29).

O'Laughlin (1996, 2001, 2002) suggests that this binary view of proletarianisation and diversification of livelihoods is fallacious. The historical process of proletarianisation has indeed played a central role in shaping contemporary livelihoods in Mozambique. The petty commodity production concept "provides a theoretical point of entry and basis for considering 'peasants' in the capitalist mode of production, and in imperialism as its modern global form" (Bernstein, 2006:31).

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has underlined the importance of emphasizing class inequalities and relations in the analysis of rural livelihoods. I have drawn attention to some empirical studies on rural

[5] Also, and importantly, the transformation of peasantries in capitalism today, or the transition to petty commodity production, with its varying scales of entry and reproductions costs, involves differentiation. For each farming household able to reproduce itself as capital and to secure labour (often through hiring of wage workers to supplement family labour), there are others too poor to farm, or to farm as the principal basis of any minimally adequate livelihood (Bernstein, 2006b:404).

livelihoods which have attempted to explore the interconnection between livelihoods diversification and rural differentiation. Traditional Marxist concepts like proletarianisation and class remain important in studying rural livelihoods in contemporary times. I have argued that the concept of petty commodity production is useful in defining and specifying the historical and structural position of rural households, small-scale farmers and 'peasants' in contemporary capitalism. Another key issue in this chapter is the diversification of rural livelihoods wherein households combine farm and non-farm income in complex ways for reproduction and accumulation purposes. This is often characterized by increased fragmentation of livelihoods whereby households increasingly experience a social reproduction squeeze as a result of the failure of the capitalist system, globally, to generate a living wage.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the research design adopted in this study. It begins by discussing the philosophical assumptions underlying the research design. I briefly discuss why the realist approach in social science is a progressive methodological and philosophical approach as opposed to the usual tendency of pitting interpretivist approaches against positivist perspectives. I then present background information on the original focus of the research on the differential impact of a government maize scheme, the MFPP and later on the AsgiSA maize scheme. I explain why this focus eventually shifted to encompass broader processes of de-agrarianisation and livelihoods diversification. This is followed by a description of the actual research instruments deployed in this study. I conclude by discussing the challenges I encountered in executing this study.

4.2 Epistemological Issues

Here I highlight some of the epistemological assumptions underlying this study. In terms of the philosophy of social science and the implications for issues of methodology, Sayer's (2000) realist social science approach seems to offer a plausible approach to debates on what constitutes 'knowledge'. Sayer (2000) argues that one of the defining features of realist social science is that it negates the notion of 'foundationalism' (Sayer, 2000:2). Realist social science is also based on the belief that "there is a world existing independently of our knowledge of it...that independence of objects from knowledge immediately undermines any complacent assumptions about the relation between them and renders it problematic" (Sayer, 2000:*ibid*). According to Sayer (2000) "the basic realist proposition is the mind-independence of the world". In further explaining the epistemological principles of realist social science Sayer (2000) poses a pertinent question: "what reason have we for accepting this basic realist proposition of the mind-independence of the world?". Sayer argues that "it is the evident fallibility of our knowledge – the experience of getting things wrong, of having our expectations confounded, and of crashing into things, that justifies us in believing the world exists regardless of what we happen to think about it" (Sayer, 2000:2). To substantiate this point, Sayer asserts that "if the world itself was a product or

construction of our knowledge, then our knowledge would surely be infallible, for how could we ever be mistaken" (Sayer, 2000:2). It is on the basis of these epistemological principles that realist social science on the one hand does not subscribe to the notion of a law-finding science modelled on natural science. On the other hand it does not subscribe wholesale to the anti-naturalist or interpretivist reductions of social science to interpretation of meaning.

Sayer (1992) asserts that it is fundamentally important to be wary of methodological imperialism. On the one hand, there is a kind of 'scientism' which uses a restricted view of social science, usually centering on the search for regularities and hypothesis testing. Often this is accompanied by derogating practices such as ethnography, historical narrative or explorative research, for which there are often no superior alternatives. On the other hand, as a response to the above limitation, there is a form of methodological imperialism which tries to reduce social science wholly to the interpretation of meaning. However, a critical methodology should not restrict social science to a narrow path that is only appropriate to a minority of studies (Sayer, 1992:4). Accordingly, this study has used both 'extensive' and 'intensive' methods. The research process is an iterative one which involves moving back and forth between the different methods, as well as between theory and data gathering. My approach in this research is to 'triangulate' the different methods (intensive and extensive) and to remain sensitive to the complex nature of social reality. In this sense, triangulation, specifically, capitalising on the complementarities of both extensive and intensive research designs, has the potential to furnish well-rounded answers to the research question.

4.3 The research process: shifts over time

Before discussing the methods and how they were deployed during the research process, I will highlight some of the shifts and changes that ensued in the field after the research commenced, and how this necessitated some changes in the focus of the research. The original focus of this research was on the differential impact of the MFPP (small holders and social differentiation in the MFPP, Eastern Cape, South Africa) on participating rural households. However, as the research evolved, social differentiation remained central, but for the reasons outlined below I decided to situate the analysis of rural differentiation in the broader tendencies of de-agrarianisation and livelihoods diversification.

The initial original focus of this study was on the MFPP and social differentiation in the Eastern Cape. My primary concern was to assess the differential impact of the MFPP and the extent to which it was accelerating rural differentiation. I also wanted to examine the extent to which large-scale agricultural development programmes like the MFPP could be the basis for unleashing a process of 'accumulation from below'. My first field visit to the Eastern Cape to was intended to develop a sense of what was happening on the ground, and it soon revealed that this highly-popularised massive maize scheme had collapsed in many of the rural villages where it had been implemented. Some small pockets of agricultural activity or remnants of this scheme were only to be found in privately-owned farms. These farms were wholly owned by 'emerging' farmers or were being leased by some relatively well-off individuals. My primary interest was in the differential impact of the scheme in rural villages under communal tenure, as opposed to privately-owned land. These privately-owned farms did not offer an ideal unit of analysis to examine social differentiation in communal areas. However, during my field visit something important was unfolding in the Eastern Cape. The demise of the MFPP was immediately followed by implementation of another large-scale maize production scheme, the AsgiSA-EC programme. During my travels in the Transkei I often encountered colourful banners publicising the 'new' programme that would apparently revolutionise agricultural production in the former homeland. From the look of things this was meant to be even more 'massive', and more 'agri-business oriented', than its predecessor. It was meant to put to use the vast tracts of fallow land in the Transkei thereby utilising what had so far been an idle economic resource. It became imperative for me to go back to the drawing board and make sense of what was unfolding with respect to agricultural development in the province. I also had to rethink my focus on the MFPP, given that my original plans had been overtaken by events.

A review of the secondary literature on this new maize production scheme revealed that one particular project constantly featured as a success story. This was the AsgiSA-EC maize production scheme in the Ongeluksnek Valley, in the Matatiele District. On another field visit to the Ongeluksnek Valley area I realised that there was indeed cultivation taking place on both privately-owned farms and in the rural villages. The involvement of the rural villages in the scheme would allow me to focus on communal area villages instead of privately-owned farms.

The collapse of the highly-popularised MFPP and its subsequent replacement with yet another similarly designed massive maize scheme resonated with Li's (2007) characterisation of development projects in terms of 'the will to improve' which is often 'stubborn' in character. I realised that there was much more at work here, considering the continuous introduction of these 'massive schemes' without many changes in their design, in spite of previous shortcomings.

In spite of these developments I had resolved that Ongeluksnek valley in Matatiele would be the ideal place to conduct my research. However, I decided to examine the differential impacts of the AsgiSA maize scheme in the rural villages of Ongeluksnek against the background of previous large-scale agricultural development schemes. The idea was to map out the shifts and continuities in these interventions. During the course of my research the new scheme (AsgiSA) was also discontinued. After the withdrawal of AsgiSA from the villages it became apparent that there was more at work in these rural communities. There were larger processes involved beyond the government scheme and its impacts. The vast tracts of fallow land in the post-AsgiSA period and the withdrawal of rural households from the cultivation of large fields brought other key issues to the fore. It became clear that there had indeed been a gradual withdrawal from field cultivation and the massive maize scheme had merely accelerated that process. Also evident were the continued cultivation of homestead gardens and the resilience of livestock production. Nevertheless, de-agrarianisation, whatever its nature and permutations, was clearly unfolding.

Accordingly, I decided to shift my focus from the differential impact of the AsgiSA maize scheme on rural households in Ongeluksnek. My new focus would consider this maize scheme as one piece of the puzzle to explain larger processes at work. AsgiSA was a large-scale agricultural scheme being introduced against the backdrop of a general decline in agriculture and, more acutely, field cultivation. The significance of non-agricultural forms of livelihood was also evident in the rural villages. In fact, what appeared to be unfolding was a broader trend of de-agrarianisation and diversification of livelihoods. The government scheme then became an intervention meant to halt some of these tendencies especially de-agrarianisation by resuscitating cropping in large arable fields. My initial interest in rural differentiation remained but now I had to locate it in these larger processes. What patterns of rural differentiation could be at play in the context of de-agrarianisation and diversification of rural livelihoods? What would be the impact

of massive maize schemes in such contexts? These are some of the underlying questions that saw me changing the focus of my research. What started as a study aimed at examining the nature of social differentiation within the context of large-scale agricultural interventions had now shifted to encompass broader processes of de-agrarianisation and livelihoods diversification.

4.4 Extensive and intensive research design

In the introductory remarks in this chapter I indicated that this study will combine both intensive and extensive research methods to gather data. Sayer (1992) asserts that the distinction between extensive and intensive research is not merely a matter of scale versus depth but more importantly the research designs ask different sorts of questions, use different techniques and methods and define their objects and boundaries differently. Intensive research is primarily concerned with how some causal process work out in a particular case or limited number of cases. In contrast, extensive research prioritises discovering some of the common properties and general patterns of a population as a whole (Sayer, 1992:242). In intensive research qualitative methods are often used and these include structural and causal analysis, participant observation and informal/interactive interviews. In contrast, extensive research mainly utilises large-scale formal questionnaires to gather evidence from a population or a representative. Intensive research uses descriptive and inferential statistics as well as numerical analysis like cross-tabulation to analyse data (Sayer, 1992:244).

These research designs also have a different conception of groups. In extensive research, the focus is on *taxonomic* groups. These are groups whose members may share similar or formal attributes but which need not necessarily connect or interact with one another. In this view, individual members are only of interest insofar as they are representative of the population as a whole. Conversely, in intensive research the focus is predominantly but not exclusively on "groups whose members may be either similar or different but which actually relate to each other structurally or causally" (Sayer, 1992:244). These differences have practical implications in research design.

To illustrate, my study uses a survey questionnaire which gathers mainly quantitative data which was analysed to yield both descriptive and inferential statistics. Part of the analysis produced

statistically derived categories based on grouping or classification of the various assets (durable, transport and agricultural) and livestock owned. Different households may fall into different categories or groupings on the basis of the assets or livestock they own. These groups or statistical categories are important as proxies or points of entry to an analysis of differentiation amongst rural households. They simply indicate that there are differences, but fall short when it comes to explanation of causal processes or relationships between households. Causal explanations provide a rich, more in-depth and contextual understanding of the underlying processes and mechanisms. These relative strengths are used in a complementary way in the study of rural livelihoods and diversification. Beyond computing different asset groups it is also possible through the use of intensive research methods to examine and understand the relational aspects of differentiation within a particular (historical) context.

4.5 Stages of the research

As has already been noted, this research combines both intensive and extensive research designs to explore livelihoods diversification and social differentiation in rural Matatiele. During the initial phase the focus was on the differential impact of the MFPP in the Eastern Cape. However, field visits revealed that the MFPP had been discontinued and a 'new' intervention, AsgiSA was now operational. The Ongeluksnek valley was considered to be a success story amongst the AsgiSA projects in the country. On that basis I selected the area for my study. I have already outlined the basis for shifting my focus from solely looking at the government schemes to locating these schemes within broader processes at work in the countryside. Below is a table showing the time-line of the research.

Table 1: Time line of field work

Date	Activity	Outcome/Decisions
June-July 2010	Scoping exercise, visiting different sites in the Eastern Cape where the MFPP had been implemented.	Interviews with various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the MFPP. The MFPP had collapsed and the AsgiSA maize scheme was the 'new' government scheme.
Nov-Dec 2010	Selected study area and conducted pilot study to test research instrument.	Ongeluksnek was popularised as a success story of AsgiSA and it was interesting to see how this success story was unfolding.
May-July 2011	Surveyed 124 households in the villages of Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha.	Generated quantitative data on the demographics, asset ownership, asset groups and categories.
December 2011	Conducted a wealth ranking exercise.	Generated qualitative data on local criteria of wealth ranking to compare with statistically-generated asset groups.
January-August 2012	Selected a sub-sample of households to conduct life history interviews.	Life history interview material provided data on trajectories of accumulation amongst rural households.
September 2012	Analysis of maps and aerial photographs through focus group discussions on changes in land use patterns across the years.	Generated historical evidence on how land use patterns have changed in the locality over the years especially between the pre-betterment days and post-betterment interventions.

Table 1 shows that the first step in data collection was exploratory (intensive) in the form of a field excursion to identify the study site and familiarise myself with how the government interventions were unfolding on the ground. This yielded new information which saw me reformulating my research. After settling for a research site I conducted a survey questionnaire (extensive) in the villages. This was followed by a wealth ranking exercise which yielded local criteria for wealth ranking.

4.6 Quantitative survey

The first stage of the research in the selected field site in Moeketsi was the extensive phase. This involved the administering of a survey questionnaire to rural households in the research area. I administered the questionnaire to 124 households in three villages namely Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. Before the survey was conducted I enumerated the households in the three

villages to obtain the size of the overall population of the area. The total number of households enumerated in Moeketsi villages totalled 315 and the survey questionnaire was administered to 124 households (see Table 2). This constitutes 39.37 percent of the total population of the area.

Table 2: Number of households surveyed

Village Name	Enumerated households	Households surveyed
Mutsini	60	34
Litichareng	130	51
Thaba Chicha	125	39
Total	315	124

4.7. Wealth ranking exercise

I drew on participatory research approaches to conduct a wealth ranking exercise in the study villages with the aim of gaining insights into the local understandings of what it means to be 'wealthy', or 'average' or 'poor'. This allowed the analysis of livelihoods in the villages of Moeketsi to go beyond the statistically-generated asset groups. I conducted focus group discussions with members of the three villages to explore local meanings of wealth and poverty. For instance, Scoones (1995) demonstrates that the combination of 'wealth ranking produced by local people with insights generated from survey material and a statistical cluster method can be a useful way of exploring the dimensions of difference in rural societies'. According to Scoones (1995:85) "stratification is thus based on local perceptions and understandings of 'wealth' and not on arbitrary survey indicators chosen by the researcher or clusters imposed by statistical rules". Scoones (1995:86) further notes that "qualitative insights derived from rankings by different groups reveal important information about the historically, socially and economically constructed meanings of wealth and wellbeing". Thus, "analysis of ranking data alongside survey data helps reveal gaps in the survey material, assists in the identification of appropriate wealth indicators and demonstrates the utility of wealth ranking as a complementary method to conventional surveys" (Scoones, 1995:85).

I listed all the households in each village. Each name was then transferred onto a card and allocated a number to identify it. The following process was conducted for each village:

- Informants sorted the cards into three piles according to relative wealth (rich, average, and poor),
- Informants were asked to discuss the characteristics of each category of wealth (ownership of livestock, assets like vehicles and tractors, cultivation of fields, access to temporary and permanent employment, etc).

During the wealth ranking exercise local words for the rich ('*Baruwi*'), the average ('*Bahare*'), and the poor ('*Bafutsana*') were used to ensure that the informants clearly understood the subject matter and would in turn provide responses grounded in the local knowledge of their communities. The informants were asked to group the households into three groups in terms of relative wealth or socio-economic status. After the ranking, the informants were then asked to discuss the criteria, or the basis for placing a set of households in each socio-economic category. Thus, instead of discussing the key features of wealth or poverty first, I opted to start with the ranking exercise to avoid limiting the range of responses on the criteria for wealth ranking. Accordingly, it is only after the ranking itself that the respondents were asked to describe the key issues or factors they considered when grouping households into their respective categories.

4.8 Life history interview method

I also conducted 36 life history interviews to explore the trajectories of accumulation and impoverishment amongst the rural households. Life history interviews are a useful avenue for looking back into the past – what Murray (2002) has characterised as the 'retrospective approach'. The retrospective approach ('looking back') involves "pushing to the limits of their potential various methods of understanding the changes that have taken place over a much longer time scale" (Murray, 2002:490). In an ideal situation this would involve panel studies or repeated cross-sectional studies of the 'same' population over time. However, this is often associated with a host of practical problems, chief among which is the reality that households move, expand, fragment and disperse. Murray (2002) cites the case of a study by Niehaus in Phutaditjaba, where efforts to undertake a longitudinal study a year later were to some extent undercut by changes

like the death of some elderly people, the marriage of those who were children at the time of the original research and subsequent establishment of their own independent homesteads. Nevertheless, these problems and challenges may be overcome through the strategic use of the life history interview method in a way that allows for space for adequate retrospective analysis. This essentially means not defining longitudinal work in a restricted or rigid sense, such as seeing it only as comprising cross-sectional surveys (Murray, 2002:500).

According to Buck, Ermisch and Jenkins (cited in Murray, 2002:500), life history interviews are "carried out at one moment only, whose emphasis is on reconstruction of key moments, events, decisions, changes of trajectory, etc in the lives of individuals" and constitute retrospective analysis. The use of life history interviews in this sense allows for the study of divergent trajectories of both men and women and the systematic analysis of both intra-household and extra-household relations as they change over time (see Murray, 2002). The primary aim of the retrospective approach is to "analyse household or family trajectories of accumulation or impoverishment over time" (Murray, 2002:490) and life history interviews are a good research instrument to achieve this.

Oya (2007) deployed the life history interview method to analyse trajectories of accumulation amongst rural capitalists in Senegal. The study demonstrates that life history material may be used to address general and broader themes on a particular topic. In the analysis of rural capitalists in Senegal, Oya (2007) used the narrative method to gather empirical evidence on long-term processes of agrarian change and accumulation in rural Africa. According to Oya, "individual trajectories of accumulation give texture and details, at a micro level of analysis to the analytical and more general portraits of rural capitalism in Africa" (Oya, 2007:456). In this study a sample was selected so as to represent fairly the diversity and commonalities of rural capitalists in Senegal.

In my own study, life history interviews were used to gather empirical evidence of the 'trajectories of accumulation and impoverishment' amongst different rural households. The focus was on certain 'turning points' that resulted in individuals and households taking a downward or upward trajectory. I also looked out for key events, moments, or opportunities that propped up

individuals and/or households, allowing them to improve their level of livelihood or accumulate. Life history interviews provided in-depth and detailed information that became useful in explaining processes of differentiation in the study area. The statistical categories were useful in providing a more aggregate and general picture of the distribution of assets, cattle and wealth, among other things. However, to unpack what makes some individuals and households winners while others lose, or why some people diversify to accumulate while other diversify to survive, requires qualitative information to explain underlying processes shaping and mediating livelihoods activities. In this regard, life history interviews were complementary to the statistical survey data generated in the initial phase of the research.

4.9 Focus group discussions

This study also made use of focus group discussions to gather data on changes in land use patterns. In my discussions with the locals they often highlighted that in earlier periods field cultivation in the area was extensive. Oral accounts revealed that there were some sizeable portions of arable fields that had been abandoned in the area. I encountered respondents who mentioned Mahosi village as their original place of residence before they were moved either to Thaba Chicha or Litichareng by the 'Trust'. Some people tended to see the betterment period as a turning point in the history of the place especially with regard to land use practices. From the life histories, fragments of information on how the landscape had been planned or altered through betterment interventions were emerging. I realised that it was imperative to have a more detailed discussion on changes in land use patterns in the Moeketsi area. It is against this background that I resolved to conduct a focus group discussion to explore the changes in land use practices in the area across the years. I selected senior people from the villages who had witnessed these changes and had experiential knowledge of how the local landscape had been planned and altered. Four people (two women and two men) agreed to participate in the focus group discussion. With the aid of aerial images from the years[6], 1953, 1966, 2000 and 2009 a discussion on changes in land use practices was conducted with four residents of the Moeketsi area. The focus group session raised questions concerning which arable fields were being used at

[6] For the 1970s the aerial image was of poor quality and I decided that it could not be effectively use for analysis purposes. For the 1980s no aerial images could be found and the reason given by the National Geo-spatial unit (NGI) at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) is that the locality of Moeketsi was not covered in the flight routes for that period.

different points in time. The issue of grazing land and relationships with large land holders in the area were also discussed. Overall, the impact of these shifts and changes on agriculture and livelihoods was emphasised throughout the discussion. The focus group discussions yielded information on historical changes in the locality of Moeketsi and how these impacted on agriculture and livelihoods.

4.10 Challenges and Constraints during the research process

I now highlight some of the challenges encountered during the course of this study. A component of this study focuses on agricultural development. I specifically examine government-sponsored massive maize schemes in the Eastern Cape and situate them within the historical context by highlighting previous interventions. Researching development programmes is never any easy exercise. One of the main challenges was securing interviews with government officials. This research happened at a time when the MFPP had collapsed and during the course of the research the new scheme, AsgiSA maize scheme was also discontinued. During this time some government officials were often wary of providing interviews. In the end, it became a matter of staying for longer in the field and establishing trust to secure interviews. Interviews tended to be few and far between. However, a clear picture began to emerge as more interviews were secured. In the rural villages I noticed that interviews around the theme of traditional leadership, the administration and allocation of land were initially met with hesitance on the part of the respondents. It was only after repeated visits that some of my informants began to open up about the issues relating to chiefly power in their locality. For historical reasons, the institution of traditional leadership is not very popular in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. Traditional leaders were often repressive and undemocratic and favouritism and corruption were not uncommon amongst the traditional leaders especially during the homeland era.

Some research participants did not mind having the interviews recorded. However, in some cases people felt uncomfortable with recorded interviews. My approach was to be flexible and to treat each case differently. I often had to take notes whenever I felt that recording the interview may make the respondent uncomfortable. At times respondents held back when the interview was being recorded. The formalities of interviewing can also create a sense of uneasiness on the part of the interviewee. Establishing rapport was very important. At times people revealed rich and

detailed information during informal conversations. I often had to occasionally make informal visits especially to those households I had developed good relations with. It is through some of these informal visits, or brief conversations outside of the formal research interview set-up that some useful leads or information often emerged. The point here is that understanding individual lives, mapping out household trajectories often involves immersing oneself beyond the actual interview.

4.11. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research design adopted in this study. The study uses both intensive (life history interviews, wealth ranking exercise and focus groups discussions) and extensive (survey questionnaire) methods to gather data. The main reason for using both intensive and extensive research methods is that realist social science does not subscribe to methodological imperialism. Methodological imperialism describes the tendency to view certain research approaches as superior to others in terms of generating knowledge. Researchers often pit interpretivist approaches against positivist perspectives. However, both research approaches may be useful in conducting research and may be used in a complementary fashion to generate well-rounded answers. In this chapter I have also explained how my research evolved from its original focus on social differentiation within the context of the MFPP to a broader focus on de-agrarianisation and rural livelihoods diversification.

Chapter 5: The Land Question in Moeketsi: Settlement and Land Tenure

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the historical background of the rural villages of Moeketsi. My focus in on the existence of large landholders alongside the land-starved rural villages and the implications that this co-existence has for agriculture in the rural villages. The villages are surrounded by large landholders and occupy a small strip of land which constrains agricultural activities especially livestock production. This chapter will discuss the betterment interventions which entailed, among other things, the demarcation of grazing and arable land so as to rationalise rural production. I will also examine how land use practices have changed across the years. The discussion on changes in land use practices will draw on insights from a focus group discussion conducted with the aid of aerial images and cadastral maps of the area. Through a participatory research exercise the old and new fields were mapped to show the changes that have happened over time. I also examine the administration and allocation of land in the villages. In the final section of this chapter I present some socio-economic and demographic data on contemporary Moeketsi.

5.2 Historical Context: The Eastern Cape

My research site, Moeketsi Reserve, is in Ongeluksnek valley which is located in the Eastern Cape province's Matatiele local municipality. Matatiele is a small town under the jurisdiction of the Alfred Nzo district municipality. The Eastern Cape province has six district municipalities and one metropole. This province is one of South Africa's nine and is located in South-eastern part of the country along the Indian ocean seaboard (see Lahiff, 2003:1). Lahiff (2003) notes that the Eastern Cape was a site of prolonged struggle between the native people (mainly Xhosa speakers) and the European colonists throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This resulted in the defeat and subsequent subjugation of the African chieftaincies and loss of much of the territory to the white settlers. In the twentieth century, the annexation of the Eastern Cape under segregation and apartheid policies saw the province being divided territorially into zones of 'white' occupation and the native reserves (also known as 'African' Reserves or Bantustans

especially in later years) of Transkei and Ciskei (see Lahiff, 2003:1). This historical process entailed the integration of the Eastern Cape into capitalist relations of production. According to the 2010 Eastern Cape Provincial Industrial Development Strategy (PIDS) the main role of the former homeland areas was that of a reservoir of labour power primarily but not exclusively for the mining industry (PIDS, 2010:27).

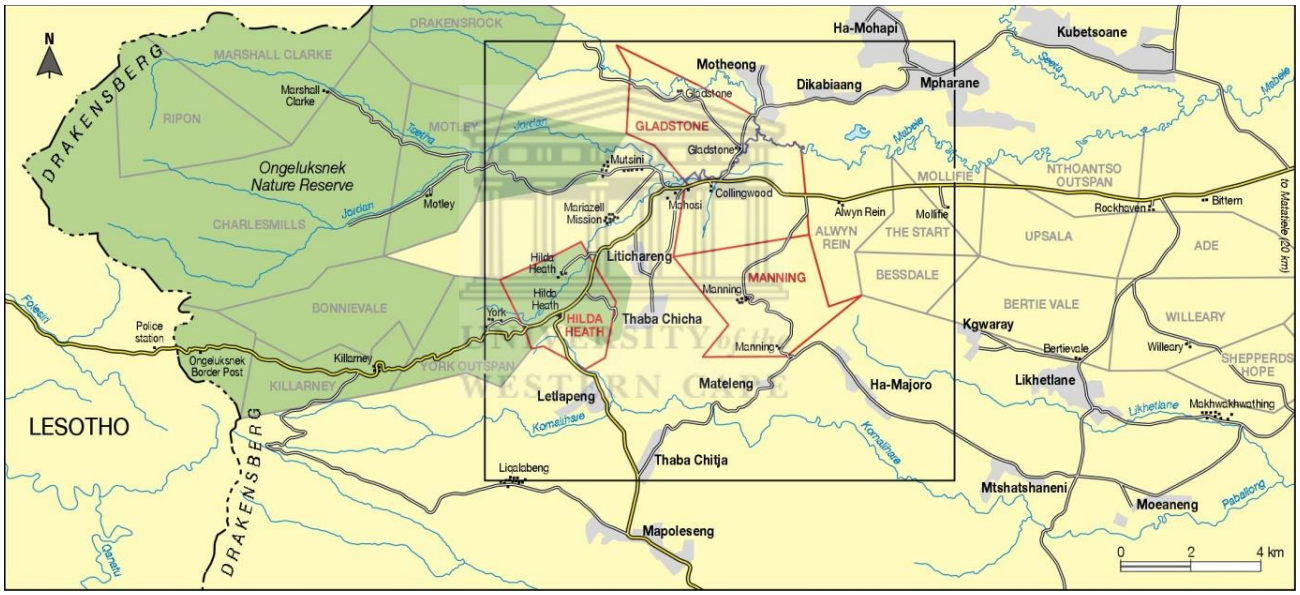
Dzivakwi and Jacobs (2010) note that the homelands of Ciskei and Transkei were essentially fragmented enclaves designed under apartheid and systematically underdeveloped through lack of sustainable investment and constant outmigration of the productive workforce. The current crisis of poverty and unemployment has historical roots. According to the PIDS (2010), since the province played the role of a labour reservoir especially for the mining industry the decline of the mining sector in recent years has significantly contributed to falling incomes and rising unemployment for many households in the Eastern Cape. The Matatiele local municipality is located in the Northern part of the Eastern Cape Province. Matatiele is one of the two local municipalities located within Alfred Nzo district municipality. The other municipality is uMzimvubu local municipality. Matatiele consists of 24 municipal wards with a population of 258 758 people and accounts for 58% (4352 km2) of Alfred Nzo District's geographical size (IDP, 2010:1).

5.3 Large land holders in the Moeketsi area

This section will discuss the issue of large land holders in the Moeketsi area. Map 5.1 shows the vast tracts of land on the Ongeluksnek valley marked as commercial farmland. As is the case with many rural localities in South Africa, the enclosure of vast tracts of land during the establishment of white commercial farms in the Ongeluksnek valley resulted in the current skewed land ownership and is part of the problems confronting rural households in present times. Discussing the delimitation of land in Matatiele and Ladysmith districts during colonial dispossession, Beningfield (2006) notes that "the boundary not only acted as a thin line, dividing territory, but also ultimately affected the physical characteristics of the land it demarcated – dividing white from black, fertile from infertile, as the increasing density of the reserve territories resulted in severe pressure on the land" (Beningfield, 2006:108). However, the

increasing deterioration of land as a result of the disproportionate allocation by the authorities was often blamed on blacks. Blacks were portrayed as unable to properly manage resources and also 'as new to agriculture'. Further, 'the areas of land progressively less able to sustain their burgeoning populations were targeted for betterment planning'. Thus, "betterment sought to institute alternative spatial forms of settlement and farming in order to repair the land after the devastation caused by overpopulation and overgrazing" (Beningfield, 2006:110). Considering the above, I will discuss the issue of large land holders in the area of Moeketsi. This will shed light on the political economy of land in the area.

Figure 1: Ongeluksnek farms in Matatiele district



The issue of access to land in the rural villages of Ongeluksnek cannot be fully understood in isolation from the establishment and presence of large land holders in the form of surrounding commercial farms and other large landholders in the area. Figure 2 shows the location of the villages and the surrounding farms (the Muzikandaba, Judge and Sitsubi's farms) and other large land holders (Mariazell Mission and Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve). Beningfield (2006) highlights the politics of land dispossession in Ongeluksnek area. In the Ongeluksnek area white people claimed rights to the most fertile pieces of land, mostly catchment areas and productive valleys. Claims on the most fertile land by both white farmers and government were often

justified by ‘evidence’ of the destruction wrought to the landscape in areas reserved for black occupation. The productive ‘white’ landscape was often contrasted with an unproductive ‘black’ landscape (Beningfield, 2006).

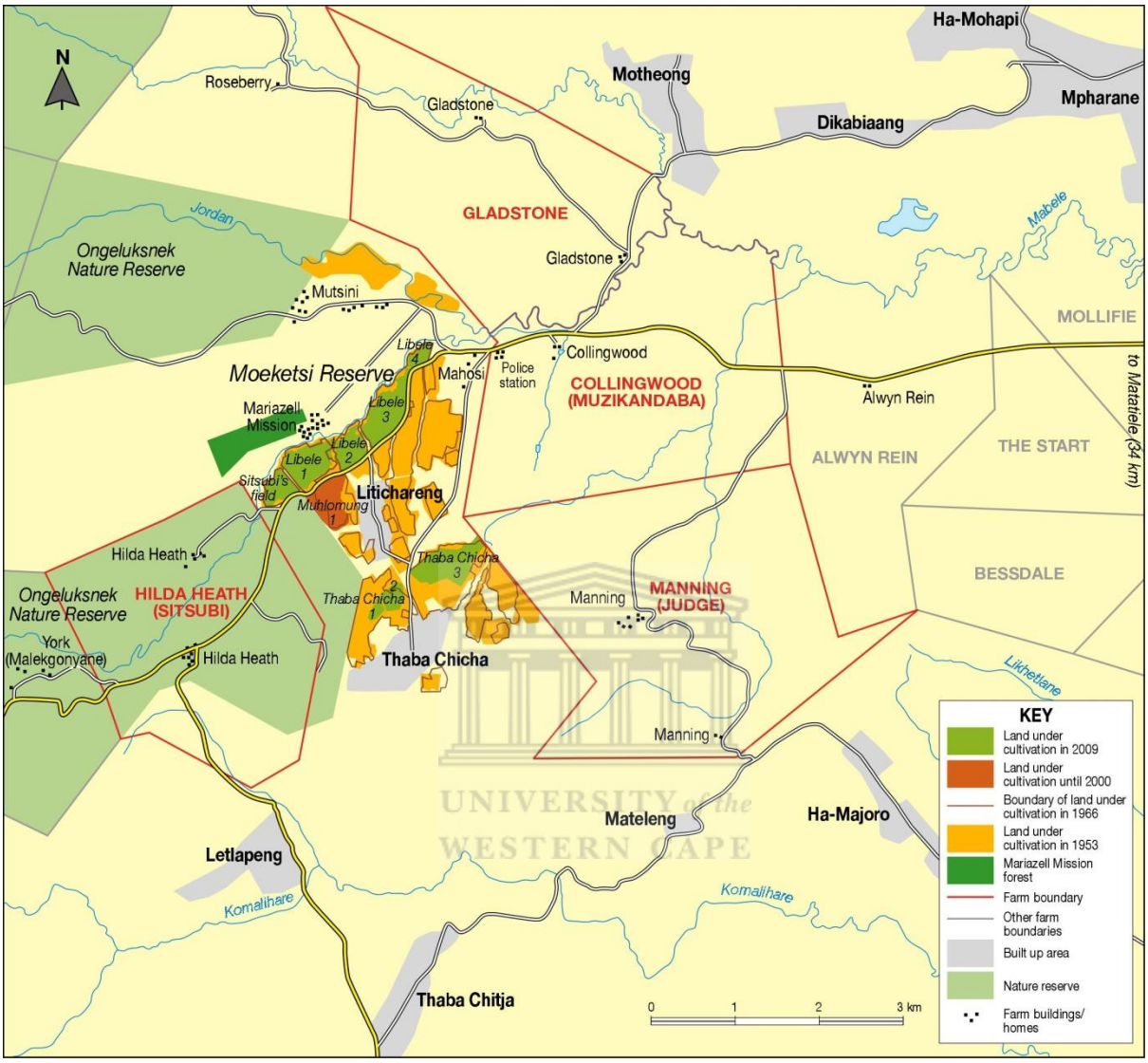
Oral accounts indicate that during the presence of the white commercial farmers in the Ongeluksnek valley the agrarian economy of the area was fairly robust. Historical evidence reveals that the dairy industry was an important component of the productive activities amongst the commercial farmers. With the flourishing of dairy farming in the earlier periods (1912) a cheese factory was established in the Ongeluksnek district at Martin Liedfeldt farm (Vernon, 2002). In the later years (1930s) there were two new cheese factories at Firth and Gladstone farms (see Vernon, 2002). Gladstone farm is in close proximity to the villages of Moeketsi (see Figure 2). Oral accounts indicate that the farms played a central role in the local economy. They primarily provided employment opportunities for the rural population. Besides employment opportunities, rural people in the area accessed essential services through the white farmers.

During the time of the whites, there were two large trading stores, one on Gladstone farm and the other on Malekgonyane farm. These provided the Moeketsi villagers with almost all their necessities and people could also buy goods on credit. These stores sold hardware (farming implements and building materials) and groceries. Malekgonyane farm also provided communication services since villagers could make and receive phone calls at the farm. The early 1970s saw a drastic change in the agrarian economy of Ongeluksnek. During this time, the South African government finalised plans to integrate the Ongeluksnek farming area into the Transkei homeland. Consequently, the white farmers moved out of the area. This set in motion a process of de-capitalisation of the farms and a general decline in the agrarian economy of the area. While the erstwhile white farmers benefited from institutional subsidies, allowances and tax rebates, this would not be the case with the future black occupants (Spiegel, 1990). These farms were expropriated in 1978 and were left in the care of the South African Development Trust (SADT) pending their transfer to the government of Transkei from 1983 onwards (Spiegel, 1990:136). During this time these farms were made available for leasing on condition that the occupants used them in a productive and sustainable way (Spiegel, 1990). Those who managed

to lease the Ongeluksnek farms were mostly traders in Matatiele and Mt. Fletcher as well as government bureaucrats. Spiegel argues that the ability to lease land in the Ongeluksnek farming area was an indicator of wealth and only people with significant non-farming income sources could occupy these farms (Spiegel, 1990:136).

Below I discuss the impact of the presence of these large land holders in the Moeketsi area. I include some vignettes to demonstrate that the establishment and enclosure of the large farms squeezed the people of Moeketsi into a narrow strip of land. During the era of white commercial farmers land shortage in the area was already an obstacle to agricultural production. Yet there was still a possibility of obtaining work in these farms. With the leasing of these farms to the black occupants there was a general decline in production and subsequently employment opportunities. The relationship between the large land holders and the villagers has often been conflictual and characterised by tension. The villagers are generally ambivalent about the departure of white farmers. On the one hand, their presence deprived them of agricultural resources in the form of land. On the other hand, they acknowledge their contribution in the form of jobs and socio-economic services. However, the socio-economic conditions seem to have worsened with the arrival of the capital-short black occupants leasing the farms. The departure of the former white owners saw the de-capitalisation of the farms with very little investment in the farms by the new occupants. While the establishment of these farms contributed to landlessness in the area of Moeketsi, these white farmers also acted as a buffer against cattle rustlers from Lesotho. With the arrival of the new black occupants, these farms have become highly under-developed and under-utilised.

Figure 2: The large farms in Moeketsi area



5.3.1 Mr Sitsubi's Farm

Before leasing the Hilda Heath farm in the Moeketsi area, Mr Sitsubi worked in the education sector initially as a teacher and in later years as an education officer. Upon retirement he concentrated on farming and leased the Hilda Heath farm. During his time at the farm Mr Sitsubi mainly focused on livestock production keeping cattle and sheep at the farm. He also produced maize at a small scale. His maize field was adjacent to the Libele village fields. Mr Sitsubi lived at the farm before being removed by the villagers. Oral accounts reveal that his relationship with the villagers was conflictual. Informants argued that the previous owner of the farm allowed

them to use the foot paths in the farm and to harvest natural resources like firewood and thatch grass. Mr Sitsubi was very strict and reversed all those privileges upon his arrival. The tensions also emanated from the lack of sufficient land for the rural villages to graze their livestock. Mr Sitsubi was eventually was evicted by the community. On the relationship of Mr. Sitsubi and the villagers one informant noted:

> Mr Sitsubi happened to have the farm from the government. The farm once belonged to a white man. But people were eager to get the farm because they were short of space. But they could not do that with the white man, they knew they would get shot, and get arrested. I think Mr Sitsubi left in 1986, in December. People were angry and harassed Mr Sitsubi and he finally left. Now the farm is part of our grazing land. No formal transfer has been done. We are just using the land in the meantime. People did not have enough land but they had to survive in those difficult conditions in those days. We just relied on the immediate grazing lands and the mountains for grazing. That's why people troubled Mr Sitsubi until he left (Interview with Thabang, 2010).

The departure of the white farmers was not beneficial to the villagers since the Bantustan government retained these farms and offered them to private individuals on a leasehold basis. Land shortages thus persisted. Currently, the Sitsubi farm now forms part of the grazing commons. The fences marking the boundaries of the farm were also removed.

5.3.2 Muzikandaba's Farm

The Muzikandaba farm is currently occupied by Mr Valatshiya. Mr Valatshiya is a local agriculturalist from a neighbouring village who has accumulated a sizeable herd of cattle. At the time of the research there were 150 livestock units at the farm. There were three employees from Lesotho at the farm, two of them tending the cattle and one a tractor driver. There is no cropping happening at the farm. Valatshiya took over the farm from the original occupier, Mr Muzikandaba, after the latter passed on. According to local informants when Mr Muzikandaba passed on his children sold off the moveable assets at the farm and most of the livestock. Around the same period, Muzikandaba's wife passed on. At the time Mrs Muzikandaba passed on, there was no money to meet her burial costs. A local livestock accumulator, Mr Valatshiya, offered to help the Muzikandaba family with payment of the burial costs for Mrs Muzikandaba's funeral. The agreement was that in exchange for meeting all the burial costs, Mr Valatshiya would be allowed to utilise the Muzikandaba farm. Since then Mr Valatshiya has moved his cattle to the

Muzikandaba farm. The community is also eyeing this farm and is hoping to push out Mr Valatshiya and utilise the farm for grazing land and a forestry project. According to one informant:

> This farm eats into village land. We have about 14.5 hectares in that farm. When we try to engage the man who is leasing the farm (Mr Valatshiya) he is evasive. He simply says he is leasing the farm and is dismissive. Recently at an imbizo the paramount Chief told us to go ahead and put our cattle on that farm because it's our land. If anyone protests he said we should tell them it's the Chief who gave us permission to occupy the farm. The Chief says now it's time for this issue to be escalated and goes to the courts. Any problems or conflicts that may arise the Chief will step in. This man has no basis whatsoever to be occupying our land. We also intend to extend the forestry trees into the neighbouring farm because the Chief gave us the green light. The Chief will step in if we have any problems (Interview with Mantoa, 2010).

The relationship between the large land holders and the villagers is characterised by tensions. This is essentially because the general view in these villages is that all the farmland in the area is tribal land which was annexed by the whites when they established their farms. The occupation of these farms by fellow blacks upon the departure of the white farmers in the 1970s has been associated with a decline in employment opportunities and general deterioration of the local agrarian economy. While the white farmers deprived the locals of much-needed land, the view is that the current occupants occupy this land without bringing about much development as was the case with white farmers.

5.3.3 Judge's Farm

While the Sitsubi farm had been deserted and occupied by the villagers as part of the grazing commons, the fences demarcating Judge's farm from the village are still intact. However, the farm has literally been abandoned by Judge's children. Judge leased the farm to acquire more grazing land for his cattle. However, when he passed on no one took up farming amongst his children. Judge's farm was often described as dilapidated (*igxaba*). Instead of a 'proper' commercial farm it was often characterised as having deteriorated to the level of a mere cattle outpost in the mountains (*umudibo*). This is mainly because some people from Moeketsi and surrounding villages were renting grazing land on the farm. The dilapidated nature of Judge's farm is thus portrayed as the very opposite of the productive nature of these farms whilst they

were in the hands of the whites. The benefits of these commercial farms during their productive years under white ownership included employment opportunities for the locals, provision of services (telephones and grocery shops) and minimal stock theft as a result of good security. However, villagers also acknowledge that the scarcity of adequate land has remained an intractable problem. The villagers often drew a contrast between the erstwhile white farmers and the new black occupants. It was often argued that the previous commercial farmers resided on their farms and were actively engaged in the operations of the farm. In contrast, the new black occupants did not reside on the farms and often stayed in the rural villages. The new farmers often chose village life as opposed to the quiet and isolated farm life. This narrative is often used to justify claims to the surrounding farms by the villagers.

5.3.4 Mariazell Mission

The Mariazell Mission was established in 1894. At the time, the mission bought three privately owned farms which were being auctioned and consolidated them into the present day mission. In total the mission owns 1 400 hectares of land. Within a period of three years after these farms were purchased land preparations were completed and building commenced (Interview with Father Bernard, 2014). The Lebenya traditional authorities were opposed to the mission occupying land in the area. However, they later realised that the land had been legally purchased and the mission had title deeds to the land. Throughout the years, the mission has been actively involved in agricultural production. This entailed livestock production and cropping on a large scale. In the 1990s, there has been a gradual withdrawal of the mission from large-scale farming. This is mainly because the mission has fewer personnel to manage farming activities and most of the missionaries who were interested in farming have either retired or passed on. However, when the mission was actively involved in farming, it invested in infrastructure like fences to protect its own crops from being damaged by livestock from the villages. With enough crops of their own, the villagers would also not steal from the mission farm. It also helped the Mutsini villagers by fencing their arable fields and hiring rangers to protect the crops and maintain the fences. By supporting farming in Mutsini villagers the mission was protecting its own farming investments. In the process the people of Mutsini benefited from the active role of the mission in farming (Interview with Father Bernard, 2014).

In response to calls by the post-apartheid government for large land owners to make available land for redistribution the mission decided to donate half of its land to Mutsini villagers. In 1996 the mission under the leadership of the late Father Ernest decided to donate part of its land (900 hectares) to the Mutsini villagers. The sub-division of the land was carried out, the community drafted a trust deed but the process was never finalised and Mutsini Trust was never registered. Ultimately no title deed was ever obtained to authenticate the land transfer. Recently, the process of donating the land to Mutsini village was resuscitated. The only change from the previous offer is that the Mission resolved to secure its water source and some grazing land. This will see the initial land offer of approximately 900 hectares being reduced to about 800 hectares. The whole community was part of the mapping process and accepted the revised offer. Yet a splinter group of eight people has emerged which claims that the whole land belongs to the village and the reduced land offer will not be accepted (Interview with McLeod, 2013).

Further probing on this issue reveals that there seem to be conflicting interests amongst the villagers with respect to what the donated land will be used for. This has stalled the process of transferring the land. On the one hand, there are the majority of villagers who are in favour of the current revised offer from the Mission. These villagers plan to continue with the usual land use practices namely household farming. This mainly entails reviving cropping in the arable fields and continuing with livestock production. However, there is a small group of about eight individuals who have opposed the transfer of land by the mission. They are demanding more land from the mission than what has been made available. Their new demands target the prime farmland on the mission. Further probing has revealed that these individuals have been lobbied by outside business interests. These business people are making promises of bringing a large-scale agricultural development scheme which will grow soya beans for bio-fuels. The splinter group believes that with more land available it will thus be possible to engage in highly-mechanised large-scale cultivation and bring about development in the area. It is on this basis that the small group of villagers is stalling the process of land transfer by demanding more land from the mission (Interview with Father Bernard, 2014).

5.3.5 Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve

Besides the neighbouring farms, relations with the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve have also been problematic. Villagers argue that no tangible benefits have been realized from the operation of the Nature Reserve. In the interviews respondents noted that employment opportunities provided by Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve were not enough and the few jobs available did not always go Moeketsi villagers. However, the most critical point of contention was grazing land. The people of Moeketsi are of the view that the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve was established on their ancestors' land, depriving them of grazing land. In my interviews people complained that their cattle were thin because the pastures on the village side were of poor quality and over-grazed relative to the Nature Reserve. In the past, relations between the village and the Nature Reserve have been characterised by tension especially when livestock from the village roam into the Nature Reserve. Villagers have had their livestock impounded when they wander into the Nature Reserve and are supposed to pay a fine for their release. This has been a primary source of disaffection amongst the Moeketsi villagers. The following excepts give some insight into the nature of the relationship between the Moeketsi villagers and the Nature Reserve:

> I am not from here. I am from the Ciskei. I first started working here as a game ranger for the Nature Reserve. Government and the residents of Moeketsi had agreed way back on the boundaries between the Nature Reserve and the village. Still the people claimed that we had taken a portion of their land and pushed us back. We yielded and moved back and hoped they would be satisfied. They went on to cut down the fence and put their cattle to graze in the conservancy. Maybe they thought the whole thing was a joke. We impounded the cattle and took them to Maluti. They had to pay a fine to get them back. And one of the weekends in the village I was attacked by a group of men and fought them off. They said I had betrayed them (Interview with Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve employee, 2012).

The Moeketsi area is a small strip of land surrounded by large land holders. Villagers note that their agricultural activities have suffered as a result of lack of adequate land in the area. Livestock production is the most affected activity considering that it requires fairly extensive land for grazing animals. However, this has in turn affected cropping in large fields. Without adequate grazing pastures livestock frequently destroyed crops in arable fields and over the years people have been discouraged to continue cultivating their fields. One development consultant noted that:

> The relationship between the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and the villagers is not good. The quality of grazing land within the Nature Reserve is so much better than outside the fence. Villagers want to graze their cattle in the Nature Reserve but they can't. There have been so many suspicious fires in the Nature Reserve. While I can't pinpoint who is responsible my own sense is that people are of the view that 'if we can't graze our cattle then we burn the grass' (Interview with Matello, 2012).

Villagers often argued that the surrounding farms and the Nature Reserve have deprived them of their grazing land. The land shortages that have characterised the rural villages of Moeketsi are critical in understanding the decline in field cultivation and the constrained nature of livestock production in the area.

5.4 Moeketsi Reserve before betterment interventions

Before the introduction of betterment in Moeketsi there were three villages namely Thaba Chicha, Litichareng and Mahosi. The first settlement in Moeketsi was Thaba Chicha. Mahosi was only established for security reasons. It was meant to be a buffer zone between the neighbouring villages, especially Masupha and the arable fields belonging to the Thaba Chicha residents. Mahosi is named after a sub-Chief, Mahosi Letseka, who was assigned by the local Chief at the time to settle in that area to secure their crops from thieves. Litichareng only emerged after Thaba Chicha and Mahosi were already populated. From the interviews, the first few people arrived in Litichareng in the early 1950s.

The first people to arrive in Litichareng (or *'the place of teachers'*) were teachers from the Mariazell Mission. During that time, there was extensive cultivation in most of the fields in different parts of the villages. Thus, all the arable fields (see Figure 2 showing arable fields under cultivation in 1953) in different sites of Moeketsi (namely, Muhlomung, Libele, Mahosi and Thaba Chicha) were under cultivation. Focus group participants argued that it was not uncommon in the 1950s for a single homestead to own more than one arable field. In most cases this would be one large field and a small field (*isivande*). Crops from the small field were usually immediately used for feeding the family. Crops from the large fields were harvested and stored in granaries for future use. The small field was meant to provide the homestead with greens for immediate consumption. As one elderly woman from Litichareng noted:

> We arrived in this area in 1952. From the primary school at Maphele right up to Mahosi, the whole area had arable fields. People were cultivating their fields. We had fewer people and so some homesteads had two or more fields. During that time you just asked for a portion of land if you identified fertile land suitable for cultivation. People had bigger fields and smaller fields *(isivande*). The *isivande* was used for growing green maize to feed the family. The maize in the large fields was kept for harvesting when it was dry (Interview with Nomuzi, 2012).

During this time there were no fences separating grazing land from arable fields. However, it was far from being a 'free for all' scenario since the villagers had their own systems of managing land. One of the systems in place was the *maboella* system. One of the focus group participants argued that:

> Even before the grazing camps we had the *maboella* system. Everything was orderly from one season to the next. If your cattle were in the wrong place you were fined by the Chief. The cattle could not roam freely in cultivated fields. People were given enough time to harvest their crops in the fields. We were also given time to cut thatch grass in the fields. Cattle were usually allowed in the fields around June/July (Interview with Qoza, 2012).

The *maboella* system essentially involved setting aside certain portions of the land for grazing at different times of the year. Fallow fields or fields which had been abandoned for longer periods would also form part of the grazing land. Villagers used *umkulukuthane* which simply refers to a heap of stones used to mark boundaries and demarcate grazing land from arable fields. These boundary markers would be moved depending on what land was being used for cultivation at the time or which portions of the grazing land were not supposed to be grazed. People who violated the system or had their livestock grazing in a certain portion of land before it was declared open for grazing were fined by the Chief.

5.4.1 Betterment Interventions and Changing Patterns of Land use in Moeketsi

Betterment interventions had a pervasive and profound impact on rural households in South Africa's reserves (De Wet, 1989; Hendricks, 1989 and McAllister, 1992). The case of Moeketsi is no exception. Interviews from the study sites and aerial images provide evidence of how state interventions in Moeketsi villages reorganised land-use practices and altered the livelihood activities of rural households. In Moeketsi betterment interventions were first experienced in the

early 1970s. Local representatives of the state were dispatched in the rural villages to inform people about the need to move from the mountainous areas and settle closer to roads and social services. In the Moeketsi area, the Thaba Chicha residents were settled on a mountainous area. Focus group participants noted that in terms of original betterment land-use plans the people from Thaba Chicha were to be resettled in Mahosi and Litichareng. However, since the then Chief had his homestead in Thaba Chicha, resettlement of the Thaba Chicha residents did not happen. Informants reveal that the then Chief influenced the man responsible for resettlement, a certain Mr Mahlelebe from Mt Fletcher to, instead, move the people from Mahosi. As a result, the whole village of Mahosi was resettled. Some of its residents moved to Thaba Chicha while others were settled in Litichareng. There were some residents who moved to neighbouring villages and farms while the rest went back to their places of origin.

> This was a difficult and miserable time for the people but when the government's law is spelt out to the Chiefs and is passed on to people who know no violence they just accept. It starts with the Chief, to accept government orders, and then the Chief says 'what can I do, accept what the government is saying and see what follows'. Some people were displaced, their lives disturbed and they moved to other villages. They said we don't understand this whole idea of moving from our parents' homesteads and our fields (Interview with Nomuzi, 2012).

Besides the re-organisation of residential areas some of the arable fields were turned into grazing camps. Discussions with the villagers reveal that the worst affected fields were the Mahosi fields. All of them became part of the grazing camps. Only a small part of the Muhlomung fields was fenced off from the grazing camp and their owners continued to cultivate this remaining small portion. The Libele and Thaba Chicha fields fell outside of the areas allocated for grazing and thus continued to be used for cultivation. According to one respondent:

> When the Trust[7] arrived, extension officers were dispatched to measure the fields and allocate equal portions of land to fields owners. Only the Chief's field remained large, about two and half hectares. We all remained with one hectare each. Before the Trust people had huge fields. The Chief would allocate you land and its size depended on how much land you could cultivate. Land was abundant. But when this law came, all the fields were supposed to be of equal size and most people ended up with smaller fields. Some

[7] The local people frequently referred to the Trust as the authority responsible for their relocation. The Trust here refers to the South African Native Development Trust. This word trust was also often used loosely to refer to the government of the time, specifically Mathanzima's government.

had infertile land. It became clear that the government squeezed us and land became smaller and smaller (Interview with Nomuzi, 2012).

The establishment of grazing land was justified by the officials as a system that would allow the villagers not only to conserve their range land through proper management but also free their children from a life of herding cattle so that they attend school. In total there were four grazing camps established in the Moeketsi Reserve and the livestock would spend two weeks in each grazing camp. However, the grazing camps were soon proved to be small for the livestock in the villages. In no time they were overgrazed. Villagers were thus compelled to reduce the number of cattle they owned. Each homestead was required to have six cattle and with four of these being oxen for ploughing and only two for milking. This was to have a negative impact on the rural households. One respondent remarked:

> Matanzima's[8] law became a problem because it was ordered that each homestead should have six cattle. In that number, two cattle would be for milk, and four cattle are for draught power. And people found it difficult. The thing was at times the four cattle would be young and you couldn't use them for draught power. It would have been better if they had said six cattle are oxen for draught power and two cows for milk. These grazing camps were very small. People had big herds of cattle. In one week you would notice that the grass would be trampled and overgrazed. The camps looked dusty especially when the rains were not good. By mid-day, the cattle would gather at the gate wanting to be released from the paddock because there was no food. The cattle were starving. The Chief raised these problems in meetings, with Matanzima. So when it became clear that there was not enough grass for our cattle in the grazing camps Matanzima ordered that the number of cattle per household be reduced. Reduce the number of cattle. You can't have many cattle because your land is small we were told (Interview with Qoza, 2012).

This limitation on number of cattle owned did not take into account increases in livestock numbers as a result of births. When the number of cattle increased the chief would summon the people to an *Imbizo* (community gathering) and urge them to comply with the government's law. Stock cards would be checked on a regular basis during dipping days to ensure that people kept the cattle numbers down. Betterment interventions disrupted the land use practices of the people of Moeketsi. From the 1970s until the 1980s the grazing camps still existed. Focus group

[8] Kaiser Matanzima was the president of the Transkei homeland from 1979 to 1987 and people associated betterment interventions with his rule.

participants noted that in 1990s people started removing the fence saying ‘we are free now’. The fences ‘belonged to Matanzima’. In no time the fences were stolen and there was no order.

Thus, when it became apparent that the homeland government was in its twilight days, people started to vandalise the 'trust' fences in the grazing camps and the perimeter fences in some of the neighbouring farms. Even the telephone line from Matatiele was also destroyed and people used these materials to erect perimeter fences on their homesteads. In the discussions on land use changes villagers indicated that even today one can see these telephone poles in some homestead fences. According to one respondent:

> Quite a lot of destruction happened and started around 1989 and things became worse with the release of Mandela. That’s when people started cutting the fences. The word ‘freedom’ was in our minds and we were now to destroy all things associated with Matanzima. Removal of all the fences of the camps was during the time when the prisoners were being released. ‘Mandela is coming, he is going to cultivate the fields for us, and he is going to help us buy cattle’, people used to say (Interview with Nzeleni, 2012).

Both the realisation that the homeland government was in its twilight days and lack of adequate land seem to explain this behaviour. Over the years, there has also been an increase in the population. This development has not only presented problems with regard to agricultural land. It appears that access to residential sites is also an emergent problem. This explains the recent reclamation of Mahosi as the younger generation demand residential stands. In the interviews, respondents confirmed that Mahosi was mainly for younger people reclaiming the land of their families who were moved during betterment days. However, there is no evidence that this area is meant only for people whose families had lived there before. Settlement in Mahosi is open to all Moeketsi’s young residents. In addition, Mahosi also represents young people's quest to be free from the grip of chiefly power. This is succinctly captured by one of the focus group participants. In his words:

> It is only now that some of our youngsters, some teachers, said we need that place, we are overcrowded. And also because there was a lot friction between them and the Chief. Because Chiefs are absolute, they are demanding, they are the bribing type. Young people like what they feel is right for them, more especially educated young men. They believe they must be free and independent. They want to make themselves a very good example of being free and independent. So they demanded to go back to Mahosi. They

> formed a committee of some sort against the Chief. So they cornered him and he had nothing to say considering the reasons they presented to him. And now Mahosi is growing (Interview with Qoza, 2012).

Mahosi has been revived and is now mainly occupied by a few young professionals. Most of the structures in Mahosi are rectangular cement houses. At the time of the research some of the homesteads were newly established and building was still taking place. The area of Mahosi also has two of the most active taverns where young people prefer to socialise and drink beer away from the eyes of the strict elderly people.

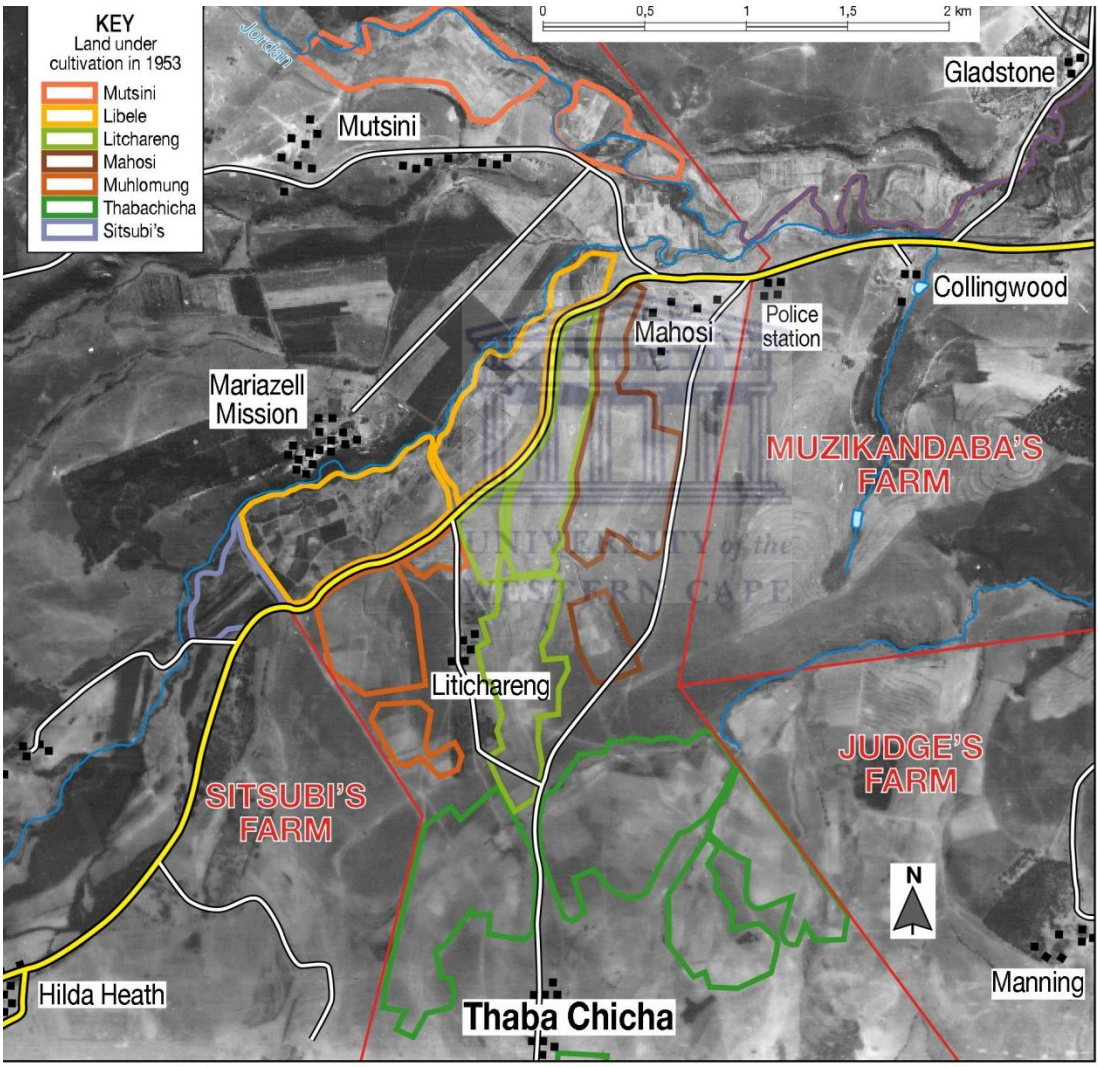
5.4.2 Participatory analysis of maps and aerial images: Changes in land use patterns

I will discuss the land-use patterns in the pre-betterment and post betterment period. The process of analysing land-use patterns across the years commenced with a focus group discussion with four elderly people, 2 women and 2 men, who had first-hand experience of these changes. I presented the aerial images and maps to the focus group members and allowed them time to reflect on the changes that had occurred during the different years. The maps were useful since they helped the participants to recall some of the past events. After the informal and unstructured discussion, I then posed some questions focusing on five themes; settlement patterns, cultivation of arable land, management of grazing land and the changes as well as impact of the betterment interventions. After the discussion one member of the group accompanied me on a field excursion where we mapped the different arable fields. The objective of this field excursion was to identify which arable fields were being utilised during which period. It was also meant to corroborate information that had emerged from the focus group discussion.

While Mutsini village features in this discussion my emphasis will be on Mahosi, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha villages which are under the communal tenure regime and experienced betterment. Mutsini village was established on Mariazell Mission land for the mission employees. Since it is private land there were no government interventions implemented in this village. However, oral accounts reveal that it was equally affected by the collapse of the betterment land-use regime. People in Mutsini argued that besides the withdrawal of material support by their benefactor, Mariazell Mission, the collapse of betterment fences affected them.

Cattle from the other villages frequently destroyed their crops at a time when there were not adequate resources to maintain their fences. The shortage of grazing land meant that livestock production and cropping in large fields have had to compete for the small amount of land available.

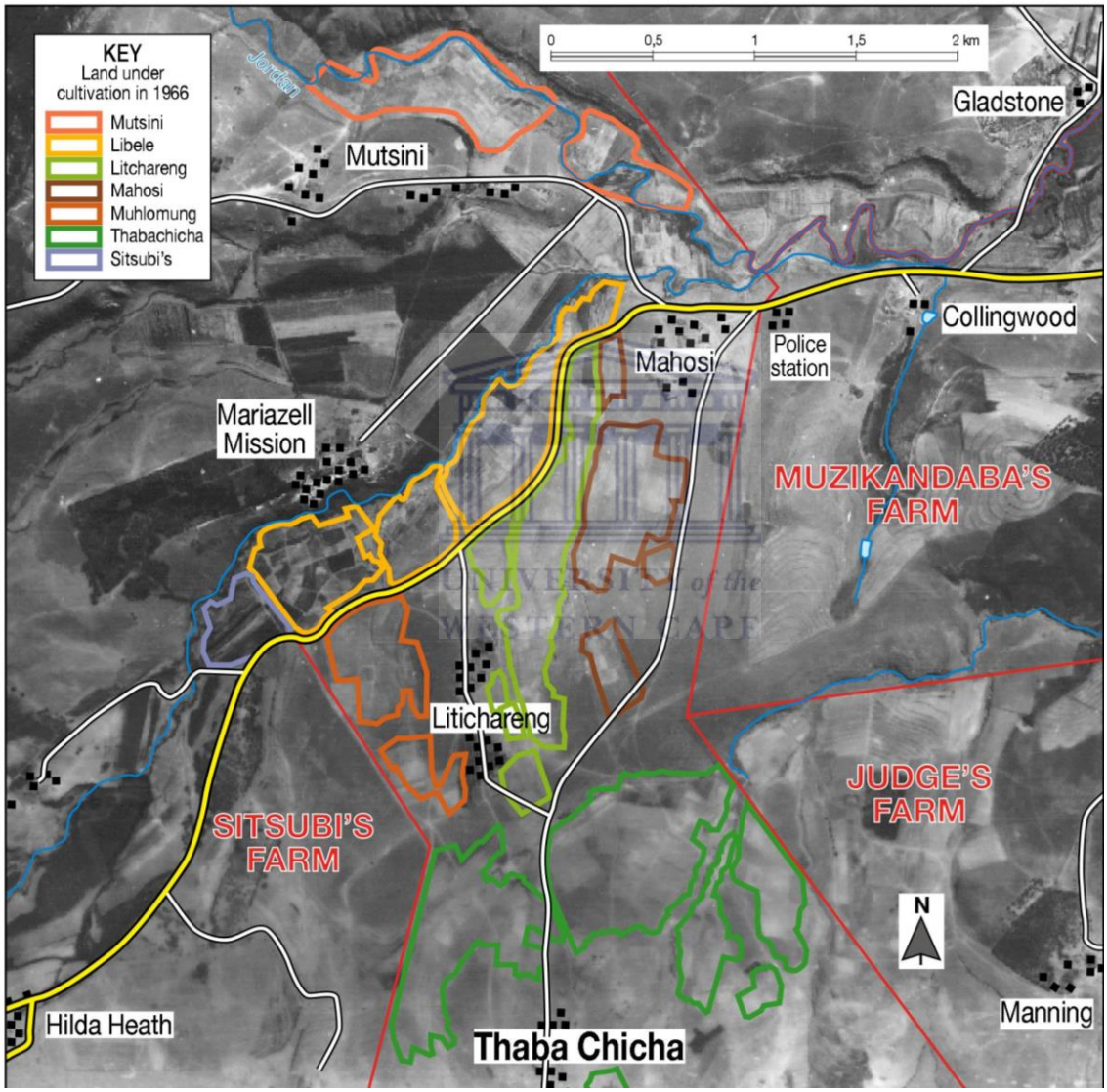
Figure 3: Arable land under cultivation in 1953



The Mutsini land was originally donated to forty employees (40 households) and it has since grown to sixty households. Figure 3 is an aerial image showing the patterns in land use (based on the mapping exercise) in 1953. In 1953 there was extensive cultivation of arable land in the rural villages of Moeketsi namely Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. The 1953 aerial image

shows that the arable fields in these villages are located in six sites namely the Mutsini, Libele, Litichareng, Mahosi, Muhlomung and Thaba Chicha. There is also a large arable field belonging to Hilda Heath (Sitsubi farm) adjoining the Libele arable fields. Oral accounts reveal that all the fields in different sites around the villages were being cultivated in the 1950s.

Figure 4: Arable land under cultivation in 1966



The Chief in Thaba Chicha had dispatched Mahosi Letseka his kinsmen to settle near Avondale police station so as to secure the arable fields lying between Litichareng and the police station as well as the Libele fields. This is how the Mahosi settlement became established. The idea was to protect crops from being stolen by people from neighbouring villages. Around this time (1950s)

Litichareng was still a small settlement with a couple of dwellings. In the early 1950s the outer part of present day Litichareng, from the side facing Mahosi to the side facing the Sitsubi farm consisted of arable fields. There was also extensive cultivation in the arable fields in Thaba Chicha and Mutsini. Oral accounts indicate that during the 1950s it was common for homesteads to possess more than one field. Usually this consisted of one large field meant for growing crops for harvesting and storage. People also tended to own a smaller field (*isivande*) which was meant to feed the family with green maize.

Oral accounts indicate that in 1966 (see Figure 4) cultivation of arable fields was still robust. Mahosi has slightly grown as more people who came from other areas to search for work at the mission and surrounding farms stayed at Mahosi. Some of these people stayed in Mahosi on a temporary basis while others ended up settling permanently under the jurisdiction of the chief's appointee Mahosi Letseka. Litichareng had also grown slightly as more people settled in the village. The arable fields in the villages were being extensively cultivated with work parties (*letsema*) being the most common means of mobilising labour amongst the villagers. For Thaba Chicha residents with fields in the lower plains, sledges were used to transport the harvest from the fields to the uplands.

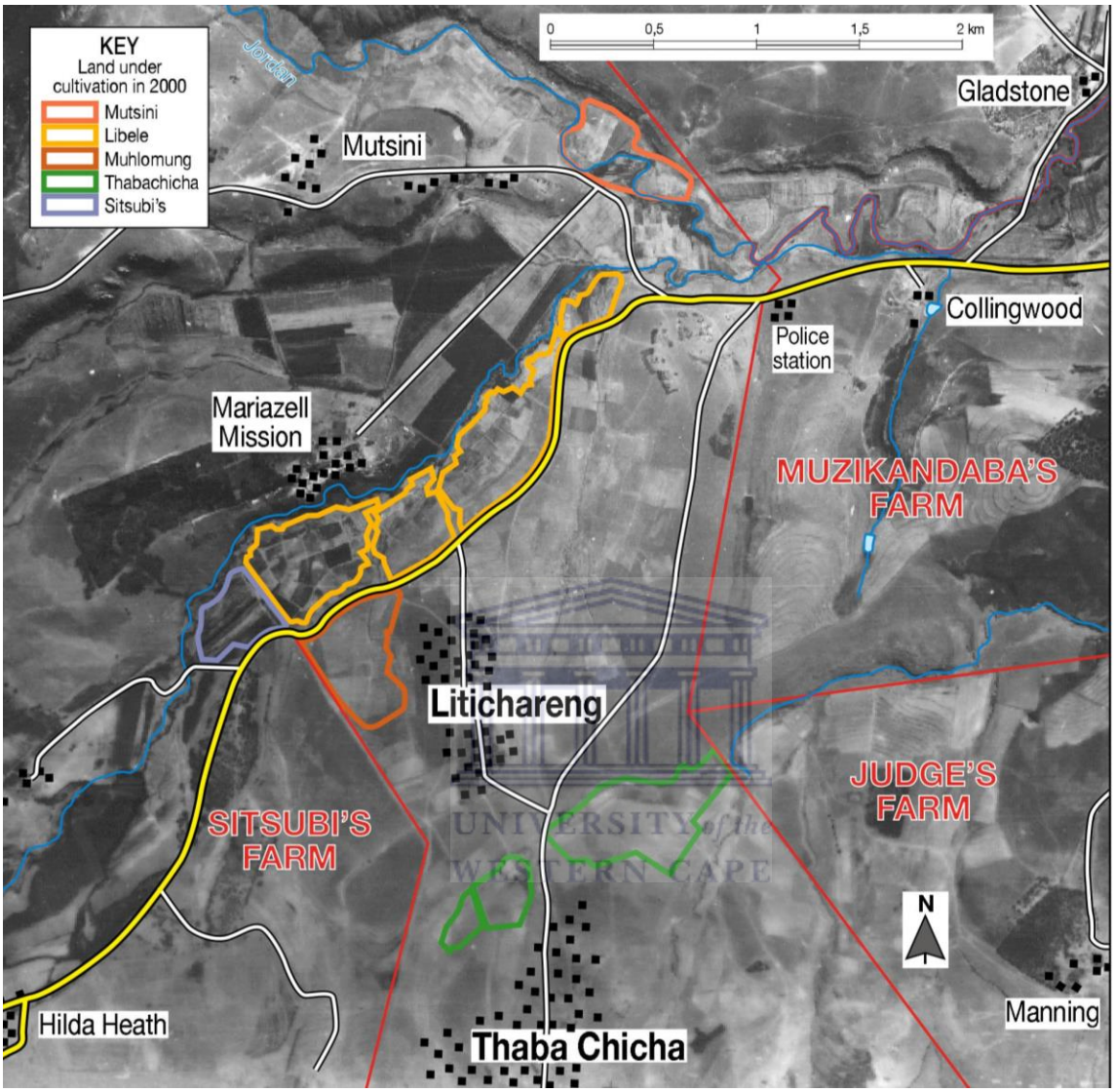
To recapitulate, in the pre-betterment period there were five sites (excluding Mutsini arable fields since it did not experience betterment) of arable fields which were being utilised in the Moeketsi villages. These are the Libele, Litichareng, Muhlomung, Mahosi and Thaba Chicha arable fields. In the early 1970s, betterment interventions were introduced in three villages namely Litichareng, Mahosi and Thaba Chicha. Of the five field sites belonging to the three villages three were annexed (i.e. Muhlomung and Mahosi and Litichareng arable fields) and set aside for grazing camps. A small part at the centre of Muhlomung arable fields was still retained as arable land within a grazing camp (see the 2000 cultivation patterns in Figure 5). The Moeketsi villages were thus left with Libele, a small portion of Muhlomung and Thaba Chicha arable fields.

The land owners of the annexed field sites were supposed to be allocated land in the two remaining arable field sites namely Libele, Thaba Chicha and the small portion of Muhlomung.

To achieve this, the practise of owning more than one piece of land was abolished. Oral accounts revealed that besides owning one large arable field and a smaller one (*isivande*) dedicated for harvesting green maize some few wealth households owned two or three large fields. Now households were being limited to one arable field. However, the arable field was supposed to be at most 1.5 hectares in size. Some displaced households were squeezed into the demarcated arable field sites, that is, Libele, Thaba Chicha and the small site at Muhlomung. Many of them however were forced to abandon their homesteads since they no longer had a productive base in the form of the arable land. Some relocated to their places of origin while others settled as workers or tenants in commercial farms in the region.

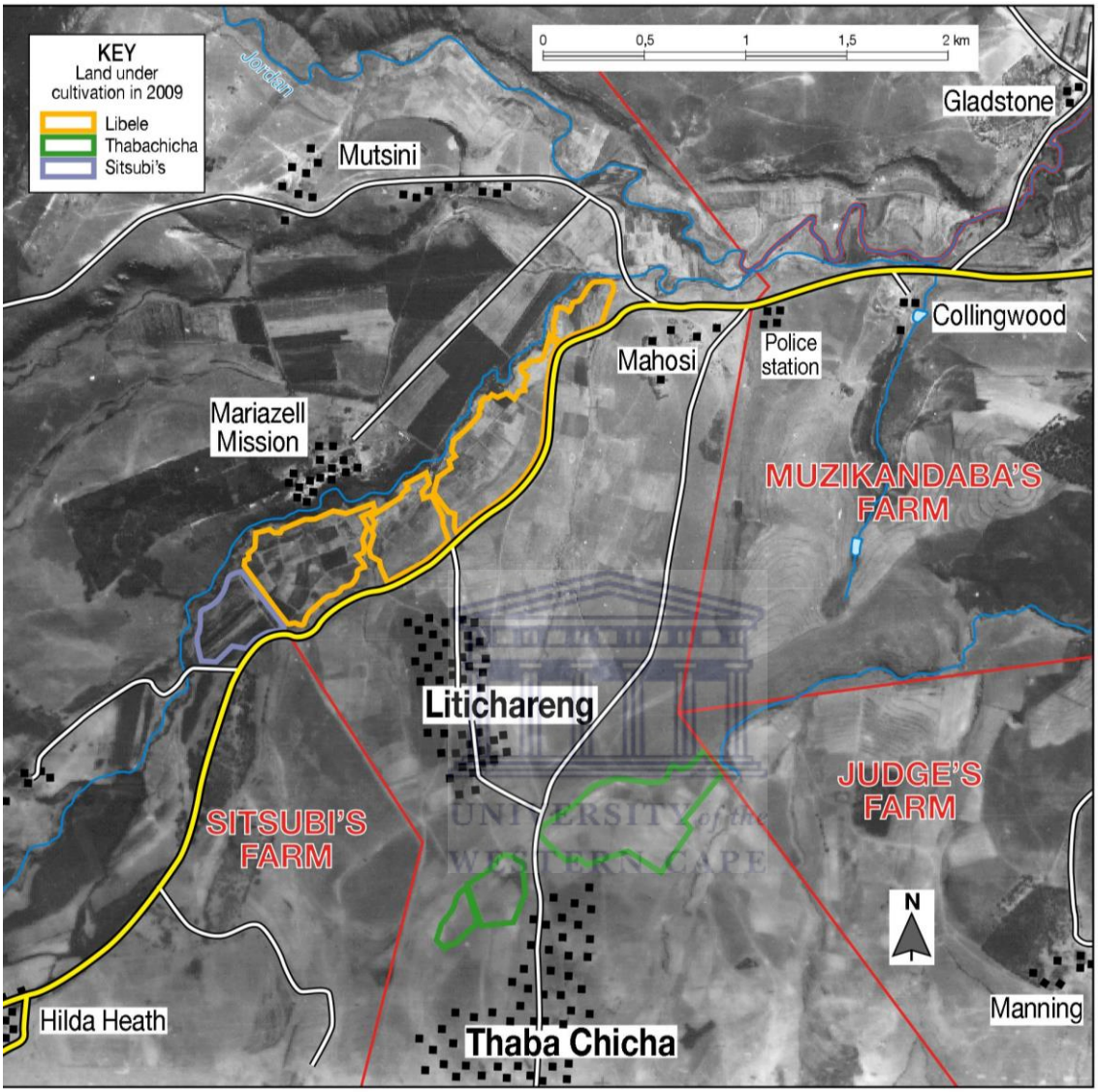
The stretch of land between Mahosi and Litichareng villages formed two grazing camps. The Muhlomung arable fields formed two additional grazing camps. Each grazing camp had a water point installed. In the aerial image below I show the cultivation patterns in 2000 (Figure 5), well after betterment had been implemented. The area that was once under cultivation in the 1950s (Figure 3) and 1960s (Figure 4) has not been mapped. This is because after the implementation of betterment land use plans these arable fields became grazing land. Households in the Litichareng and Thaba Chicha and some who had been relocated from Mahosi now had to rely on the land in Libele, Thaba Chicha and a small part of Muhlomung. The arable land under cultivation after the betterment interventions is shown in Figure 5 (2000 aerial image) and figure 6 (2009 aerial image).

Figure 5: Arable land under cultivation in 2000



As already mentioned the map above (2000) shows that after betterment, the only remaining arable fields were Libele and Thaba Chicha and smaller Muhlomung. A small portion of Muhlomung located inside a grazing camp was also fenced off and some homesteads were allowed to use them for cropping. The Muhlomung fields located inside the grazing camp continued to be utilised until about 2000. The homesteads utilising those fields stopped cultivating around that time. The Thaba Chicha and Libele fields continued to be utilised by some households.

Figure 6: Arable land under cultivation in 2009



While others were dropping out of field cultivation still a number of agriculturalists continued to plough these fields. In 2009/10 farming season the government massive maize production scheme was introduced in Moeketsi and all the households who were still utilising fields in the Libele and Thaba Chicha sites made way for the government scheme. The fields that were still being utilised (Libele and Thaba Chicha) and had not been fallow were easy to work on and as a result they were immediately brought under cultivation by the government scheme. The large field formerly belonging to Mr Sitsubi adjoining the Libele fields was also brought under cultivation under the AsgiSA maize scheme in the 2009/10 farming season. After betterment, the

only remaining arable fields were Libele and Thaba Chicha fields. A small portion of Muhlomung located inside a grazing camp was also fenced off and some homesteads were allowed to use them for cropping. The Muhlomung fields located inside the grazing camp continued to be utilised until the about 2000. The homesteads utilising those fields stopped cultivating around that time. The Thaba Chicha and Libele fields continued to be utilised by some households.

In terms of settlements, the pre-betterment period had two major settlements, Thaba Chicha and Mahosi. Litichareng had a handful of homesteads belonging to Mariazell teachers who had been allowed to settle in Moeketsi Reserve by the local Chief. In the 1950s Litichareng village consisted of a few dwellings located at the centre of a forest. There were also sledge routes passing through this forest. These sledge routes were used by villagers in Litichareng and Thaba Chicha to transport crops from the fields. Ox-drawn sledges were popular mode of transport during this period. During the 1950s there was extensive cultivation of large fields. The arable fields on both the Muhlomung and Mahosi sides encroached onto the then small village of Litichareng. When Litichareng became an approved betterment village and Mahosi villagers were dispersed, Litichareng grew as more people settled in the village. As more people were absorbed in Litichareng and more homesteads were built the village extended onto the Muhlomung and Mahosi fields which had been under cultivation in earlier times and were encroached on by the growing village. Today the homesteads at the edges of the village are built on the older fields. It is noteworthy that huge portions of these fields ceased to be cultivated when they were demarcated as grazing camps.

Mahosi had been expanding before betterment was implemented. The settlement originated when Mahosi, a member of the chieftaincy, was assigned to settle in that area and guard crops in the Mahosi fields from thieves. With time, people from neighbouring villages and some from as far as Lesotho who came to Mariazell looking for work used Mahosi as a dormitory settlement. Some of them ended up being allocated residential stands and settling permanently. Oral accounts indicate that during this time (1950s-1960s) Mahosi was a diverse place with both coloured and black residents. However, with the introduction of betterment, only Litichareng and Thaba Chicha were the designated residential sites. Mahosi was disbanded and some of its

residents went back to Thaba Chicha while others, especially those from faraway villages moved back to their places of origin. In the years after betterment Mahosi did not show any evidence of settlement. It is only in recent years, from at least mid-2000 that younger people starting their own homesteads were allowed to settle in the area. As a result, the recent aerial images in recent years show evidence of a re-emerging Mahosi.

Betterment was supposed to see people descending from the mountains and settling in the lower plains closer to road networks and other essential services. Oral accounts indicate that initially the official plan was to have Thaba Chicha disbanded and Mahosi and Litichareng become the demarcated betterment settlements. However, the Chief at the time had his homestead in Thaba Chicha and eventually managed to save Thaba Chicha homesteads from being resettled. Thaba Chicha is the oldest settlement and has continued to grow along the rugged terrain on the mountain range.

5.5 Land administration and allocation

This section discusses land tenure in the villages of Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. In Mutsini village the land currently belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, the Mutsini case will be discussed separately. My focus is on the administration and allocation of land under the communal tenure system in Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. Before examining these issues I will provide a brief review the wider literature on land tenure in the former homelands. According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (2004:7) "land tenure is the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land. Land tenure is an institution, i.e., rules invented by societies to regulate behaviour". FAO (2004:7) further notes that "rules of tenure define how property rights to land are to be allocated within societies. They define how access is granted to rights to use, control, and transfer land, as well as associated responsibilities and restraints". Cousins (2007b) asserts that "in South Africa contemporary forms of 'customary' or 'communal' land tenure can be understood only in the context of a centuries-old history of land dispossession and state regulation". Equally important are the various "local responses ranging from high profile rebellions to 'hidden struggles'...that shaped the outcomes of these interventions to a degree" (Cousins, 2007b:283). The state interventions were meant to "reconfigure the livelihood and land tenure systems of the

indigenous populations in ways that served the interests of the dominant classes. African 'reserves' were created as a way to contain resistance and to facilitate the supply of cheap labour for the emerging capitalist economy" (Cousins, 2007b:283). These interventions were also justified by colonial governments on the basis that "the 'commons' are not and cannot be regarded as property systems" (Okoth-Ogendo, 2002:4). According to Okoth-Ogendo (1992) the "denial of the proprietary character of the commons was fundamental to the operation and subsequent exploitation of the African commons".

Mamdani's (1996) thesis of 'decentralised despotism' offers an explanation of the nature and impacts of colonial and apartheid interventions in the traditional governance systems and how the latter were altered to serve capitalist interests. In this formulation, the institution of 'traditional leadership' was used as an instrument of 'indirect rule' by the colonialists or apartheid governments. Mamdani (1996) notes that the colonial state was 'bifurcated' offering rights and enfranchisement to urban 'citizens' while the rural 'subjects' remained oppressed mainly through the institution of traditional leadership. More importantly, vestiges of a bifurcated state have persisted in the post-colonial era with the enactment, in various African countries, of laws that prop up the institution of traditional leadership. Describing the oppressive nature of the institution of traditional leadership, Mamdani (1996) notes that:

> Not only did the chief have the right to pass rules (by laws) governing persons under his domain, he also executed all laws and was the administrator in "his" area, in which he settled all disputes. The authority of the chief fused in a single person all moments of power, judicial, legislative, executive, and administrative. This authority was like a clenched fist, necessary because the chief stood at the intersection of the market economy and non-market one. The administrative justice and the administrative coercion that were the sum and substance of his authority lay behind a regime of extra-economic coercion, a regime that breathed life into a whole range of compulsions: forced labour, forced crops, forced sales, forced contributions, and forced removals (Mamdani, 1996:23).

In South Africa, Chiefs have exercised considerable power in the administration and allocation of land under the communal tenure system. In spite of the policy focus on a 'developmental' local government in post-apartheid South Africa these supposed development 'functions' are undermined by the recognition of the institution of traditional leadership. According to Ntsebeza (1999:1) "the recognition of the powers of traditional leaders has a number of far reaching

implications for control over land allocation, democratic local government and gender equality". More specifically, "chiefly authority is ascribed by lineage rather than achieved through elections, and its patriarchal principles ensure that major decisions on land allocations and local government are almost invariably taken by men" (Ntsebeza, 1999:1).

Some studies have revealed that instead of emphasising laid-down rules and procedures in examining land tenure in rural settings, another important point of entry is the 'local practices', what Fay terms 'tenure in practice' (see Fay, 2005; Hornby, 2000). In a study of kinship and access to land in Hobeni, Eastern Cape, Fay (2005) focuses on 'tenure in practice' emphasising the point that land is always socially and spatially situated. According to Fay (2005) "because a particular piece of land is always located in space, actors' social positions and the spatial locations of the land they seek are significant; access depends on who is looking for land, and where they are looking for land" (Fay, 2005:183). Fay (2005) deployed 'a practice-based approach' to the analysis of land tenure. This revealed significant variations in tenure practices which were related to the kin composition of local neighbourhoods.

Thus, in areas where few families are numerically predominant, agnatic kinship is the primary means for access to land. Conversely, in areas which are diverse in terms of their kin composition, other ties, for instance, friendship, church membership and common employment are the basis for gaining access to land. According to Fay (2005) some agnatically dense neighbourhoods in Hobeni trace their descent to a few wealthy polyginists who managed to accumulate wealth during the years of peasant prosperity underwritten by income from migrant labour. These managed to marry more wives leading to the numerical dominance of a few extended families within the same neighbourhood. The neighbourhoods with diverse compositions by contrast trace their origins to the less well-off families who could not accumulate as much wealth as the polyginists families. Without significant wealth like their counterparts these families could not afford marrying many wives to become numerically predominant within their localities. With respect to access to land the diverse localities are more open in terms of allowing outsiders access to land. Conversely, in neighbourhoods with 'a network of closely related, co-resident agnates' kinship networks seem to be the primary basis of qualifying for land (see Fay, 2005). However, there may be countervailing forces to the

predominance of agnatic segments in the allocation of land. To illustrate, the co-resident agnatic networks may be predominant in areas which did not experience administrative intervention and where forced removals have not removed control over land from local people (Fay, 2005:196).

In Ekuthuleni, KwaZulu-Natal, Hornby (2000) found that resource sharing and land allocation are conditioned by family relationships. Hornby (2000) argues that it is critical to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, land that has already been allocated and, on the other hand, land which is available for allocation. Thus, families living on land allocated to them are entitled to reallocate that land. According to Hornby (2000:314) "the right to allocate privately-held land belongs to the holder of the land right and not the *induna*". On the surface, there seems to "be no constraint on this right and it therefore looks similar to the exclusive rights of ownership". What this means is that if people are asked what they can or cannot do as land holders they answer that there are no restrictions on their land rights. However, in practice it emerged that the majority of households had only allocated land to their relatives. Conversely, only one household had allocated land to a non-relative. In that the perception that there were no restrictions on what people could do with their land was not entirely true. Hornby (2000:314) argues that "families find it very difficult to refuse land to a relative in need unless they themselves are short of land and/ or have sons who will need land". The *induna* only features in transfer of already allocated land when an arrangement has already been made whereupon he is informed about the decision. With the help of *ibandla*, the *induna* approves the new person and witnesses and verifies the new boundaries. The induna is also responsible for allocating vacant land (Hornby, 2000).

At the time of my research no new land was being allocated. Insights on the process of land allocation are based on retrospective data from the life history interviews. Qualitative research reveals that prospective land holders in the study villages first approached the chief who ascertained if there was any land available for allocation. When this had been established the land applicants were presented before the community (*isichaba*). The community gathering was meant to ensure that the community members were comfortable with having the new comers as their prospective neighbours. Once the community had accepted the new comer then land was allocated. However, it is apposite to note that not all new comers could obtain both a residential site and an arable field. On the surface the impression is that land was allocated on a 'first come

first serve basis'. Yet, in the study there are some earlier inhabitants who were only granted residential sties but were never allocated any arable fields. The approval by the wider community was followed by a visit from the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture's role is to ensure that the land allocation conforms to the land use plans for the area. Allocation of land was finalised with the approval of land use planners or extension officers from the department of Agriculture. In some parts of the Transkei this was often followed by the issuance of a 'permission to occupy' (PTO) certificate. However, in the research setting people did not have any knowledge of these certificates.

In Moeketsi (Litichareng and Thaba Chicha) the Chief is responsible for allocation of land. As already noted, Mutsini land officially belongs to Mariazell Mission and is not, strictly speaking, under communal tenure. Accordingly, the issue of land allocation in Mutsini will be looked at separately. As is the case in many other localities in South Africa's rural areas traditional authorities (chiefs and headman) play a significant role in the allocation of land. Historically, the role of traditional authorities and petty bureaucrats in the Transkei has been characterised by widespread local-level corruption and patronage relations assuming some form of small-scale primitive accumulation (Spiegel, 1992:42). The traditional leadership in Moeketsi has had an influence on land allocation. During betterment days the Chief was at the forefront of land allocation. Oral accounts reveal that the Chief played a significant role by mobilising the villagers to accept government law by complying with the new relocation and land use plans. Most of the arable land was allocated or annexed for grazing. The remaining plots were allocated to some families. The chief's role in the allocation of new arable land thus became redundant. However, the traditional leadership is still involved in the transfer of already allocated land through inheritance within families. This role usually entails the final approval when families have agreed on who gets what land or the resolution of disputes in the event that families fail to resolves land inheritance disputes. However, in some instances, family members with access to Chiefly power may influence the Chief to have the land allocated to them.

While the administrative process in land allocation has clear steps this is not always the case on the ground. As Hornby (2000) and Fay (2005) have shown the administrative process may be different from what obtains on the ground. In the study villages, land was in principle

presumably allocated on a first come first serve basis. However, in practice proximity to chiefly power, social status and access to material resources to pay the traditional authorities almost always determined whether one is allocated land or not. Some people mentioned that their families had arrived early in the area but were never allocated land. The reasons mentioned for the failure to secure land in spite of having arrived early include lack of good relations with the Chief. One of my respondents mentioned that Chiefs were traditionally very difficult people especially if you were not a notable in society. When I asked why she did not own a field she noted that for people who were poor and of lower social stature (*amadlwempu*) it was highly unlikely to be allocated land. Another relatively wealthy respondent cultivating a larger homestead garden indicated that he had no field and that his father had never been allocated a field upon his arrival in Moeketsi. He mentioned that his father did not have good relations with the chief. He said the 'chief hated my father and because of that we never got allocated a field'. Thus, proximity to chiefly power seems to have been an important avenue for access to arable land.

During my research I noted that most of the problems around land allocation emanated from the issue of inheritance of land. This is because most of the available arable land had been annexed for grazing under betterment and there was no additional land available for new allocations. In some instances, land was not always transferred to the rightful beneficiaries. The case of Pontso is particularly instructive:

> The field that we call ours today was a family field. Originally it belonged to the elder brother of my husband's father. My husband's uncle who owned this field died mysteriously and it was a case of witchcraft. So when he passed on as a family we never claimed the field or used it until some people started using it. In fact it was the late Chief Lebenya, father to the current chief who would give this field to different people to use it. Different people would use the field and when they harvested they would give a portion of their yield to the chief. He never actually farmed the field himself. When this went on I realised we were losing the family field to people who had no right to it. So I approached the chief so that he could give us back the field and he refused. He gave all sorts of excuses. Initially he said we had not been paying tax for the field to the tribal authority for 11 years and so we had no claim to the field. My husband supported me when I challenged the Chief on this. He would send money whenever I needed it. So I paid all the money the Chief said we had not paid for 11 years. After that he then shifted goal posts and still said there was general tax to be paid again, which had not been paid for 11 years. Again my husband made sure we raised money and paid the chief again. From

> 1972 when we realised we were about to lose the field for good we challenged the chief and only got the field in 1974 (Interview with Pontso, 2012).

In the case of Pontso she had the material resources and moral support of her husband to reclaim the family's field. Miriam's case is different. As a poor widow she was in a weaker position to fight for the family's field. Miriam offered her married daughter the family's field since she was still working in the city and could not use the field at the time. However, her husband's family was against her decision and evicted her daughter from the field. When the matter was brought before the Chief, the outcome was still not in her favour. In her words:

> We had two family fields, one near the river and the other one on the upper side. And my husband's brother took all the two fields and you know tradition, and our hearts. We lack compassion as people, especially the way women are treated. When I was still in Durban I gave our field to my daughter who stays in e*Dwaleni* so that she could use it. But her uncle, my husband's brother took the field from her. The Chief summoned me and said because you are fighting over this field I am going to take it. But that was unjust. How could he take our field in the name of resolving a conflict? That's not justice at all. He should have adjudicated and given us our field. When I came back from Durban the chief handed us back the field and when we tried to plough the field my brother-in-law took it back all over again. I only farmed for two years. But now we are all the same. AsgiSA came and took all the fields and farmed them, now he left and we are all the same (Interview with Miriam, 2012).

The Chief plays an important role in land administration. This influence extends to authenticating the rightful beneficiaries of land in inheritance cases. The institution of patriarchy also has significant implications for the manner in which land is allocated. Overall women seem to be more disadvantaged when it comes to contesting their rights to land. While families play a role in the allocation of inherited land, oral accounts reveal that the chief has significant influence in endorsing decisions made at family level. Female-headed households with no immediate senior men to act as their 'politico-jural representatives' (Mafeje, 2003) in the public domain often experience a lot of interference from the local traditional leadership.

5.5.1 Land allocation in Mahosi: younger generation challenging chiefly authority

As has already been noted the implementation of betterment in the 1970s resulted in the relocation of residents of Mahosi village. In the section on land use changes I mentioned the

issue of the return to Mahosi. I recapture it here to emphasize that the young and educated people in the area successfully challenged chiefly power and were eventually offered land. Most of these young people are also gainfully employed. They formed their own committee and did not go through the usual traditional channels. They convincingly argued their case until they were allowed to settle in Mahosi. This saw Mahosi becoming open to residents who were willing to relocate. From the oral accounts it is evident that the 'new' Mahosi residents managed to challenge chiefly authority on matters of land allocation because of their relatively higher social status as educated and gainfully employed people with resources.

5.5.2 Management of grazing land in the Ongeluksnek villages

In this section I discuss the management of grazing land in the study sites. Bennett and Barrett (2007:98) identify "three broad levels of grazing management system in the communal areas of the central Eastern Cape Province. These are the complete lack of management with grazing taking place in an open access manner, grazing being controlled on a community basis, and grazing taking place on private land and in being controlled entirely by the land owner". Oral evidence indicates that rotational grazing is traditionally the main rangeland management system in these villages. This entails the 'opening and closing' of areas on a systematic rotational pattern' (see Turner, 1999:18). With the introduction of the betterment land management regime, grazing land was demarcated and divided into different grazing paddocks. This system still resembled the traditional *maboella* system. However, it lacked the flexibility and participation of that was characteristic of the *maboella* system. Oral accounts indicate that most of the time the villagers had to keep their livestock in the betterment grazing camps even though these were overgrazed. The management of the rangeland during the time of betterment was a top-down affair and every decision had to be referred to the agricultural officers. Villagers also moved their livestock on a seasonal basis between the lower plains and the mountain areas. During the dry season cattle were often moved to the mountains. In wet seasons, grass tended to be abundant even in the lower plains. With the betterment grazing management system the livestock became confined to the grazing camps and there was no room to move the animals between the lower plains and the mountain areas.

The collapse of betterment means that there are no longer fences demarcating grazing land from arable fields. The different grazing camps also collapsed as the fences were vandalised. However, is difficult to revert to the old *maboella* system or any systematic rangeland management arrangement. Currently, the system of gazing is open access and random. Animals from other neighbouring villages also have access to the rangeland in the Moeketsi area. As is the case with many areas which experienced betterment, it is becoming difficult to implement any form of grazing management arrangement. Turner (1999:19) notes that this may be a result of the fact that "village authority is fragmenting and contested". This emanates from the past experience where interventions were often imposed from above with Chiefs and local authorities being heavily implicated. Local people still have memories of the distorted and perverted and authority structures (see Turner, 1999:19).

5.6 Contemporary Moeketsi: household and demographic features of study area

This section presents empirical data on the demographic features of households in the study area. Ellis (2000:18) notes that the household is one of the most appropriate social arenas of analysis for investigating livelihoods. According to Ellis (2008:18), "the household is a site in which particularly intense social and economic interdependences occur between a group of individuals". As a result, the household is an appropriate unit of social and economic analysis since it allows individual actions to be seen as part of the social and residential space they occupy (Ellis, 2000).

Households need to be understood within their particular historical context. The encounter of the large domestic units or the lineage mode of production with processes of commoditisation has been interpreted in terms of the dissolution and preservation thesis (Wolpe, 1972). The preservation and dissolution thesis originated partly to challenge the ahistorical, myopically local-level studies of family and village organisation by redirecting attention to the structures of a dominant regional capitalism (Peters, 1983:101). However, the preservation and dissolution thesis ended up glossing over household dynamics, for instance, household structure and inequalities especially the inequalities between men and women (Peters, 1983). Subsequent studies emphasised the impacts of the capitalist system on the domestic unit (Bundy, 1988;

Beinart, 1982). One of the effects of capitalist penetration was the restructuring of domestic units. Large agnatic units tended to split into smaller units as labour migration enabled younger men to earn cash incomes and establish their own independent homesteads earlier in life. Younger men could also afford to raise money for the bride price without the help of the patriarchs (Beinart, 1982; McAllister, 2001). Specifically, the establishment of the migrant labour system resulted in the breaking down of large agnatic units into smaller domestic units which are commonly referred to as households. The absorption of younger males into the capitalist industries as wage labourers afforded them the platform to earn their own income. Generational tensions thus ensued.

Contemporary patterns of rural households in South Africa are characterised by continuities and disjunctures (Neves and du Toit, 2008). While out-migration persists it has assumed new dimensions in contemporary times. In the Eastern Cape, the removal of restrictions at the end of apartheid has seen the movement of rural dwellers not only to big cities but also to small regional towns like Mthatha and Butterworth (Neves and du Toit, 2008). This has often resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements. Besides the predominance of younger males in the migratory system there has been a steady increase in female labour migration (Posel, 2003:12). Young mothers now migrate to urban areas to seek work opportunities often leaving their children with the elderly women. The phenomenon of migration and the spatially extended nature of households make identifying boundaries of this social unit problematic. Many rural dwellers reside in urban areas for prolonged periods of time in search of employment opportunities. It is important to distinguish between two types of residency when studying households. There is the strict residency criterion which requires that an individual be resident in the household for much of the year to be considered a member of the household (Posel *et al*, 2004). A broad residency rule allows individuals to be considered members of the household even if there have been living elsewhere for most of the year (Posel *et al*, 2004). The strict residency criterion may be useful in avoiding double counting since respondents are more likely to provide accurate information about people who are present in the household most of the time as opposed to those who are mostly absent. However, a broad residency approach "may better capture the reality of fluid households" (Posel *et al*, 2004). In this view individuals may view themselves or may be viewed by others as members of the household even if they are absent

from the household for much of the year. In the South African context the broader view of residency is more appropriate considering the historical and continued predominance of the migrant labour system and its impacts on the living arrangements of rural people (Posel *et al*, 2004).

In the research setting individuals reside in urban areas for economic reasons and still retain membership in the household of origin. The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, distorted markets and lack of land forces may rural residents to migrate to the cities or larger rural areas (see Posel *et al*, 2004:17). It was also apparent that some households had young members attending school in neighbouring villages, regional towns and other cities. This is because the local high school is expensive for some poor households. These household members continued to draw support from their original households and often visited during school holidays. There are also instances where shared or collective assets like livestock were sold and the proceeds are shared amongst the siblings with the urban-based members also receiving their share of the money. In some instances, people often played a critical role in the ceremonial life of the household often contributing cash resources for cultural functions like funerals, cleansing ceremonies and initiation rites. This was in spite of them not making frequent visits to their natal homestead. The idea of a household as a social unit which provides a base to perform cultural rites and ceremonies is of critical significance amongst rural households. While some people may not remit or visit on a regular basis they may still be part of the homestead and contribute to the ceremonial fund when the need arises.

Neves and du Toit (2008:4) argue that in spite of the challenges confronted in the use of the household concept it remains an important tool in the study of livelihoods and socio-economic practices. Neves and du Toit (2008) note that even in instances where members are spatially dispersed and hence not co-resident or engaged in commensality they typically are jointly committed to the continuation and perpetuation of the household. In cases where people abscond or do not remit this is often seen as a sign of failure and Neves and du Toit (2008) argue that abandonment is "typically strongly marked and loaded with ideological significance". The term *itshipa* is often used to portray those individuals who have become consumed by city life and abandoned their original homestead. Considering the above, I opted for a more flexible and

broad definition of the household. Following de Wet *et al* (1997) and Posel *et al* (2004) I acknowledge that the household in rural South Africa is spatially extended and that the minimal requirements of co-residence and commensality are not sufficient to capture the fluid nature of the household in contemporary South Africa.

5.7 Demographics and Socio-economic Features

Table 3 shows some basic demographics on the age and gender of the surveyed adult population in Moeketsi. The data shows that there are 483 adults in the survey. However there are more adult females (297) in the population compared to adult males (186). This means that adult females constitute 61.5 percent of the adult population while the remaining 38.5 percent consists of adult males. The gender distribution of the population is consistent with the wider trends in the municipality of Matatiele. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) notes that females generally outnumber males in Matatiele. Females thus constitute 55 percent of the population while males constitute the remaining 45 percent (IDP, 2011:10). The IDP (2001) attributes this to the historical migration patterns whereby men are more likely to leave the homestead in search of work while women stay behind to look after the homestead. In terms of age, the data on Moeketsi (see Table 3) shows that the highest proportion (27 percent) of adult females is in the 20 to 29 age cohort. The second highest concentration (22 percent) of adult females is in the 30-39 age cohort. For adult males, the highest proportion (30 percent) is in the 30 to 39 age category and the second highest proportion (29 percent) falls into the 20 to 29 age category.

Table 3: Age of adult males and females in Moeketsi (n=483)

	Adult males		Adult females		All adults	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
missing	4	2	3	1	7	1
18-19 yrs	16	9	18	6	34	7
20-29 yrs	54	29	80	27	134	28
30-39 yrs	56	30	66	22	122	25
40-49 yrs	18	10	32	11	50	10
50-59 yrs	13	7	38	13	51	11
60-69 yrs	15	8	36	12	51	11
70-79 yrs	9	5	15	5	24	5
80 yrs >	1	1	9	3	10	2
Total	186	100	297	100	483	100

Table 4 displays the marital status of adults in the Moeketsi villages. In the sample there are 186 adult males. Of these the highest percentage (56.5 percent) have never been married. This is followed by the proportion of adult males who are married. In the survey 30.6 percent of the adult males are married. About 4.8 percent of the adult males are co-habiting while 3.2 percent of the adult males reported that they are widowed. The table shows that there is a small proportion of adult males who are divorced or separated/abandoned. In the survey, 2.7 percent of the adult males are divorced while 2.2 reported that they were separated or abandoned.

The data in Table 4 also reveals that 49.2 percent of the 297 adult females have never been married. Approximately 21.9 percent of adult females reported that they are widowed. In the survey, about 20.9 percent of adult females indicated that they are married. The proportion of adult females who are cohabiting is 3.7 while about 3.4 percent are separated or have been abandoned by their spouses. Only 1 percent of the adult females indicated that they had been divorced. In both gender groups the highest proportion is that adults who have never been married. This figure is 56.5 percent for adult males while for adult females the proportion is 49.2 percent. It is also noteworthy that there are more adult females who are widowed compared to adult males. Only 3.2 percent of adult males are widowed. In contrast, 21.9 percent of the adult females are widowed.

Table 4: Marriage status of adults in Moeketsi (n=483)

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
Never married	105	56.5	146	49.2
Married	57	30.6	62	20.9
Co-habiting	9	4.8	11	3.7
Divorced	5	2.7	3	1.0
Separated or abandoned	4	2.2	10	3.4
Widowed	6	3.2	65	21.9
Total	186	100.0	297	100.0

Table 5 presents data on household size and composition. I have already noted the restructuring and splitting of large agnatic clusters in earlier times into small domestic units as a result of capitalist penetration. Migrant labour involving young economically active males was at the centre of these developments. Wage earnings enabled young males to split from the large

homestead and become independent much earlier in life as they could afford the bride wealth and acquiring the material resources required to build the homestead. In contemporary times, it has been noted that the household size in South Africa has tended to become smaller across the years. Absolute numbers of household units are increasing and the average number of members per unit decreasing and many of these unbundled households tend to be female headed households (Neves and du Toit, 2008:7). The mean household size in Moeketsi is 6.05. The majority of households in the area (58.9 percent) have between 1 and 6 members, while 28.3 percent of the households have 7 to 9 members. Only 12.9 percent of the households in this survey have more than 10 household members.

Table 5: Household features and demographics (n=124)

	Mean	Median	Range	Proportions
Household size	6.05	6.0	1-14	58.9% have 1 – 6 members; 28.2% have 7 – 9 members; 12.9% have >10 members
Age of adult males (18 yrs or >)	36	32	18-97	Of adults, 38% < 30 years old
Age of adult females (18 yrs or >)	41	36	18-97	Of adults, 33% < 30 years old
Generations in household	2.4	2	1-4	8.1% have 1 generation, 47.6% have 2 generations, 44.4 have 3 generations or more.
% household members present all or most nights	71.86%	79.50%	16-100 %	

However, the unbundling or general decline in the size of the household has not necessarily resulted in nuclear households (husband, wife and children) in Western the sense. If anything, there has also been a trend towards complex households in the form of multiple generations and skip-generation households. There are skip-generation households where a middle generation is missing and children aged 18 or younger lived with their grandparents (Posel, 2001:656). The survey data shows that the average number of generations in Moeketsi households is 2. However, only 8.0 percent of the households have members from one generation. About 47.6 percent of the households consist of 2 generations while the remaining 44.4 percent of the households are made of more than 3 generations.

In my own research three-generational units with the grandmother, parents and children were common (at least 44.4 percent). Young adult females often had children at a young age and also remained unmarried. These households units often relied on old age grants as their primary income, with the middle generation often relying on social grants and temporary jobs. As Bank and Qambata (1999) note in their own study, the economic contribution of the middle generation to the welfare of the household is often constrained by lack of employment opportunities. In their study in Ngxingxolo village, Eastern Cape, Bank and Qambata (1999) found that social grants (specifically old age pensions) had become the mainstay of rural the rural economy. In my chapter on rural livelihoods and differentiation I will explore the material constraints and challenges households confront in constructing livelihoods.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the history behind the current patterns of land ownership, use and settlement in the Moeketsi villages. I have emphasised the relationship between large land holders and the rural villages. The rural villages of Moeketsi occupy a confined area of land which restricts the potential of agriculture in the area. The most affected agricultural activity is livestock production. I have also examined the history of betterment interventions in the area and how they altered land use patterns. In Moeketsi, betterment involved the demarcation of grazing land through the creation of grazing camps. Villagers were also required to reduce the number of animals especially cattle in line with the ecological capacity of the rangelands. However, the betterment 'planning' in the area did not resolve the primary problem confronting this locality – land shortage. The grazing camps soon turned into dust.

Chapter 6: Agricultural Development in the Transkei and Moeketsi: Shifts and Continuities

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the history of agricultural development in the former Transkei and highlight the striking similarities between agricultural development interventions of the past and contemporary state interventions in the countryside. Rural interventions by successive governments both during the colonial and apartheid era as well as the post-apartheid period reveal certain continuities. In particular, lack of agricultural development or failure to 'improve' has often been framed by experts, development planners and the state as indicative of inadequate knowledge, skills and the inclination of rural dwellers towards 'traditional' and 'backward' methods of farming. I will discuss the betterment or rehabilitation schemes and their impacts on rural households in the Transkei.

The chapter will also discuss the large-scale agricultural development schemes that sought to foster commercial production techniques amongst the small-scale communal area farmers in the Transkei. The Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR) played a central role in the efforts by the homeland government to commercialise agriculture in the Transkei. This was mainly through large-scale maize production schemes or tractor schemes spearheaded by TRACOR. The setting up of large-scale agricultural production schemes in rural areas as the basis for 'improving' and 'modernising' farming on the part of small-scale rural producers has also continued in the post-apartheid era. Two 'massive' maize schemes were thus implemented in the post-apartheid era; the Massive Food Production Programme by the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture and the maize schemes initiated by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa, Eastern Cape (AsgiSA-EC). Both schemes have since become defunct.

6.2 Development as improvement

Historically, rural development in South Africa is intertwined with capitalist processes of dispossession and the creation of cheap labour for the emergent capitalist sector (Wolpe, 1972). Capitalist processes and interventions introduced to 'develop' and 'improve' the reserves are

closely related. In a different context, Li (2007) illustrates that one of the striking features of transformations in the countryside is the intersection of capitalist processes and programmes of improvement. In her study of Sulawesi, Indonesia, Li (2007:21) argues that development experts often use "a particular population's failure to improve (to turn nature's bounty to a profit), or to conserve (to protect nature for the common good) as rationales for their dispossession, and as a justification to assign resources to people who will make better use of them". Li (2007) further observes that "this myth is alive and well in national bureaucracies and transnational agencies promoting agricultural development and conservation".

In the South African context, Hebinck, Fay and Kondlo (2011) discuss land and agrarian reform and argue that there are continuities in terms of how 'the agricultural expert system' is constantly reproduced. Expert knowledge continues to 'exert influence and give direction to pre-apartheid, apartheid and post-apartheid agrarian policies and simultaneously shapes the domain of agrarian sciences' (Hebinck *et al*, 2011). The authors argue that there is no decisive break in the current land and agrarian reform policies from what they call the 'white settler frame of reference' which has ideologically favoured forms of agricultural production practiced by white landholders (Hebinck *et al*, 2011:227). For instance, "many experts continue to view agricultural development as best realized in commercial farming, highly commoditized forms of production that are seen as superior to and more advanced than forms of production hinging on substantially lower degrees of commoditization" (Hebinck *et al*, 2011:229). Hebinck *et al* (2011:229) also note that "non-commercial agriculture by smallholders is often equated with subsistence farming and is seen as marginally linked to markets and thus holding no future". In the following sections, I review some of the key development interventions in rural production in the Transkei. I will show some of the continuities and striking similarities between interventions made in the past and recent, agricultural development interventions in the post-apartheid era.

6.3 Rural development, betterment and rehabilitation in the Reserves

State interventions in the rural economy of the Reserves have a long history. However, the 1950s are usually seen as a watershed period in terms of these interventions being more extensive. State interventions which sought to resuscitate declining agriculture in the former homelands and place

it on a 'scientific footing' (Bank and Qambata, 1999) were known as betterment or rehabilitation schemes. According to De Wet (1989:207):

> Betterment planning officially refers to attempts by successive South African governments to combat erosion, conserve the environment and develop agriculture in the 'homelands', and also cut down on urbanization, and in some phases even migrant labour, thereby keeping more people in the homelands (DeWet, 1989:207).

Beinart and Bundy (1980:298) argue that "betterment proposals and their subsequent implementation should be situated within the broader context of structural changes in the economy and the nature of the state". These authors note that the economic boom of the 1930s in South Africa resulted in a rapid expansion of manufacturing industry. Consequently, an increase in industrial labour force followed and, most critically, black workers in manufacturing increased from 76, 000 in 1936 to 149, 000 in 1945. African urbanization was thus on the increase and needed to be managed as this was a potential threat to the white workers. The competing needs of different fractions (for instance agrarian and industrial capital) of capital especially the need for cheap labour also needed to be managed[9]. According to Beinart and Bundy (1980:298) the issues at the time were "the competing labour requirements of industrial and agrarian capital, the optimum level of African urbanization, the role of the pass laws and influx controls, and the means of controlling the political and industrial challenge of an African working class". In this context, it was imperative on the part of the state to revive agriculture in the homelands and ensure part of the African population remained committed to agriculture for sustenance.

McAllister (1992) identifies the steps that were usually followed in implementing betterment interventions. According to McAllister (1992:207) the process usually involved:

[9] While fractions of capital may share opposition to labour, they still retain distinct interests. Cooper (1993) draws on Marx's concepts of 'absolute surplus value' and 'relative surplus value' to explain competition for labour amongst different capitals in the context of colonialism. According to Cooper (1993:137) "Marx separates 'absolute surplus value' – what a capitalist gets by making workers put in more hours than needed to pay the costs of their subsistence – from 'relative surplus value'– extension of accumulation by increasing productivity". Cooper (1993:137) notes that any capitalist would like to do both yet social conditions for maintaining the two entail contradictions. Thus, "the accumulation of absolute surplus value depends above all on the elimination of alternatives for workers; the accumulation of relative surplus value creates alternatives" (Cooper, 1993:137). Importantly, Cooper argues that "this is exactly what many political disputes in settler colonies have been about: settlers who cannot or will not raise productivity fight to keep their labour from those who can" (ibid).

1. Proclamation of a given area (usually a rural ward or 'location') as a betterment area.
2. The development of a land use plan for the area, which included division of land into three types (residential, arable and a number of different grazing camps).
3. The relocation of people from their previous (usually dispersed) homestead sites into the new village-type residential areas.
4. The fencing of residential areas and grazing camps and the introduction of measures such as contour ploughing and rotational grazing (see McAllister, 1992:207).

Underlying the re-organization of the rural communities was the idea of fostering 'economic farming units'. The idea of economic faming units emanated from the thinking that Africans were engaged in economically backward and environmental destructive forms of agriculture. The Tomlinson Commission in particular proposed that betterment areas were to be planned on the basis of 'economic farming units' to ensure the optimal use of resources. The argument was that each family (equated to a household) had to have access to an amount of arable land and grazing commonage sufficient to enable it to make a full-time living off the land (De Wet, 1989:327). It was essential to create a middle peasantry committed to full time family farming and distinct from those Africans who could not make a living from the land. People in the latter group would have to move off the land and be accommodated in new rural townships and industrial towns. However, the Government rejected the request by the Tomlinson Commission for £3, 000, 000 that was meant for secondary and tertiary industrial development in the reserves. The fear was that promotion of industries in the reserves would pose competition for industries in white areas (De Wet, 1989). In sum, betterment programmes, especially some of the potentially progressive aspects were never implemented. McAllister (1992) summaries some of the adverse impacts of betterment schemes on rural households. According to McAllister (1992:210-211) betterment schemes in the reserves resulted in:

1. Economic hardship and agricultural *under*development, due to (poorly compensated or un-compensated) residential relocation into villages, inadequate land use planning (leading to reduction of arable land holdings and increased landlessness), increased erosion and overgrazing, and disruption of co-operative economic relationships and the ethic of mutual help;

2. Loss of autonomy and increased regulation and control from the centre, often alienating people from the state and from local leaders, and breaking down established territorial and organizational structures;
3. Social disruption (of groups based on kinship or neighbourhood) due to villagisation; suspicion and hostility between neighbours in the new villages; and emotional and religious costs of being forced to leave established homes;
4. Deteriorating ecological circumstances and loss of land use flexibility, increased distances from natural resources, increased erosion, overgrazing and over-exploitation of nearby wood and water resources, and loss of ecological knowledge (McAllister, 1992:210-211).

Thus, betterment schemes had a negative impact on the livelihoods of rural households. Instead of 'improving' agriculture and halting the decline in production, these policies constrained rural production and rural households scrambled to survive under crowded conditions with far fewer resources (land wood, etc.). This provided a fertile environment for the subsequent ecological crisis evident in increased erosion, over-grazing and deforestation.

6.4 Agricultural development and smallholder development in the Transkei

Transkei's large-scale agricultural development schemes emerged against the backdrop of 'homeland independence'. Manona (2005) notes that initial agricultural development interventions in the Transkei were first implemented by the Corporation for Economic Development (CED) and the Xhosa Development Corporation (XDC) in the 1960s. These agricultural schemes were funded by South Africa's apartheid government and the primary aim was to demonstrate that the homeland system was economically feasible (Manona, 2005). According to AsgiSA (2010:42) "it was also acknowledged that the people living in the rural areas of both Transkei and Ciskei had not developed to a point where they could embark upon commercial operations on their own and develop the rural economy to the point of making a meaningful contribution to the GDP of these territories". TRACOR is another Transkeian parastatal formed to develop and commercialise agriculture in the former homelands. TRACOR was established in 1981 as a statutory body and a development agency meant to assist the Department of Agriculture and Forestry in developing Transkei's agricultural potential. The main focus of TRACOR was commercial maize production in the Transkei villages. Beside the maize

schemes, TRACOR also pursued other commercial ventures which included a tea enterprise and irrigation schemes (Manona, 2005).

Manona (2005) argues that TRACOR's success was mixed. Thus, yields increased to about 2.8 tonnes per hectare amongst its beneficiaries. Yet, there was no visible improvement in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. It is against the background of unsuccessful agricultural interventions that the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) made proposals for a shift in the approach to developing agriculture in the homelands. Following the recommendations of the DBSA, Farmer Support Centres (FSCs) were established to offer inputs and implements on a loan basis, and train farmers. However, both TRACOR and the newly established FSCs did not manage to transform agriculture in the Transkei (Manona, 2005).

Cloete's (1987) study of TRACOR maize schemes in the villages of Transkei also reveals problems of lack of participation by villagers, profit sharing and lack of understanding of local indigenous systems of knowledge. Cloete (1987:28) notes that the TRACOR maize schemes were introduced through tribal authorities, chiefs and headmen. Many people whose land had been included in the TRACOR maize scheme did not attend initial meetings and were not consulted as to whether they wanted to participate in the maize production schemes (Cloete, 1987:28). In the Herschel area fields that had been planted by the villagers were replanted by TRACOR (Cloete, 1987:29). While initial attempts had been made to consult villagers, the overall programme itself, by virtue of its design left little room for participation. The production process was often designed before consultations with the villagers and the highly technical nature of the programme saw the villagers accepting things that they did not often understand. Also, the highly mechanized production process was inaccessible to people in the villages who had no experience in industrial agriculture (Cloete, 1987:29-30). In the case of Mantusini village, in Transkei, local involvement in the TRACOR maize scheme was limited to land holders providing labour for the more labour intensive parts of the production process. It seemed the project managers were doubtful of the education and skill levels of the villagers (Cloete, 1987:31).

In Cutwini, Eastern Cape, Hadju (2006:208) finds that the largest intervention into agricultural practices in the area was the TRACOR maize scheme which was implemented in the late 1970s and 1980s. Respondents reported that outsiders came to their locality bringing with them hybrid seeds, pesticides and fertilizers and telling them they would provide tractors and mechanization services. The villagers were also encouraged to abandon their old, locally bred seeds and use maize seed products supplied by TRACOR. After the departure of TRACOR from their village, people no longer had their old maize seeds and were compelled to buy new hybrid seeds from local shops (Hadju, 2006:208). The problem with the 'green revolution' type of hybrid seeds and recently the genetically modified seeds is the increased reliance on outside products on the part of farmers. For maximum yields to be attained, the 'modern' seeds need specific fertilizers and pesticides. Besides the costs associated with the adoption of 'modern' seeds, farmers tend to lose local knowledge as they increasingly rely on purchased products. In the case of Cutwini, Hadju (2006) found that locals had to contend with expensive new types of maize seeds with required fertilizers. In the previous years, farmers simply kept old 'Xhosa' seeds and they could also use *kraal* manure instead of chemical fertilizers.

6.5 Rural development in the Eastern Cape after the end of apartheid

In post-apartheid South Africa there has been a lack of coherent policy interventions in the rural areas. This section briefly highlights some of the key issues with respect to rural development in the Eastern Cape. Rural development interventions in post-apartheid South Africa have been formulated with the aim of reversing the adverse legacy of apartheid planning. Apartheid policies have had an enduring adverse impact on the welfare of rural households. This is evident in the persistence of structural poverty and spatial inequalities in rural economies (Cater and May, 1998). Mayende (2010a:56) poses the fundamental question of the extent to which policies and programmes of the post-apartheid state on rural development and agrarian transformation have addressed the negative historical economic and social legacies. Scholars have argued that there has been more policy continuity in various post-apartheid state interventions in the rural areas of South Africa and less in terms of transition or a decisive break with the past (Mayende, 2010a, 2010b; Hebinck, Fay and Kondlo, 2011). The progressive policy pronouncements on rural development in both the Mandela and Mbeki administrations "were hardly ever translated into concrete action" (Mayende, 2010b:65). Mayende (2010b:65) notes that another key feature of the

marginal position of rural development is that it has never enjoyed the allocation of significant resources. During the Mandela administration a Rural Development Strategy of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was finalized in 1995 and its implementation was to be spearheaded by the Department of Land Affairs (DLA). However, this policy document was never implemented and was soon superseded by the largely neo-liberal development approach in the Mbeki era (Mayende, 2010b). According to Mayende (2010b) during the Mbeki administration rural development was undercut by the prevailing neo-liberal development and macro-economic agenda pursued under the aegis of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme which replaced the more redistributive RDP. It was only in 2001 that rural development re-emerged in policy discourse in the form of the Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) (Mayende, 2010b:65-66). Thus, rural development projects implemented under the ISRDP across the country were highly piece-meal and fragmented. Mayende (2010a:57) argues that "the ISRDP turned out to be neither integrated nor sustainable, nor was it in any real sense a rural development programme". This programme was to a greater extent an epitome of "the failure of the 'trickle down' effect envisaged under GEAR to materialize" (Mayende, 2010b:67). However, Hebinck (2013:38) notes that significant changes have occurred with regard to rural development since 2009 at the beginning of the Zuma presidency. The former Department of Land Affairs was transformed into the new Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). This represents a new focus which gives primacy to rural development as opposed to it being subsumed under other developmental programmes. The new department has also formulated the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) whose aim is to create vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities (Hebinck, 2013:38).

In the Eastern Cape province there was no explicit focus on rural development. The Eastern Cape's Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) has six[10] flagship programmes which include the agrarian transformation and food security programme (PGDP, 2004). The agrarian transformation and food security programme was conceived to specifically address rural development challenges. This flagship programme consists of four components namely the

[10] The other pillars of the Eastern Cape's PGDP are Poverty Eradication, Infrastructure, Manufacturing Diversification and Tourism, and Public Sector and Institutional Transformation.

Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP), *Siyazondla* homestead food production, the Comprehensive Nutrition Programme and the Integrated Agricultural Infrastructure Support Programme (see PGDP Assessment Report, 2009:41). One of the recommendations of the review of the PDGP is the need to accord rural development a higher priority status by investing more resources in the sector. The PGDP (2009:45) assessment report highlights the shortcoming of the agrarian transformation and food security programme. In the report, it is argued that agrarian transformation cannot materialize without addressing land reform challenges. According to the report only 4.3 percent of land in the Eastern Cape had been transferred since 1994. The report suggests the need to include the land and agrarian reform project as a core component of agrarian transformation. Besides redistribution of land, it is suggested that agrarian transformation should include a betterment redress programme which prioritizes the needs of rural households adversely affected by the betterment interventions (PGDP Assessment Report, 2009:*ibid*).

6.5.1 Massive maize schemes in post-apartheid South Africa.

In the Eastern Cape, the large-scale maize production schemes (the MFPP in 2003 and later AsgiSA-EC maize schemes in 2008) were implemented with the aim of nurturing small-scale producers in communal areas into commercial farmers through the modernization of agriculture. These large-scale agricultural investments may be seen as part of policy interventions meant to reverse the adverse impact of past policies through the re-agrarianisation of the countryside. The communal area farmers are seen as failing to take advantage of the opportunities available in the wider value chains. To ensure their integration into markets and value chains, it is therefore important to introduce commercial practices that will enhance the productivity and competitiveness of these farmers. In the following sections I will discuss the Eastern Cape province's large-scale maize schemes namely the MFPP and the AsgiSA-EC maize schemes.

6.5.2 A brief history of the MFPP

In 2003, the Eastern Cape provincial government introduced the MFPP through the Department of Agriculture (ECDA). At its inception, the MFPP had two components namely the mechanization component which provided prospective entrepreneurs with loans for acquiring tractors and machinery so as to provide mechanization services to other MFPP participants in

their localities (ECDA, 2008). The programme also had a conditional grant system targeting ordinary cultivators or participants. This was meant to provide finance to smallholders participating in the scheme for purchasing seeds, fertilizers, herbicides and other agro-inputs (ECDA, 2008). The farmers were linked with certain agribusinesses that would supply these inputs. The procurement of inputs was only possible once 'economically viable' production and marketing plans had been approved by the Department of Agriculture (ECDA, 2008:7). In terms of its operation, the MFPP required small-scale farmers with small parcels of land sub-divided over the years through inheritance to combine their plots to form extensive blocks of land not less than 50 hectares. This was meant to make large-scale commercial production feasible and achieve economies of scale (Madyibi, 2013). When households combined their arable fields to comply the stipulation on minimum land size required for participation in the scheme they were treated as a co-operative. Each co-operative used a single production and marketing plan. However, in most instances, these co-operatives also included households with no land. There was, in some instances, reluctance on the part of villagers to surrender rights to their land as stipulated by the MFPP. Also, the programme was largely technocratic and top-down in nature. Most of the projects implemented at the beginning were not demand-driven. Instead, the programme was supply driven and there was no consideration of the differentiated nature of the communal area farmers. The harvests were far from impressive and the default rate on the conditional grants was high so much so that the provincial government was forced to re-think the programme (ECDA, 2007).

The review of the MFPP resulted in the introduction of *Siyakhula* (we are growing) which aimed to be more inclusive by reducing the minimum size of land required to participate in the scheme ranging from 1-50 hectares (ECDA, 2007). This was an acknowledgement that there was more to agricultural development than economies of scale and commercialization. The massive or large-scale roll out of the programme failed to capture the target beneficiaries and integrate them into the first economy as commercial farmers. Thus, the MFPP has mostly been seen as a failure considering its aim of fostering modernization of agricultural practices in the communal areas of the Eastern Cape and the integration of these farmers into modern markets. In spite of attempts to adjust the programme to suit beneficiaries with small allotments of land, some of the conditionalities remained intact and this did not change the dwindling fortunes of the MFPP.

Financing for mechanization services was also identified as a critical component of the scheme. According to GRAIN (2008:29), 'the contractors were paid to plough and disk the fields of the participating farmers, they still had the option of benefiting from the scheme as participants therefore qualifying for the subsidy given to fellow farmers, the scheme also paid them if they worked on their own land as contractors, in addition, they qualified for a loan from UVIMBA bank to acquire implements such as tractors' (GRAIN, 2008). The contractors or mechanization service providers thus benefited fourfold from the MFPP. In 2005, there were about 400 tractors in use owned and operated by 76 service providers and covering 15 000ha (ECDA, 2007).

6.5.3 Some assumptions of the MFPP

One of the key assumptions in massive agricultural development interventions like the MFPP is the thinking that land in the former homelands is underutilized. It is assumed that the existence of fallow land means that rural households cannot fully exploit an important resource, namely arable land. In history and contemporary times interventions in rural production by successive governments have often been on the basis that land in the commons is underutilized and it makes economic sense to bring this 'wasteland' under productive use (Bank and Minkley, 2005). This has also been a point of departure for the Eastern Cape's agricultural development schemes in the post-apartheid era (Bank and Minkley 2005:7). Such assumptions have often overlooked the multiple functions of land. These fields are usually utilized for such purposes as harvesting natural resources and grazing in addition to limited cropping (Shackleton *et al*, 2001).

The disadvantaged position of rural households engaged in agricultural production is attributed to the 'subsistence' nature of their activities. This, on the one hand, entails the reliance on outmoded and traditional methods of production – a problem which may corrected through the application of more advanced scientific methods to agriculture. The MFPP relied on hired mentors, mainly former or practicing commercial farmers, to provide technical assistance to participants of the scheme (Madyibi, 2013:220). On the other hand, the 'subsistence' nature of their activities is evidenced by the lack of adequate integration to the market. The solution lies in ensuring that more rural households are linked to the agro-value chains and formal markets.

6.5.4 Impact of the MFPP on agriculture and livelihoods in the Eastern Cape

For the MFPP yields per hectare were initially very low and the project had a high failure rate. The project failed to meet its initial target of 7T/ha. In the fifth year the average yields were well below the target at 3.8T/ha, as shown in Table 6.1. Among the many challenges were the high costs of inputs and the fluctuations in maize prices. With respect to price fluctuations, the ECDA (2007), for instance, notes that in 2005, the South African futures exchange's (SAFEX) price for maize was in the order of R600/T. The price of R600/T was at least R300 below the cost of production of maize (ECDA, 2007). This was in stark contrast to the SAFEX price for maize at the time of inception of the MFPP when SAFEX price of maize was in the order of R1 700/T, almost double the production cost of maize. The poor maize price meant that even if a project had maize to sell it would certainly not generate enough money for the farmers to be able to deposit the required 25% or 50% of production costs (ECDA, 2007). This raises questions about the profitability of maize using agro-industrial farming systems in specific market conditions.

Table 6: MFPP project and maize yields 2003/04 to 2008/09

Financial year	Number of projects	Area planted	Average yield (tons/ha-maize
2003/04	192	9 000	1
2004/05	247	12 000	1
2005/06	413	15 000	2.2
2006/07	424	15 000	3.6
2007/08	350	13 133	3.89
2008/09	Not reported	2 326	3.8

Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture 2007.

Each beneficiary of the MFPP was required, by 15 July each year, to repay money equivalent to 25%, 50% and 75% of the production inputs at the end of the first, second and third growing season respectively. Yet the poor yields relative to the high input costs resulted in farmers defaulting in the first year (2003/04 farming season) of the project and not proceeding to the second year (ECDA, 2007). A huge proportion of the beneficiaries who were part of the conditional grant scheme failed to graduate into the next phase of the programme. Many participated only in the first year when the scheme offered a 100% grant, and in the next farming season failed to deposit the initial payment of 25%. Thus, the ECDA (2007) noted that most farmers might have harvested some crop for homestead food security and most projects did not

realize a big enough yield to even consider selling maize to be able to place a cash deposit as required by the conditional grant contract (ECDA, 2007).

Various studies have been conducted on the impact of the MFPP in different parts of the Eastern Cape. Masifunde (2010) analysed the impact of the MFPP on the lives of small-scale producers in various villages (Mgababa, Prudhoe, Peelton and Nxarhuni) in Amathole district municipality in the Eastern Cape. According to Masifunde (2010), the MFPP had generally limited impact in terms of improving the level of livelihood and promoting accumulation amongst the beneficiaries. The study revealed that cash income for the MFPP beneficiaries was largely negligible especially considering that these earnings were for several months' work per year of production. In all the villages except Majali, the most frequently reported important sources of household income were state pensions, followed by remittances, odd jobs and agriculture. In Majali, agriculture was seen as the most important source of household income followed by state social grants, remittances and informal trade. The Masifunde (2010) study also revealed that the MFPP resulted in over-reliance on agro-chemical inputs and the undermining of traditional, cheaper methods of agricultural production. Thus, all the projects in the Amathole district relied on the use of expensive inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) supplied by outsiders. There was also forced land consolidation, collective contracts and group sizes which tended to undermine the independence of individual beneficiaries. The forced collective contracts and production were meant to facilitate mechanization and ensure ease of access to loans/financial assistance yet this did not always meet the needs of individual famers (Masifunde, 2010).

In an analysis of the MFPP in the Eastern Cape's OR Tambo district municipality, Jacobson (2013) observed that there were tensions between the commercially-oriented farming methods of the government's massive maize production scheme and the local practices of the beneficiaries. Local villagers often tried to resist the rigid methods of the MFPP. According to Jacobson (2013) practices and inputs of large-scale commercialized agriculture were uncritically introduced to small-scale farmers. This included the introduction of hybrid and genetically modified maize seeds which do not grow well when recycled and are also protected by patents and breeders' rights. Villagers in the MFPP were not supposed to share or recycle the seeds. Yet the

beneficiaries of the programme, to some extent, resisted some of these conditionalities. For instance, many participants recycled the seeds distributed by the MFPP and continued to plant local seed varieties and other plants along with new hybrid and genetically modified seeds. This was contrary to the intentions of the programme designers who interpreted these tendencies as lack of respect for the programme and incompetence. According to Jacobson (2013:211) this reflects the dominant view that 'small-scale farmers are incompetent and that agricultural development means doing like the successful commercial farmers already do'.

My own study commenced in 2010 when most of the MFPP projects in the province had collapsed or had been discontinued. I visited five areas in the Eastern Cape namely Flagstaff, Lusikisiki, Maclear, Mt. Frere and Matatiele where the scheme had been implemented. Even though the MFPP had collapsed in many areas and had been replaced by a new large-scale maize scheme run by AsgiSA-EC, qualitative interviews were conducted with government officials who were involved in the MFPP. The idea was to ascertain the shifts and continuities between the redundant MFPP and the newly-introduced AsgiSA maize scheme. Below I present some insights on the MFPP maize scheme from these interviews. I draw on my qualitative research in various research sites including the Matatiele area where my research site is located. Qualitative research on the MFPP revealed that the scheme did not bring about an improvement in the level of livelihood amongst the beneficiaries. The scheme was also not successful in creating a vibrant segment of agribusinesses through the financing of contractors providing tractors and other mechanization services.

In the Matatiele area in 2010, there were no MFPP projects still operational in the rural villages under the communal tenure system. This trend seemed to be the case in most rural villages I visited. The only operational MFPP maize production schemes at the time were in the freehold or private farms. In Matatiele the MFPP initiated in the rural villages collapsed in its infant phase. In the first year of its implementation villagers revolted and set the crops on fire during harvest time. The underlying problem was lack of clarity on the sharing of the harvest especially between the land owners and the funders (government) as well as co-operative members who did not own land. Villagers, in particular land owners, revolted since many of them felt that it was

inappropriate for them to give up the produce from their fields. They also did not want non-field owners to benefit equally from the scheme. As one government official remarked:

> From the outset it was explained to the people how the programme would work, how people had to combine their plots of land to form one block of land. Come harvest time, when the maize looked good and ready for harvest, people started protesting. This field belongs to my grandfather. This field belongs to our family they said... People just went along with the plans when the programme was introduced during the facilitation workshop. But when the food was ready in the fields they were singing a different song. When it was harvest time people appeared, some stole the maize; others spoke of their rights to their families' fields and there were fights over the maize in the fields, over the produce. And so people set the maize on fire and heavy losses were incurred. That's when the department of agriculture chose to focus on individual commercial farms because of the chaos and friction in the rural villages (Interview with Mr Matlatsi, 2010).

The issue of land ownership and rights is a delicate one especially in the context of development interventions by outside agencies. It is often assumed that arable land is fallow and therefore being wasted in the former homelands. This is frequently used as a justification for introducing agricultural development schemes in rural areas. However, Kepe and Tessaro (2014:272) argue that "irrespective of its condition and current use, land carries significance as a form of identity and power". Kepe and Tessaro highlight the case of Lujizweni and Mqwangqweni villages in the Eastern Cape which had been approached by AsgiSA in the initial years and refused to be part of the programme. From their interviews they conclude that refusal to participate in government-initiated interventions is not something to be wondered at. Thus, in some cases villagers would rather leave their fields fallow than participate in projects initiated by government or third parties. This is mainly because of fear of losing control or management responsibility over their land. Previous land dispossessions during colonial and apartheid times are the reason why the fear to lose land persists among rural households (Kepe and Tessaro, 2014:272).

The small size of land holdings in the reserves meant that the MFPP's emphasis on economies of scale and therefore the cultivation of extensive blocks of land became problematic. Some officials revealed that it was difficult to implement the MFPP in many rural villages because combining small and dispersed parcels of arable land was challenging. In Flagstaff, one official observed:

> We had the MFPP in Xopozo, Siphezini and Mtwaka villages. But because of lack of huge pieces of land we could not always meet the minimum land size requirement of 50 hectares. People have small parcels of land and over the years these have been sub-divided through inheritance. So now the MFPP only allowed people who had 50 hectares and above. Having people combine their pieces of land to have the 50 hectares is always a problem. In this part of the Transkei we have small pieces of land unlike, for example, some private farms in the Ciskei (Senior Extension Officer, 2010).

From the above, it is clear that the MFPP's stipulation on the consolidation of land is rigid. In some areas of the former homelands betterment planning left rural households with smaller parcels of land averaging 1.5 hectares or dispossessed them of their arable land altogether. In such cases, the minimum land size requirement of at least 50 hectares of contiguous land to participate in the MFPP is not practical. In the later phases of the MFPP attempts were made to cater for rural villages with small land holdings. The review of the MFPP resulted in the introduction of the Siyakhula Step-up component of the MFPP to cater for smaller land sizes. However, the two programmes differed only in the percentage of loan repayments to be made at end of the first year and subsequent years of production[11]. Many of the conditionalities were still retained and the programme continued to decline. In Matatiele, one of the officers from the Department of Agriculture noted that the MPPP was dancing around the same spot and never went beyond the initial beneficiaries. The initial beneficiaries never repaid the loans. As a result, the programme was restarted a number of times and the same people participated. There would be official statements that the pioneers would be removed from the projects but they always ended up allowing the same original participants to continue in the programme. Oral accounts reveal that no pioneers graduated from the programme and it was never extended in any significant way to include more new comers (Interview with Mr Mahlatsi, 2010).

During my qualitative research it also emerged that contractors hired to provide tractors services to the MFPP beneficiaries also benefited inordinately from the scheme. This often provided opportunities for elite capture of state resources and took the form of 'accumulation from above'.

[11] The changes introduced in the new component of the MFPP (Siyakhula Step-up) consisted of requiring prospective beneficiaries to make upfront contributions from the first year of production/participation. With the Siyakhula programme, the beneficiaries were required to pay 10 % (in first year), 15% (second year), 20% (fourth year) and 50% in fifth and final year. This is different from the original MFPP funding structure in which beneficiaries enjoyed 100% subsidy in the first year of participation and paid 25% (in second year), followed by 50% (in the third year), 75% (in fourth year) and 100% (in fifth and final year).

Through its mechanization component the MFPP sought to create a segment of dynamic accumulators who were initially meant to provide mechanization or tractor services to the beneficiaries of the programme. It was envisaged that these contractors would eventually evolve into dynamic agribusinesses and stimulate growth within agriculture and the broader rural economy. In the whole of Matatiele district, only two contractors were relatively successful and remained engaged in agriculture. Government officials interviewed noted that most of the beneficiaries in the mechanization scheme failed or dropped out of the scheme. Others divested from agriculture and bought property in urban areas or luxury vehicles. Overall, the mechanization project provided a conducive environment for elite capture of state resources. In Matatiele, one of the two successful erstwhile contractors is involved in a successful agricultural venture, mainly dairy farming, and has a sizeable herd of beef cattle. This contractor started by providing tractor services to the MFPP beneficiaries from the inception of the programme. Proceeds from the MFPP were combined with non-agricultural income to invest in farming. The contractor teamed up with his sibling who contributed capital from her retirement benefits. I managed to secure an interview with his business partner who is also his sister and manages their farming enterprise. Below is an excerpt from the interview:

> My brother was a contractor for Eastern Cape provincial government's MFPP and he saved up the money earned from providing tractor services. He invested in leasing the farm at Mariazell Mission. He started as a small contractor ploughing maize fields for the MFPP beneficiaries and by the time programme was scaled down he had seven tractors. I also joined hands with my brother and decided to go into farming. When there were signs that it's profitable to farm I retired from my teaching job and decided go into farming full-time. So it's a joint venture between the two of us. In fact in 2006 we had started farming but I went into full-time farming in 2009. We leased the farm from Mariazell mission in 2006 and in 2007. We were settled and there wasn't a lot of activity at the farm. As early as 2002, we had already started rearing dairy cattle at my rural homestead in Mohloloaneng before leasing the farm in Mariazell. At the time we started with 10 dairy cows. Three of the ten cattle died and we were left with seven but we did not give up. We continued to build our herd. We would go to auctions and approach individual farmers to buy cattle and add to the seven cattle we already had. When we moved to the Mariazell farm we had 25 dairy cattle. The herd has grown since then and now we have 65 dairy cattle. In summer we get 600 litres of milk per day and in winter we usually get 300 litres of milk per day. But this winter the milk yield has improved because we now have silage and hay. So we now get about 400 litres of milk per day. It's actually our first time to be having such an amount of milk around this time (July). I feed the schools and also supply the local community with milk. In summer the milk is profitable. When the schools close I have to throw away the milk or give it to pigs because there is not enough

> market for us. We sell one litre of milk for R6. When I sell 600 litres I get R3600. And when I sell 300 litres I get R1800. In Matatiele town they need lots of milk but I am not able to supply large quantities of milk more so in winter. At the moment it's far much better for us to supply the schools and local communities. We also have 125 beef cattle. We have been selling beef cattle. In 2009 we sold 71 beef cattle at the auction in Kokstad (Interview with Makapa, 2012).

This former contractor used the MFPP as a spring board to accumulate and re-invest the proceeds in agriculture. He also benefited from his sister's earnings from the formal sector and eventually her payout income when she retired from her teaching job. This augmented resources accumulated from the MFPP. However, he is just one of the two contractors who seem to be on an upward trajectory of accumulation.

By 2007, it had become it had become widely accepted that the MFPP had failed. The intended beneficiaries, the small-scale farmers, who had participated in the programme, were mostly left in debt and the UVIMBA bank had to write off their debts. In much of the province the only remaining signs of the programme were the emerging black commercial farmers who had managed to meet the stringent conditions of the scheme. The contractors, who provided the scheme with mechanization services also managed to extract significant benefits from the scheme. The realization that the MFPP had failed led to its subsequent replacement with the AsgiSA maize schemes as the province's flagship agricultural development scheme meant to bring about a 'green revolution'. However, as will become apparent in the sections below, there are some striking similarities between the Eastern Cape's MFPP and the AsgiSA maize schemes, for example, the consolidation of land and the prominent role of the private sector. The introduction of the AsgiSA-EC maize schemes represented continuity as opposed to change.

6.6 A brief history of the AsgiSA-EC maize scheme

AsgiSA was an overarching policy framework for national government implemented between 2006 and 2009 whose primary purpose was to halve poverty in South Africa by 2014 through rapid economic growth. The AsgiSA policy framework sought to reduce poverty and inequality in South Africa though deliberate interventions by the state aimed at correcting market failures and accelerating economic transformation. In particular, the AsgiSA objectives include specific interventions to address entrenched inequality and marginalization which has resulted in many

economically excluded people being unable to participate in the benefits of growth and development, especially those trapped in the so-called 'second economy'.

In May 2007 the Eastern Cape provincial government launched the AsgiSA-EC Pty. Ltd. company to revive agriculture and positioned it as an alternative to its predecessor the MFPP. The Eastern Cape provincial government resolved to capitalize on the momentum that had been generated by the highly popularized AsgiSA national policy framework by creating the AsgiSA-EC Pty. Ltd. Thus, the Eastern Cape Provincial Government set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), later established as AsgiSA-EC (Pty) Ltd, to drive the implementation of critical development programmes in the Eastern Cape, particularly agrarian transformation in the province. The vision for AsgiSA-EC envisages a vibrant and sustainable rural economy that improves livelihoods and unlocks the dormant potential of the land and the people of the Eastern Cape. In support of this vision, the mission stipulates that through partnerships, high level and focused integration and co-ordination, AsgiSA-EC will play a direct and facilitative role in building a sustainable and modern, rural-based economy, primarily through agrarian reform (AsgiSA-EC, 2009).

6.6.1 Some assumptions of the AsgiSA-EC maize scheme

AsgiSA-EC (2010) identifies agriculture and agro-processing as one of its high impact priority programmes and distinguishes itself from previous interventions like the MFPP by characterizing itself as a more systematic approach to agrarian transformation which allows for more solid linkages with agribusiness. The key assumptions here are that small-scale farmers are marginalized by their lack of linkages with the agribusiness sector and the subsequent failure to capitalize on opportunities in the formal sector, and this is the main reason for the decline in maize production in the former homelands. AsgiSA aimed to promote economies of scale in crop production by consolidating individual holdings into primary production blocks (measuring approximately 500ha), which are consolidated into even larger blocks or clusters measuring 5 000ha (AsgiSA 2010:57). However, in practice, AsgiSA managers preferred production blocks of approximately 300ha because they were seen as being more manageable (AsgiSA, 2010).

At the centre of AsgiSA-EC's strategy to revive agricultural production in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape was the 'agribusiness model' which essentially gives primacy to partnerships with the private sector companies so as to enhance communal area farmers' access to the 'market. The agribusiness model assumes that, by inclusion into the value chains or the agro-food system, the small farmers will simply piggyback on the established agribusinesses and eventually gain a strong foothold in the market system.

On the part of the programme designers, the agribusiness model would be the main distinguishing feature between the AsgiSA maize scheme and previous government intervention, the MFPP. AsgiSA's agribusiness model envisaged the establishment of strong formal relationships with key constituencies on the value chain of the identified agricultural activities, namely:

1. Outgrower (co-operatives) who are emergent farmers who will sign up with AsgiSA EC for technical and input assistance in return for a specific yield of the cash crops they produce.
2. Strategic partners comprising of established businesses, banks, Black Economic Empowerment groups who have vested interests in agribusiness who view involvement in this venture as a way of securing a market, such as seed and farm implement companies
3. Ancillary ventures whereby AsgiSA EC with the target beneficiaries invest in, for instance, milling facilities on a commercial basis.
4. Thus, each stakeholder enters into memoranda of understanding, business contracts and service level agreements to govern these relationships (AsgiSA, 2008:3).

In terms of design, the AsgiSA-EC maize scheme entails the 'lock in' strategy wherein small holders are, through the agribusiness model, partnered with agents of agrarian capital on the value chain. AsgiSA-EC's focus is on large-scale cropping through the application of modern, commercial principles in agricultural production in the former homelands where there has been widespread de-agrarianisation. The thinking in the AsgiSA agricultural development scheme is that small-scale farmers are not fully integrated into markets and value chains.

6.6.2 Impact of AsgiSA-EC on agricultural development and livelihoods in Ongeluksnek

The AsgiSA maize scheme was initiated in Ongeluksnek, in the 2007/2008 farming season. Initially, the project was only confined to the Ongeluksnek commercial farms, but it was extended to the communal area villages, including Moeketsi, in the 2009/2010 farming season. In total, the AsgiSA maize scheme operated in the Ongeluksnek commercial farms for four years (from the 2007/2008–2010/2011 farming seasons) and for a total of two years (2009/2010–2010/2011 farming seasons) in the Moeketsi communal area villages.

The AsgiSA maize scheme last operated in Ongeluksnek in the 2010/2011 farming season and it has since been discontinued. There are continuities and similarities between the AsgiSA maize scheme and its predecessor the MFPP. In the Ongeluksnek farms the scheme ran for a total of four years while in the villages it was only functional for two years. The scheme thus ran into familiar problems, namely the inability of the beneficiaries to extract benefits with production costs squeezing the profit margins. Also, the scheme had to sell the maize produce under very unfavourable market conditions when South African Futures Exchange (SAFEX) prices could not allow for profit to be realized. This is mainly attributed to the lack of storage capacity which saw the maize being sold soon after harvest to avoid any damages to the grain.

6.6.3 Improvement of livelihoods and accumulation prospects of beneficiaries

Commercialization of agriculture in the countryside has often been introduced on the basis that the so-called ‘subsistence farmers’ are engaged in ‘unproductive’, ‘unprofitable’, and ‘backward’ forms of agricultural production. As one the consultants who were part of the AsgiSA maize scheme in Ongeluksnek noted:

> With communal farmers you need an organization that has business skills and farming skills or else they will always remain subsistence farmers if that is what they want to do but it is not going to ever alleviate poverty…farming is about scientific evidence, it’s about logic and business principles, we work on the basis of evidence (Interview with Lerumo, 2012).

Thus, agricultural activities by the small-scale farmers in rural areas were seen as largely subsistence in nature. These small-scale farming activities are often seen as having limited or no prospects for accumulation or (in Marxian terms) expanded reproduction. Yet the

commercialization of farming in rural settings through the involvement of the private sector in large-scale agricultural schemes has often not resulted in the improvement of livelihoods for the beneficiaries. These 'win-win' agricultural schemes have also not created the necessary conditions for accumulation or expanded reproduction for the participating households. In the AsgiSA maize scheme the formula for sharing arrangements was that AsgiSA would get 90 percent of gross turnover whilst the beneficiaries in each instance would get 10 percent of turnover (AsgiSA-EC, 2009; 2010). This was often seen as a 'good deal' since villagers were seen as hungry for or in need of development. On the sharing of income, one development consultant who was involved in the project in Ongeluksnek noted:

> The farmers were offered by AsgiSA 10 percent on turnover, 10 percent monetary value on turnover. The 90 percent went to AsgiSA obviously because the farmers were not required to put in any effort, they had no risk whatsoever, so AsgiSA, that is, the government put in a 100 percent input cost of which as I said the farmers had nothing to put in. If you take it, it was actually a very lucrative deal in the sense that farmers would get 10 percent of turnover and the other 90 percent would obviously after various input deductions, etc., would go back to AsgiSA for inputs for the following year (Interview with Sdumo Trust Consultant, 2012).

Oral accounts reveal that the AsgiSA maize scheme did not meet the beneficiaries' expectations in terms of financial returns. Highly commercialized agriculture is characterized by high inputs costs and this leaves very little surplus to be shared by the beneficiaries. According to one respondent:

> When AsgiSA came, it came from above, it came from the Chief. We were summoned to an *imbizo* and told that there is a company that will chase away hunger. Those with fields were told to register and so we did register. Since the AsgiSA scheme started we are still starving, nothing has changed. If anything, we at this homestead rely on two old-age grants my wife and I get from the government (Interview with Mamotseoa, 2012)

In the Ongeluksnek villages (Thaba Chicha and Litichareng), interviews reveal that beneficiaries feel that they have not been able to extract any significant benefits from the AsgiSA maize scheme and the performance of the project was far below their expectations. In the 2008/2009 farming season they obtained R36 226 which represented their 10% share of gross income from the scheme. The community did not share the first payment of R36 226 since they feel that it is a very small amount and it does not make sense to share it amongst, at least, 250 co-operative

members (households) which translates to a mere R144 per household. This payment is miniscule even for those small-scale farmers who had been struggling to cultivate their fields on their own. In the 2010/11 farming season, the amount obtained has not yet been revealed by the committee. During the interviews there was a sense of disempowerment and disillusionment about the AsgiSA maize scheme amongst the villagers. According to one respondent:

> I don't have a field. You can't say I have a field when I practically gave it away for free to this company (AsgiSA-EC). I have nothing. I can't farm now because I don't have a field. They just come and plough, fertilize and harvest and we don't know what happens after that. All we hear is that they will keep the money. We never got a cent from our fields (Interview with Ramotsamai, 2012).

On large-scale agricultural investments in communal areas, Kepe and Tessaro (2014:273) argue that contracts may be poorly understood and at times the principle of justice which is the flagship principle of post-apartheid government is in jeopardy of violation. Private and quasi-private companies often sub-contract their work in land deals. While the main implementing agency with the contract to implement food security projects may respect the principle of justice, their sub-contractors may act in ways that violate this principle if unmonitored.

Considering the high costs of farming inputs (seeds and fertilizers) and the high amount of initial capital outlay required to acquire agricultural machinery (tractors and combine harvesters), it has become difficult for small-scale farmers to continue farming. The provincial government's response to the decline in cultivation has been to initiate partnerships with powerful agri-business players who are already established in the market. Yet, the imperative for agri-business players to generate profits from these ventures means that small-scale farmers extract very few benefits from these commercial arrangements. According to Friman, Hajdu, Jacobson, Johanson & Salomonsson (2010:5), the so-called modern, high-yielding techniques in industrialized agriculture fit into a context where the high monetary costs of all external inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery) can be shared over large-scale production units and often also subsidized by cheap labour or agricultural subsidies. This is not possible with subsistence farming with limited resources to pay for inputs. So even in strict economic terms, it is not possible for small subsistence farmers to use high-cost inputs, and in energy efficiency terms, it is a waste of energy.

6.6.4 Local participation in decision-making and production

The manner in which the AsgiSA maize scheme was introduced in the Ongeluksnek was also not inclusive and participatory. The conception phase of the project only involved the project managers and the paramount chief. Oral accounts reveal that the details of the project were only revealed to field owners at a later stage when all the production and business plans had been finalized. Lack of participation in the decision making processes and the actual farming activities was a problem for the beneficiaries. The AsgiSA maize scheme envisaged that the local villagers would acquire practical farming skills during the time the AsgiSA maize scheme was operational in Ongeluksnek villages. However, the design of the programme did not allow for meaningful participation in the farming processes. Often contractors came to work the fields unannounced and hardly had contact with the beneficiaries. As one farmer in Ongeluksnek noted:

> It's hard, it's quite hard. The people who are really benefiting are the project managers. With us there is no benefit. We don't learn how to farm. I just fold my arms and I see these big tractors, big things coming and coming. I don't think we are gaining any knowledge at all. When they came they said they were going to show us how to do things in this business. But now we are just folding our arms (Interview with Chairman of the Ongeluksnek Farmers Association, 2010).

Participation in this instance was a managed process meant to inform the 'beneficiaries' about the arrival of the project in their village. The villagers had no input and in the preparation of business and production plans. This did not leave room for training or transfer of knowledge.

6.6.5 Enforced cooperation and consolidation of land

Like its predecessors, the AsgiSA maize scheme also operated on the basis of consolidating land so as to facilitate mechanization and precision farming that is characteristic of large- scale forms of agricultural production. One of the project managers of the AsgiSA maize scheme justified the consolidation of individual plots of land in these terms:

> With the rural communities what happened there, one of the things that we actually are very proud of, that we pulled off, that everybody said we would never be able to pull off and which is still a challenge for everybody else throughout the country that want to develop the rural areas was the measuring, mapping and condensing...the small little postage stamp-type of lands. Because you might have 40 people in the community and in

> that area there are 40 little lands so you can't develop that, you cannot effectively plough and plant, and work that because our outlook is not one of subsistence farming but commercial farming and we have promoted the idea of precision mechanization. What we did was then measure these small little lands, these little plots and to then put all those in one big area. In other words if you had 30 little lands or so you end up with one big land in that area of say 300 hectares or so which then made it feasible to crop (Interview with AsgiSA Consultant, 2010).

However, when the AsgiSA maize scheme was initiated in Ongeluksnek villages, it seems there was no adequate explanation with respect to pertinent land tenure issues. Thus, participants were not informed whether or not project members with no land would derive the same benefits from the project as those owning land. In addition to the lack of clarity, the very idea of combining different plots of land, different in terms of shape, size and soil quality was seen as unfair by some participating households. Furthermore, when the contractors ploughed the fields, they, from the outset, collapsed most of the boundaries separating the fields and at times encroached on areas where there were no fields before, virtually extending some fields. In Ongeluksnek the issue of consolidating individual plots has proved to be problematic. It has emerged that field owners were reluctant to have their plots of land combined. As one of the respondents noted:

> In Moeketsi, the AsgiSA contractors have ploughed everywhere such that it is now difficult to identify exactly where the previous boundaries separating one field from the next were. Where there were small patches of uncultivated land before, they also ploughed with their tractor, extending some fields, and practically creating fields where none existed before. This is a source of conflict. People will fight over these boundaries. Even if I wanted to start using my field again now that AsgiSA left, how will I know where my field starts or ends? I don't even know (Interview with Khupane, 2010).

Previously, forcing villagers to combine their individual pieces of land has contributed to land tenure conflicts on the irrigation schemes in the Transkei. This unilateral approach to agricultural development has been characterized as 'enforced consolidation' and is typical of the supply-driven nature of the large-scale agricultural development schemes in the former homelands. Historically, large scale irrigation schemes initiated in the former Transkei also neglected the issues of tenure and land rights. Van Schalkwyk, *et al* (2000:34) note that most of the irrigation schemes in the former Transkei required, in the initial stages, the consolidation of land. The land was later subdivided into smaller units, irrespective of land rights previously owned by the

beneficiaries (Van Schalkwyk, *et al* 2000:34). This often resulted in conflicts amongst participating households and subsequent collapse of these schemes.

6.6.6 The co-operative model and individual equity

Cooperative models are particularly problematic especially if there are conflicting objectives. With the AsgiSA co-operative model the issue of equity, what beneficiaries bring into the project (in this case land) and the welfarist objectives (the inclusion of non-land owners) which privilege inclusiveness and equal distribution of earnings seem to be contradictory. AsgiSA treated land owners and non-land owners equally in terms of benefits to be derived from the project. In Ongeluksnek's Moeketsi villages non-land owners became part of the scheme by virtue of paying a joining fee of twenty rands (per household) and a monthly fee of five rands (per household) paid to service the co-operative's bank account. It is noteworthy that land owners were not exempt from this requirement. Also, through this monetary payment non-land owners were automatically elevated to an equal status with their land-owning counterparts. Along the way, some individuals defaulted in making the monthly payment. Other villagers simply did not pay the joining fee as well as the monthly payments. This seems to have created some confusion even amongst the leadership of the cooperative. During my interviews, the number of beneficiaries given by the leadership varied. At one time they reported that the cooperative had 80 members, and later on it was 250 members. Eventually it became apparent that the project was generally accepted as a 'community' project meant to benefit the whole community (*isichaba*) and there was little mention of the payment of co-operative membership fee. The welfarist cooperative model was essentially foisted on villagers. Land owners and non-land owners were simply lumped together.

6.6.7 Local knowledge and practices

The high-input, industrial types of agriculture characteristic of the large-scale maize schemes introduced in the countryside have a homogenizing effect and tend to ignore the highly variable local environment. According to Scott (1998:301) "if the logic of actual farming is one of an inventive, practiced response to a highly variable environment, the logic of scientific agriculture is, by contrast, of adapting the environment as much as possible to its centralizing and standardizing formulas" (Scott, 1998:301). For instance, local farmers possess profound

experiential knowledge of their fields and different soil qualities within these fields. Yet the commercial models of farming rarely factor in some of this essential local knowledge. In the case of Moeketsi villages, farmers revealed that they had better knowledge of their soils and how to plough them in spite of their lack of training in commercial farming. Many of the villagers distinguished between the dark clay soils and the reddish lighter soils in the area and noted that these soils needed to be handled differently. From their experience, while the dark and heavy clay soils are more fertile they are prone to poor drainage. The lighter red soils are less fertile yet they are better in terms of drainage. When the AsgiSA contractors ploughed the fields, they did not seem to be aware of the differences in these soils and how best to work to work them. The two vignettes below are illustrative:

> We know our soils. These people (AsgiSA) should just give us the tractors, equipment and inputs and leave us to do the job. We can win. The red soils should be planted last. They must start with the black soil. By the 27th of October they should have planted in the Black soils. They avoid the black soil because it heavy and has drainage problems, but we know how to handle it. The black soil needs to be worked on early, that's all. It's fertile and there is no need for lots of fertilizers (Interview with Mabindisa, 2010).

> The AsgiSA people complained strongly about complacency in the community. They said we had to make sure that each time the tractors came to plough there is someone from the community to make suggestions and direct them. Look at the strip of fields running parallel to the stream near Mariazell mission. The crops were totally destroyed. Those fields have the dark clay soil (*idongwe*). Ploughing too early, before the first rains, means the soils are too hard and too heavy for the machines. Waiting too late also means the soils are marshy since there is poor drainage. It needs good timing. Yet if you look at the red soils on the Thaba Chicha side the maize looks good and the soils are red with good drainage. It is not a huge problem if the fields with red soils are planted last. So now the AsgiSA tractors just came and went straight into the fields and started ploughing the fields with good drainage first and unfortunately ploughed the poor drainage soils a bit late, well into the rainy season (Interview with Nomuzi, 2010).

A leader of a maize project in the village of Mpharane (Ongeluksnek Valley) also remarked that AsgiSA demonstrated a lack of adequate understanding of the local requirements of maize production. She noted that AsgiSA was more interested in the hybrid maize and yet they hardly planted this hybrid variety in good time. Thus this project leader remarked that, "the hybrid variety AsgiSA plants needs to be in the soil between the fifteenth of October and first of November latest. This is the 27th of October and AsgiSA has not started planting. Our maize is of

better quality than AsgiSA[12]. Berry (in Scott, 1998:297) "most farms, even most fields, are made up of different soil patterns and soil sense" and "good farmers have always known this and have used land accordingly…they are not appliers of generalizations, theoretical, methodological or mechanical". The top-down nature of the AsgiSA maize scheme has seen the neglect of indigenous knowledge that local communities possess. The locals prefer the black soils and state that it needs to be cultivated earlier, at least by mid-October. Yet the AsgiSA people always start with the less fertile red soil which needs lots of fertilizer and which can potentially push up costs. Their main considerations are the logistics of operating the tractors in poorly drained soils. Yet good timing by virtue of understanding the local climate and local soil qualities may be useful in overcoming a problem of this nature.

The priority for many households is maize for household consumption initially harvested as green maize. Villagers argued that priority should be given to homestead gardens. In the villages of Thaba Chicha and Litichareng, some informants noted that the idea of leaving all the maize to dry in the fields only to be harvested by mid-year for sale in the market was against their own long-held practices. In the case of the AsgiSA maize scheme, one villager remarked:

> They harvest in July which is very late. By that time most people are already starving. When we were still farming we would start eating green mealies from the field in February. Now with AsgiSA you can't touch the maize at all. You have other people harvesting your own field and taking the maize away. I don't think it's right to have another man harvesting your field (Interview with George, 2012).

In the months of February and March (this is the 'hungry time' when grain kept from the previous years is most likely to be depleted) many households will be harvesting green maize for household consumption or to assuage hunger and the idea of leaving the maize in their fields untouched while they literally starve is something they claimed was alien to them. And also the very act of having someone else or 'another man' other than the field owner harvesting their fields was equally strange.

[12] Interview with Mrs Mabindisa, Ongelusknek.

6.6.8 Shunning development? Resistance to AsgiSA maize scheme in Moeketsi

In the last year of its operation in Moeketsi villages (2010/2011 farming season), the AsgiSA maize scheme encountered widespread problems. There was theft of maize and destruction of the maize crop by livestock from the villages. The project had a ranger responsible for guarding the fields and when livestock strayed into the fields the owner would pay a fine to the Chief. The system seemed to work in the beginning but soon collapsed as the disaffection of the villagers increased. An incident in the village sparked the disregard of all the rules with regard to the maize project. According to one respondent, the source of chaos was the disciplining of some boys from the village who had stolen the project maize. She remarked:

> It all started when a few young men were caught stealing some maize from the AsgiSA fields. These young men were taken to the chief and they were whipped as punishment for stealing. This did not go down well with members of the community. And so people said, how can the Chief punish our children? These are our fields after all. We are letting our cattle loose onto the AsgiSA maize and we will see what he is going to do (Interview with MaNkosi, 2012).

Eventually, it became a 'free for all' scenario with even the usually timid villagers leaving their livestock to roam freely in the maize fields. During my field research, one of the village leaders was disillusioned by actions of the villagers. He commented:

> You know you say to yourself my people are poor and you bring development. You want things to change for the better. But alas! You soon realize these people are not poor because they don't want development. They just want things to remain unchanged. Many people have acted willy-nilly letting their livestock onto the maize fields. Some are armed at night. I will be happy to see AsgiSA withdraw. I am happy to go to my principal and say I have given up. It's pointless to have AsgiSA here. We should just let them go because these people don't want development (Interview with Moeketsi sub-chief, 2012).

Some of the reasons for the destruction of the maize seem to have originated in the general lack of land, particularly grazing land in the villages of Moeketsi. Moeketsi has a small strip of grazing land which is perennially over-grazed. Historical land dispossessions during the establishment of white farms in the area and the subsequent betterment removals during attempts to 'improve' agriculture left the Moeketsi villages with little land. The shortage of land continues to pose a great threat to one of the key agricultural activities, livestock production and

specifically cattle rearing. Without tangible benefits forthcoming from the fields which they contributed to the AsgiSA maize scheme, it was only a matter of time before acts of resistance would surface. It is the senior livestock-owning patriarchs who initially started to let their cattle and horses onto the fields, usually at night. Gradually, other members of the community would soon follow suit. As one woman commented:

> It's the men with cattle who are a problem. I am a widow and I don't want complicate my life in this community. And so at sunset, all my cattle are in the kraal and I don't let them loose at night like what some men do…people are angry and fed up with this company. They want to be paid. They want their money that's why they let their cattle destroy the maize (Interview with Mali, 2012).

The 'culture' of vandalizing crops, often fuelled by the shortage of grazing land, had been a common occurrence within the villages well before the arrival of AsgiSA maize scheme. Homesteads with no male figure of authority or a patriarch often had their homestead gardens exposed to acts of crop vandalism by livestock usually at night. Female household heads or widows, for instance, complained that some cattle owners in the village were in the habit of cutting down perimeter fences on homestead gardens during the night and letting their cattle eat the green crops. AsgiSA was introduced in a context where land shortage was a huge problem, especially grazing land. These tensions were bound to emerge.

6.6.9 Continuities and changes

Cousins and Scoones' (2010) analysis of the framing of 'viability' in redistributive land reform provides insights into how policy programmes and interventions continue to privileged large-scale commercial farming which is seen as an ideal normative model for agricultural development in Southern Africa. According to Cousins and Scoones (2010:32), in Southern Africa arguments for and against redistributive land reform often revolve around the notion of viability. They note that "different framings of viability influence the way that a range of interest groups think about and contest the wider politics of land and agriculture in the region" (Cousins and Scoones, 2010:32). It is also noteworthy that debates on 'viability' tend to focus narrowly on such criteria as farm productivity and economic returns. Thus, the dominant framing of viability is embodied in technical recommendations around 'minimum farm sizes', 'economic units', and

'carrying capacities'. According to Cousins and Scoones (2010:32) "an implicit normative model in much usage in the region is the large-scale commercial farm even when policies suggest that other scales and forms of production, such as smallholder farming, should be accommodated".

The tendency to privilege large-scale forms of production as more desirable models for agricultural development manifests in the emphasis on optimal farm sizes or economic units has its roots in the colonial period. The flipside of this tendency is the unfavorable view of small-scale forms of production as inefficient and unproductive. In the South African context, the apartheid state and its various functionaries propagated the idea of 'a middle peasantry' or 'proper farmers' in the former homelands. This class of farmers needed access to viable economic units that would guarantee the viability of agricultural production in Reserves. The Tomlinson Commission was particularly prescriptive when it came to what constitutes viable and productive farming in the homelands. According to Hendricks (1989:311) 'the Tomlinson Commission articulated a developmental ideal in which subsistence farming could not be condoned and proposed that a farming unit producing an average gross income of £57 would attract a Bantu to full-time farming and confine him permanently to the land'. These '*bona fide* farmers' would be distinct from those households who could not productively utilize farming resources and sustain themselves through farming. The idea was to accommodate the 'non-farmers' in small rural towns and emerging industrial centres in the homelands while others would become proletarians in white capitalist industries within the confines of the forced labour regime.

In the post-apartheid era, the various agricultural development schemes have not weaned themselves from the notion that large-scale production is superior to smallholder production and should therefore be the basis for 'developing' agriculture in the former homelands. In the case of the Eastern Cape, the various agricultural programmes (MFPP and AsgiSA maize scheme) bear this out. The common denominator in these schemes is the conditionalities which require the consolidation of land to achieve economies of scale and place rural production at par with large-scale commercial production. In post-apartheid South Africa, most land reform projects envision commercialization as the appropriate avenue for effective redistributive land reform. In land reform projects, this commercial logic is usually enforced through production plans formulated

mostly by private consultants. Beneficiaries are often required to form groups and the sub-division of farms into smaller units is not encouraged. From the evidence, it is clear that this is synonymous to enforced consolidation and co-operation. There is also a deliberate inclination towards creating more linkages with the agro-industries through contract-farming arrangements. This has often resulted in a tension between the social reproduction needs of rural households involved in these schemes and the imperative of capital accumulation (expanded reproduction of capital) which is the driving force for private-sector involvement.

State functionaries and consultants various experts continuously through their work purvey the notion of the superiority of the commercial form of agricultural production and the supposed inferiority of small-scale production. Hebinck *et al* (2011:229) argue that "the expert system as it currently exists strongly emphasizes received knowledge; by implication, the future, is 'fixed', if not determined by the past". Experts persistently rely on dichotomized classification schemes which they use to order South Africa's agricultural sector. This is illustrated in the "contrast between 'subsistence' farming and 'commercial' farming, with the 'emergent' farmer as a bridging notion between the two extremes" (Hebinck *et al*, 2011:229).

6.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, state improvement schemes are often intertwined with capitalist interests. While capitalist principles in farming may result in high levels of productivity it is noteworthy that capitalism is in essence simultaneously progressive and dispossessive. This contradiction may undercut the effectiveness of developmental schemes in the formerly disadvantaged communal areas. Expert knowledge and the subsequent quest to modernize agriculture continue to characterize state interventions in the countryside. The methods and approaches of these state interventions bear some resemblance to past policies. This is indicative of the existence of continuities between past and present agricultural development schemes and a lack of decisive policy shifts to transform the rural economies.

Chapter 7: Agricultural Production in the Moeketsi villages

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents empirical data on agricultural production in the Moeketsi villages namely Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. My focus is on cropping in large fields and homestead gardens, and livestock production. The data shows that cropping in large fields has been in decline in the period preceding the introduction of the government-sponsored massive maize scheme. While a small number of resilient agriculturalists had continued to cultivate their fields many households had dropped out of field cultivation by the time the AsgiSA maize scheme was introduced. The AsgiSA maize scheme brought the villages' arable fields under cultivation and this marked the end of field cultivation even by the small segment of resilient agriculturalists. It is worth noting that one of the villages, Mutsini, was not part of the AsgiSA maize scheme. Yet in this village, abandonment of field cultivation was much more extensive. In Chapter five I noted that the cultivation of large fields in previous years had flourished in Mutsini because of sustained material support from Mariazell Mission. Mutsini villagers consist of Mariazell Mission employees and their descendants. The mission used to provide them with tractors for ploughing and maintained the fences in the fields. They also hired rangers to look after the fences and the crops. However, the mission gradually withdrew this material support and this marked the beginning of the decline in field cultivation in this village. At the time of the survey (2011) only one household in Mutsini reported that it had utilised its arable field in the previous year.

In spite of the abandonment of field cultivation, cropping in homestead gardens remains fairly robust with a wide variety of crops being grown in these gardens. Livestock production especially cattle rearing has also remained resilient considering the constrained ecological and economic environment in the area. In this chapter I conclude by noting that while de-agrarianisation is a reality this process is not inevitable and wholesale. Instead, it is important to understand which components of agriculture have declined, or remained resilient or fairly robust. Below I present the empirical data on cropping in large fields and homestead gardens and livestock production in Moeketsi villages.

7.2. Field crops

This section presents data on the cultivation of large fields in Moeketsi villages, Ongeluksnek. As has already been noted, when the government sponsored maize scheme was introduced some households were still engaged in the cultivation of large fields, albeit in a heavily constrained environment. However, it is noteworthy that most of the households that continued to cultivate their fields are in the villages of Litichareng and Thaba Chicha. In Mutsini village no government scheme was implemented hence there was no disruption of field cultivation. Yet this village had already experienced rapid decline in field cultivation. Most of Mutsini residents are employed by Mariazell Mission and were thus were engaged in field cultivation on the basis of heavy subsidisation by the Mission. With the gradual withdrawal of the Mission from direct involvement in the agricultural activities of its employees field cultivation declined in this village.

Table 7: Ownership of large arable fields in Ongeluksnek villages (n=124)

			Name of Village			
			Mutsini	Litichareng	Thaba Chicha	Total
homestead owns large field	yes	Count	11	18	19	48
		% within homestead owns field	22.9%	37.5%	39.6%	100.0%
		% within village	32.4%	35.3%	48.7%	38.7%
	no	Count	23	33	20	76
		% within homestead owns field	30.3%	43.4%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within village	67.6%	64.7%	51.3%	61.3%
Total		Count	34	51	39	124
		% within village	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 2.476, df = 2, p = 0.290

Oral accounts indicate that by the year 2000 most of the arable fields in Mutsini were now invaded by alien plants making it difficult to resume farming (Focus group discussion, 2012). Cash resources required to combat the wattle tree are quite substantial and informants indicate that even the government's Working for Water programme is not very successful in containing this alien plant. Table 7 displays the patterns in field ownership amongst the surveyed households in Ongeluksnek villages. Generally, there are more households (61.3 percent) in all

the three villages that have no access to large arable fields compared to those who own this type of land (38.7 percent). In the village of Mutsini, 32.4 percent of the households in the survey own arable fields while 67.6 percent reported no owning any arable fields. Within Litichareng village only 35.3 percent own arable fields compared to 64.7 percent with no arable fields. The data reveals similar patterns in Thaba Chicha where there are fewer households owning arable fields (48.7 percent) compared to the proportion of those who do not own arable land (51.3 percent).

Table 8: Field cultivation amongst land owning households before introduction of AsgiSA maize scheme (n=48)

			Name of Village			
			Mutsini	Litichareng	Thaba Chicha	Total
homestead cultivate field	yes	Count	1	8	10	19
		% within homestead cultivate field	5.3%	42.1%	52.6%	100.0%
		% within village	9.1%	44.4%	52.6%	39.6%
	no	Count	10	10	9	29
		% within homestead cultivate field	34.5%	34.5%	31.0%	100.0%
		% within village	90.9%	55.6%	47.4%	60.4%
Total		Count	11	18	19	48
		% within village	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 5.087, df = 2, p = 0.55

Table 8 shows that most of the households with large fields were not cultivating their land. Of the 48 large field owners 19 (39.6 percent) were cultivating their fields before the introduction of the government-sponsored massive maize production scheme. On the contrary, 29 (60.4 percent) of the large field owners had abandoned field cultivation at the time the large-scale maize scheme was introduced. The use of large fields shows interesting patterns within the villages. In Mutsini only 9.1 percent of the field owners cultivate their fields while a huge proportion (90.9 percent) were not utilising their arable fields. The data shows that in Litichareng, 44.4 percent of the households were cultivating their fields while 55.6 percent of the households had abandoned their fields. In the village of Thaba Chicha, 39.6 percent of the land owning households were utilising their large fields when the AsgiSA maize scheme was introduced. On the contrary, 60.4

percent of landholders in Thaba Chicha had abandoned their fields when the government maize production scheme was introduced.

As noted in the introductory remarks while the general trend of decline in field cultivation holds true for all the villages, it is more pronounced in Mutsini. There are some contextual factors that are unique to Mutsini. Most of these cultivators are essentially mission employees with homesteads on Mission land where they were also allocated arable fields. In addition, the mission provided resources and the requisite infrastructure for farming and this was a permissive environment for field cultivation. The gradual withdrawal of the Mission from subsidising the village's agricultural activities profoundly affected field cultivation. The Mission provided the capital investment for fencing the arable fields. Rangers who maintained the fences and ensured that they were not vandalised were on the payroll of the mission. Across the years these privileges were slowly withdrawn. Oral accounts have also revealed that besides provision of the requisite infrastructure for farming, the mission also provided tractor services for its employees. Most respondents in Mutsini highlighted that even though they still used their oxen for planting the mission would provide tractors for turning the soil.

However, the gradual withdrawal from field cultivation in Mutsini has resulted in some of these arable fields being invaded by alien plants. It has become more difficult for some households willing to resume field cultivation to do so considering the costs associated with the clearing of wattle forests. While government sponsored programmes like WFW have been operational in the area these have not been entirely effective. Further complicating the situation in Mutsini is the lack of tenure security (see Chapter five). Some villagers interested in field cultivation have been waiting the full transfer of the land donated by the mission. With most of the original fields covered in wattle forests the possibility of gaining access to prime land donated by the mission has been a source of hope for some households with aspirations to resume field cultivation. However, most of the problems I have enumerated may be surmountable with the availability of agricultural capital in the form of both infrastructure and cash resources.

7.2.1 Reasons for not cultivating fields

The survey probed the reasons why households with arable fields had not utilised their land even before the arrival of the government-sponsored scheme. The responses are presented in table 9. The lack of fences was highlighted as one of the reasons for withdrawing from field cultivation by some households. In the survey 13.79 percent of the households indicated that lack of fences was the primary reason they had dropped out of large field cultivation. Within these villages there is generally scarcity of land resources considering that much of the land is occupied by Mariazell Mission, the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and the surrounding farms (see for instance, Muzikandaba, Judge and Sitsubi's farm). Considering that the villages are squeezed between the large land holders, the rural households in this area do not have adequate grazing land. This problem becomes more acute during the farming season when the fields are ploughed leaving very little land for animals to graze. Over the years the two agricultural activities have had to co-exist in this constrained landscape and most of the time crops in the large fields have become exposed especially to grazing animals like cattle, horses, sheep and goats. As a result, most households have gradually withdrawn from cultivating their fields because of the lack of fences to keep their crops safe from animals. In fact this problem intensified with the collapse of the betterment land use plans in which the fences separated arable land from grazing land.

Table 9: Reasons for not cultivating fields (n=29)

Reasons for not cultivating field	Number of households	Percentage
Lack fences	4	13.79
No capital (seeds, fertilizer, hiring a tractor or span of oxen)	20	68.97
Moved recently	2	6.90
Poor drainage	3	10.34
Total	29	100

However, it is noteworthy that even before the betterment land use regime collapsed there already was intense pressure and competition over ecological resources with households grappling to balance competing needs between cropping in large fields and grazing their livestock. Demarcating and planning the small amount of land available for these villages did not necessarily resolve the problem of land shortage. Betterment fences only provided temporary respite to a more enduring problem of land scarcity. This is evidenced by the fact that even at the

height of the betterment programme when the rationalisation of land use was in full swing pressures on land were already manifest. Oral accounts reveal that the culling of livestock was being enforced because the betterment cattle enclosures had become dust plains and the cattle were also malnourished.

The high cost of farming, especially the expensive agro-inputs, is another reason why households have increasingly dropped out of field cultivation. In the survey, informants indicated (68.97 percent) that farming increasingly required the use of 'modern seeds' and fertilizers. Oral accounts reveal that in the past farmers would use seeds from the previous harvest. These 'traditional seeds' did not require the intensive application of fertilizers as is the case with seeds from the shops. Informants often complained that without fertilizer it is difficult and almost impossible to obtain good yields in present times. The new seeds were introduced on the basis that they are high yielding varieties yet in terms of farming costs they have become an impediment to farming for most households. The costs of farming have also increased owing to more reliance on tractors instead of oxen. Households engaged in farming often have to hire tractors for ploughing especially with the decline in cattle numbers in recent years. People cited stock theft and lack of adequate grazing land as some of the obstacles inhibiting cattle production. This in turn means that tractors are increasingly replacing cattle for draught power. This requires cash resources which are not readily available for most households.

Some households did not cultivate their fields because they had recently moved to the villages from the urban areas (6.97 percent). These are individuals or households who spent many years residing in the urban areas and only return to settle in the village in later years. During their absence they usually do not cultivate their fields. Upon their return to the rural areas, after retirement or retrenchment, there is a lag time required to mobilise resources and activate social networks in order to resume cultivation. This is increasingly difficult especially in a constrained environment where people are already dropping out of field cultivation. Finally, some households highlighted that drainage problems were the main reason (10.34 percent) why they had not utilised their large fields. There are heavy clay soils in some parts of the villages and these soils are locally known as *idongwe.* The cultivation of these soils requires good timing. Ploughing these soils when the rainy season has already commenced is often difficult. Wealthy

households with the capacity to mobilise resources well before the rainy season commences are able to overcome this problem.

7.2.2. Erstwhile agriculturalists in Ongeluksnek: Case material

Below I now discuss the erstwhile agriculturalists in Moeketsi. I have already discussed the underlying causes of agricultural decline both in livestock production and cropping especially the abandonment of large arable fields. The factors impeding the utilisation of arable fields can only be fully appreciated when one considers the historical processes that continue to shape contemporary agricultural practices. I mapped out some of the historical processes underlying the decline of agriculture in Moeketsi villages. The statistical data on agricultural production also helps to sketch the aggregate picture of the state of agriculture in the locality of Moeketsi. I therefore include some case material from the life stories of erstwhile agriculturalists. I will confine myself to dry-land cropping in large fields since this agricultural activity has virtually collapsed. These case studies will provide more in-depth and rich insights into the challenges agriculturalists involved in cropping have had to confront in recent times. Through these life stories a nuanced picture of how rural households have, across the years, negotiated the incessantly precarious agrarian economy will emerge. It is important to demonstrate how factors underlying the decline of agriculture or its precarious position in contemporary Moeketsi have featured in the lived reality of these erstwhile agriculturalists. A small number of households had continued to cultivate their larger fields in the period leading up to the introduction of the government-funded AsgiSA massive maize scheme in 2009. However, since the withdrawal of the massive maize scheme in Moeketsi, it is clear that there is a total abandonment of dry-land cropping in large fields by individual households. The massive maize scheme thus accelerated the withdrawal from field cultivation. However, insights into small-scale farming can be gleaned from the lived experience of these 'erstwhile agriculturalists' who had continued to practice dry-land cropping in the face of diminishing prospects. These vignettes provide a ‘retrospective’ (Murray, 2001 and 2002) perspective on the shifting and precarious place of agriculture in constructing rural livelihoods in contemporary Ongeluksnek.

7.2.3 Case 1: Mr Mutaung, Thaba Chicha Village

Mr Mutaung was born in 1935 in the Moeketsi reserve and his family had to move from their homestead to make way for a commercial farm. He left his rural homestead in Thaba Chicha to work in Cape Town in 1952. Mr Mutaung worked in the farms for many years and in 1974 he 'abandoned the idea of working for a white man since it was not rewarding at all'. He says "I never got all these things, the tractor, open truck and cattle, working for the whites. What propped me up was farming". Mr Mutaung left the farm work in Cape Town with a second hand tractor which he used to transport wood and to cultivate people's fields. But his break was in 1980 when he got credit for a new tractor in Matatiele. He continued cultivating people's fields, transporting firewood for sale in surrounding villages. People would pay with a sheep or a goat when they didn't have the money. After paying off his tractor loan, Mr Mutaung says that is when he became a 'real man' and money started flowing in. Besides using his tractor Mr Mutaung was cultivating his large field, growing maize. He used to get 30 100kg bags of maize from his piece of land but the yields declined over the years such that when the AsgiSA maize scheme was introduced he was only harvesting six bags of grain from the same portion of land. Asked about the reasons for the drastic decline in yields, Mr Mutaung had this to say:

> Things changed when we started using the hybrid seed varieties. We never had problems with our seeds. But these seeds cannot be reused and you have to buy new seeds every year. They also need lots of fertilizers. The prices of fertilizer and maize seeds kept going up every time. But the yields kept going down. When AsgiSA came I was now only getting six bags of maize from the thirty I used to get..." (Interview with Mutaung, 2012).

Since the collapse of the AsgiSA scheme, Mr Mutaung has not resumed cultivating his field. He has since parked his tractor and open truck. He won't be using them because it is expensive to operate and maintain them. He also indicated that people were not using their fields so business was very low. In addition, his sons are not gainfully employed which means that means there are no resources to operate the tractor and open truck. On his future plans, Mr Mutaung said:

> ...Everything needs money. We now rely on the old age grant to eat. At least we can afford a plate each. The grant is just enough for food. You can't buy clothes with grant money. My open truck and tractor are all in good condition but I won't even think of refuelling them. There is no work. People are not farming. They will stay there until one of my sons gets a proper job and has money to operate and maintain them. As for now it's better if God just takes me from this world. It would be better if I leave this world..." (Interview with Mr Mutaung, 2012).

While Mr Mutaung still owns cattle, sheep and horses, he is reluctant to sell his cattle since cattle are expensive and once he loses them, restocking will be difficult. Now the household has a number of income sources. The family has three child grants, one old age grant, his wife is a traditional healer and she brews traditional beer, and George earns money from thatching rondavels.

7.2.4 Case 2: Thabo, Thaba Chicha Village

Thabo was born in Thaba Chicha in 1957. He started working in 1974 in Cape Town as a farm worker, weeding and pruning grapes. He worked in Cape Town for twelve full months and thereafter returned to Matatiele where he only stayed for six months before leaving for the mines in 1975. Thabo worked as a machine operator at Impala Mine in Rustenburg until 1984. After that he never returned to the mines and started working for the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve in 1984 and retired in 2011.

> We used to farm a lot and there is a huge difference now. We never used to rely on fertilizers. We used to plant and the crops would just grow. We only made sure there were no weeds. Nowadays even if you weed, without fertilizer crops don't grow. They become short and yellowish. We grew maize, sugar beans, pumpkins and vegetables. We used to grow the vegetables (turnip) in between the rows of maize. We planted maize first and when it was at knee length with the weeding done, we then planted turnip in between the rows of maize. We usually planted maize between October and November and when the maize was now grown, in January, we then planted the turnip. We used a span of 8 oxen to plough, and only two oxen for both planting and weeding with an ox-drawn plough. We were three brothers with cattle and the other two didn't have cattle at the time. Amongst the three of us we had 38 cattle but my own cattle were only six. We used to get sixty 80kg bags of maize. We used to fill the whole house with maize and beans. With beans we used to get about 20 bags for most of the years. We were still farming even when AsgiSA came but at the time we were having low yields than before. We were now only getting 15 bags of maize from 60 and with beans we were getting only 3 bags from 20. We were still using the same three fields (Interview with Thabo, 2012)

> I think one of the problems is that the rainfall became unreliable. I began to notice that the rains were now falling in late November to December instead of mid-to late October. We also increasingly became reliant on fertilizers for our crops to grow and this became more and more expensive and our yields decreased a lot. In the past we never bought seeds. We selected good maize and kept it as seed planting in the next season. I would say for the last 10 years we relied on farming in order for us to eat. Now we have lots of expenses because we eat from the shop. At the time when we were getting 60 bags of

> maize we used to sell 30 of them and leave the other 30 for consumption at home. We would use the remaining maize until the next season (Interview with Thabo, 2012).

Thabo resigned from his job in 2011. He has chosen to take an exit package from the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve where he started working in 1984 when he left the mines and got married. Having lost most of his cattle, he will now be focusing on homestead gardening especially now that he bought a water pump for irrigating his garden crops.

7.2.5 Case 3: Nomusa, Mutsini Village

Nomusa was born on a commercial farm in Ongeluksnek in the 1950s and her parents moved to Mutsini when their employer's farm became part of the enlarged Transkei homeland. Nomusa had six children with her husband before formally getting married and establishing their homestead in 2000. The husband moved from his homestead in Masupha (a neighbouring village) and stayed with Nomusa's in 1996. They also started farming in 1996, using five fields. Two of the fields belonged to the Nomusa's sister and brother respectively, and another two were owned by two people from the neighbourhood who had no means to farm. The fifth field was their own, allocated to them when they decided to get married.

> From 1998 to 2003 we were farming a lot. That's when we had lots of maize and we didn't know what to do with it. We grew maize, beans, pumpkins and kaffir corn. I would fill two huts with maize and some would be left in the field to rot there. We used both a tractor and cattle to do the ploughing. We used to pay R500 for each of the five fields to be ploughed by a tractor and if we didn't have the money we would pay with a goat or sheep. For every field cultivated we would pay with a sheep or goat (Interview with Nomusa, 2012).

Nomusa has since abandoned field cultivation and is now concentrating on her homestead garden and livestock production. She explained that her husband's death is one of the reasons why she ended up dropping out of field cultivation. With the passing on of her husband she lost command of family labour as her children refused to work in the fields. In her words,

> If my husband was alive we could be having something big. A tractor, a car, we could be far by now... Now my children refuse to go to work in the fields. I am a bit older now and I am a woman...I have children who drag their feet. Even things like going to the mountains to check if my cattle are in good health I have to do it myself. I would just hear that a cow is dead without even knowing when it got sick and what happened and so on. Now I do everything myself (Interview with Nomusa, 2012).

However, at the time of the research Nomusa's homestead garden was very productive and she supplied the local communities, hiring an open truck to deliver the vegetables at the transient social grant markets. Her total income from vegetable sales for the year amounted to R12 000. Nomusa also earned significant income from livestock sales and reported to have remitted some of her earnings from livestock sales to relatives in the city. The household sold five cattle for R 5 000 each plus one cow for R 8 000 bringing the total earnings to R 33 000. They also sold sixty goats for R500 each earning a total of R30 000. Four sheep were sold for R 700 each, earning a total of R2 800. In addition, Nomusa sold ten chicken for R50 each and earned R 500. For the whole year, her total earnings from livestock sells totalled R66 300. Besides earnings from the agricultural activities, Nomusa is also employed at the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve as a general worker. One of her mentally handicapped children also gets a foster grant from the government. On my last visit in 2013, Nomusa was planning to sell more livestock and had already made contact with buyers from KwaZulu-Natal.

7.2.6 Comparative analysis of case histories

The overarching theme in these life histories is the decline of agricultural activity and subsequent dropping out of field cultivation. There is also an indication that this did not mark a total withdrawal from cropping since some households shifted their resources to homestead garden cultivation. In some cases (see Nomusa's case) livestock production has remained productive and remunerative. The phenomenon of field abandonment with households dropping out the cultivation of large arable fields can be explained in terms of rural differentiation in the face of various constraints. Bernstein and Woodhouse (2001:318) make an important argument that the effective exclusion from farming of some rural people by the increasing entry and reproduction costs of agricultural enterprise is critical yet often neglected aspect of differentiation. In the case of Moeketsi villages it is interesting to note that it is the rich households with access to draught power and cash resources that had continued to cultivate their large fields while the less well-off households tended to drop out of field cultivation much earlier. This 'exclusion' and dropping out often happens without any necessary concentration of landholding and formation of large-scale agricultural commodity production (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001). In Moeketsi (Thaba

Chicha and Litichareng) the introduction of the AsgiSA massive maize scheme brought all arable fields under cultivation. This effectively put an end to field to cultivation by individual households in the area. Those households that had remained resilient (mostly the rich households) dropped out of field cultivation at the time the large-scale maize scheme was introduced. Nevertheless, it is important to draw attention to the life histories of erstwhile agriculturalists (including those who had dropped out of field cultivation before the government scheme). Some retrospective insights into their livelihood trajectories are important. These may shed light into some of the constraints to agricultural production or what may be characterised as the 'entry and reproduction costs of agriculture' (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001).

The various constraints that have been experienced by these erstwhile agriculturalists give a glimpse into the pressures impinging on small-scale petty commodity producers in recent times. First, the economic viability of these small-scale agricultural activities is increasingly becoming constrained by downward pressures downstream and upstream of agriculture. This is manifest in the increasingly expensive agro-inputs like seeds and fertilizers. These pressures have seen a sizeable number of households dropping out of field cultivation. The case of Mr Thabo and Mr Mutaung demonstrates that in recent times agriculturalists have had to contend with increasing costs of farming. To illustrate, these case histories reveal that in earlier times it was possible to reuse maize seeds from the previous harvest instead of buying from the shops every farming season. From their accounts, these so-called 'traditional' maize seeds did not require the intensive application of fertilizers. However, the introduction of the genetically modified hybrid maize seeds, what are often referred to as 'modern seeds', is associated with increased costs of farming. First, with 'modern' maize it is not possible to keep maize seeds from the previous harvest for planting in the next season. Second, without using fertilizers yields are generally very low. This has resulted in increased costs of farming.

Mr Mutaung is one agriculturalist who had grown his enterprise beyond farming in his own field. He was now providing tractors, ploughing the fields of fellow cultivators who did not have draught power. This put him on an upward trajectory of accumulation. The poor households with no draught power often hired tractors for ploughing. Payment was either in cash or in livestock (mainly sheep and goats). However, with more people increasingly dropping out of field

cultivation business declined for these rural accumulators since fewer households required tractor/ploughing services. This constituted a turning point for some of these accumulators. Commoditisation resulted in differences amongst field cultivators with some acquiring farming machinery like tractors. This allowed such cultivators to generate income not only from the cultivation of their own fields but also through providing ploughing services for the less well off. The overall decline in agricultural activity, specifically field cultivation, marked a decline in the fortunes of these prosperous agriculturalists.

The case of Mr Mutaung also shows the importance of non-agricultural sources of income in farming. Mr Mutaung is too old to be absorbed in the formal labour market while his children are yet to be gainfully employed. This means that there are no cash resources to operate his ploughing and transport business. He argued that it would be unwise to continue utilising these assets without the injection of cash resources from outside of farming since the tractor and vehicle are expensive to maintain.

Mr Mutaung and Nomusa experienced labour shortages in their farming activities. Labour is a critical resource for the small-scale petty commodity producers. As a widow Nomusa has lost her grip on family labour since her children are not willing to contribute their labour to the household's farming activities. Family labour especially the labour of women and children is essential for the reproduction of these productive forms. However, in recent times it appears that it is increasingly difficult for some rural producers to maintain a grip on family labour. This has often become manifest in generational tensions. Older informants often complained that the young generation does not appreciate the importance of farming and that young people are lazy. Some even argued that access to social grant earnings, especially child support grants by young mothers, was the primary reason why young people are reluctant to participate in the homestead's agricultural activities. Some researchers argue that the reluctance of young people to engage in farming essentially emanates from profitability problems that have come to characterise small-scale farming in contemporary times (Kepe and Tessaro, 2013). When farming is less profitable and there is little in terms of surplus from cropping activities, it becomes difficult to convince the younger generation to contribute their labour. Declining capacities with age also compound this problem.

7.2.7 Sharecropping in Moeketsi villages

My field research indicates that in the earlier periods, large work parties reminiscent of the work groups McAllister (2001, 2005) found in Transkei's Shixini village seemed to be a common way of mobilising labour in Moeketsi. A group of homesteads, usually neighbours or relatives would team up, to plough, plant, and weed or even harvest together. In the 1950s for instance Thaba Chicha villagers gathered all the produce (maize and sorghum) during harvest time to a central point known as *umhlangeni*. In this place teams including men, women and children would thrash the maize and sorghum and transport the grain with ox-drawn sledges to their homesteads on the mountains for storage. Sharecropping arrangements also existed during this time. However, in the past it appears that sharecropping arrangements took a more communitarian and welfarist form. With the overall decline in farming resources and socio-economic changes like migration it became difficult to farm based on other people's goodwill. As one elderly woman remarked:

> Even if you brewed beer and invited neighbours with a span of oxen to help with ploughing, you didn't get much because weeding became a problem. If all your children are faraway you have no means to weed your field and so weeds thrive and the crops just don't do well. People abandoned field cultivation. It increasingly depended on other people's goodwill; whether they will assist with a span of oxen, help with weeding or harvesting (Interview with Nomuzi, 2012).

In the recent times sharecropping has been increasingly necessitated by the constrained economic terrain in which farming households have to practice cropping. The critical resources for cropping include, access to land, draught power and agro-inputs. Table 10 presents a summary of the key features of sharecropping arrangements in the Moeketsi villages. In a context of high unemployment and therefore limited access to cash income it is increasingly difficult to mobilise resources for farming. Those with land often find it difficult to cultivate their fields and their only option is to join hands with fellow villagers with access to cash income and animal traction. Cash income is needed to acquire agro-inputs (seeds and fertilizers) and to pay for a tractor or animal traction. From my interviews I noted that sharecropping arrangements were motivated by the desire continue farming in a context where cash income is scarce. The decline in livestock numbers exacerbates this problem since farmers increasingly need to hire tractors instead of solely relying on animal traction. Arable land remains a critical resource yet without the required agro-inputs fields were often left to lie fallow.

In the main, sharecropping is a coping strategy that allowed farming households to continue cropping in a highly constrained and precarious environment by pooling together scarce resources.

Table 10: Sharecropping arrangements by four selected households

	Crop sharing arrangement			
	Nomusa	Pontjo	Zwelakhe	Mpiti
Reason for sharecropping	Nomusa needed more arable land because she was getting higher yields and needed to expand her cropping activities.	Offered field to Mr Maqhuba when husband fell ill and did not have enough labour and time to cultivate.	Zwelakhe has interest in cropping but has no field of his own. Joined Zolile who has his own field and cattle.	Mrs Mpiti has field but no draught power and capital. Across the years gave the field to people with the means to plough.
No. of fields cultivated	In total 5 fields were cultivated. Nomusa's own field, her parents' field, her brother's field and two fields belonging to other villagers.	One field cultivated. Mr Maqhuba has large family and no field. Needed to cultivate to provide food for his large family.	One field (Zolile's field is cultivated). Zwelakhe previously stayed on a farm and had no field in Mutsini.	Mrs Mpiti just offered field to other people and not actively involved in field cultivation.
Inputs	For all the 5 fields Nomusa provided the inputs (draught power, seeds, and fertilizers).	Mr Maqhuba provided all the inputs (seeds, fertilizers, draught power).	Shared equally tractor and other costs (seeds, fertilizers).	Did not contribute inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.).
Labour	Parents and children did help with field cultivation. The other two families helped with planting, weeding and harvesting.	Pontjo could not be involved since she was looking after sick husband.	The two families worked together (ploughing, planting, weeding and harvesting)	Did not contribute labour.
Sharing and payment arrangement	Gave the two families half of the yields. Helped out parents and brother whenever they needed any form of help. No payment for use of fields their fileds.	Had agreed to have half of the yields but ended up taking 1 at times 2 bags since Mr Maqhuba had large family and needed the maize more.	Shared the yields half and half.	Accepted some maize as a token of appreciation. No strict agreement.

Only one farmer (see Nomusa in table 10) was involved in sharecropping arrangements for the purposes of expanding production, bringing more land under production as opposed to sharecropping in order to access agro-inputs and draught power. This sharecropper thus

cultivated five fields in total. Nomusa's family owned a field. However, Nomusa also used her mother's and brother's fields. Besides the two fields belonging to her relatives, she also got two fields from fellow villagers to expand her cropping activities. Nomusa's family was not short of draught power since they own cattle and would occasionally hire a tractor if it was necessary. Nomusa also had a remunerative and permanent job at the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and would contribute to the farming activities of the household. With a sizeable amount of resources at her disposal, Nomusa was on an upward trajectory of accumulation.

7.3 Homestead gardens in Ongeluksnek villages

Homestead gardens are an extension of the homestead yard and because of that most homesteads invariably have access to a homestead garden. In the survey, only one homestead, in Litichareng reported that it had no access to a homestead garden. This homestead had set aside a huge part of the residential plot for their business premises. On being asked why they did not have a homestead garden this business operator remarked that, "the chief does not allow people to have two residential plots. So we decided to divide the residential plot to have a business. The trading store and the tavern now occupy a huge part of the residential plot" (Interview with Mr Phumo, 2012).

Table 11: Ownership of homestead gardens across the villages (n=124)

			Name of Village			
			Mutsini	Litichareng	Thaba Chicha	Total
homestead own garden	yes	Count	34	50	39	123
		% within homestead own garden	27.6%	40.7%	31.7%	100.0%
		% within village	100.0%	98.0%	100.0%	99.2%
	no	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within homestead own garden	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within village	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	.8%
Total		Count	34	51	39	124
		% within village	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 1.443, df = 2, p = 0.486

The survey results show that the majority of households have access to homestead gardens and only one (a paltry 0.8 percent) did not own a homestead garden for the reasons mentioned above (see Table 11).

Table 12 shows data on cultivation of homestead gardens across the villages and within each village. In the survey there are 78 households (63.4 percent) that were utilising their homestead gardens. In contrast, 45 households (36.6 percent) indicated that they were not utilising their homestead gardens. Within the villages, the data shows that in Mutsini 79.4 percent of the households were cultivating their homestead gardens while the remaining 20.6 percent were not cultivating their homestead gardens. In Litichareng, 80.0 percent of the surveyed households were cultivating their homestead gardens. Conversely, 20.0 percent of the surveyed households in this village were not cultivating their gardens.

Table 12: Cultivation of homestead gardens across the villages (n=124)

			Name of Village			
			Mutsini	Litichareng	Thaba Chicha	Total
Homestead cultivates garden	yes	Count	27	40	11	78
		% within homestead cultivates garden	34.6%	51.3%	14.1%	100.0%
		% within village	79.4%	80.0%	28.2%	63.4%
	no	Count	7	10	28	45
		% within homestead cultivates garden	15.6%	22.2%	62.2%	100.0%
		% within village	20.6%	20.0%	71.8%	36.6%
Total		Count	34	50	39	123
		% within village	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 30.518, df = 2, p = 0.000

Statistics show that in Thaba Chicha village about 28.2 percent of the households from this village were using their homestead gardens while approximately 71.8 percent were not using their gardens. From the data, it is clear that overall more households that are utilising their gardens while a fairly smaller proportion had dropped out of homestead garden cultivation. However, when disaggregated by village the data shows that Thaba Chicha village has fewer people cultivating their gardens compared to the other two villages.

Table 13 presents the cross tabulation of homestead garden cultivation and wealth rank of households. The data shows that there is some differentiation in homestead garden cultivation on the basis of wealth rank of the households. Insights from this study indicate that the cultivation of homestead gardens is relatively less expensive compared to the cultivation of large fields. Within each wealth category the data shows that amongst the poor 53.3 percent were cultivating their homestead gardens while 46.7 percent were not cultivating their gardens. In the average wealth group 68.4 percent were cultivating their gardens and 31.6 were not cultivating their gardens. In the rich wealth group, 80.0 percent of the households were cultivating their gardens while 20.0 percent were not. The general trend is that the cultivation of homestead gardens seems to be accessible to poor households. Yet it still remains that this activity (homestead garden cultivation) is still differentiated on the basis of wealth status. The data thus reveals that within each wealth group, it is the rich households with the highest proportion of households that were cultivating their homestead gardens.

Table 13: Cultivation of homestead gardens and wealth rank (n=124)

			Wealth Rank			
			Poor	Average	Rich	Total
Homestead cultivates garden	yes	Count	32	26	20	78
		% within homestead cultivates garden	41.0%	33.3%	25.6%	100.0%
		% within wealth rank	53.3%	68.4%	80.0%	63.4%
	no	Count	28	12	5	45
		% within homestead cultivates garden	62.2%	26.7%	11.1%	100.0%
		% within wealth rank	46.7%	31.6%	20.0%	36.6%
Total		Count	60	38	25	123
		% within wealth rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 6.003, df = 2, p = 0.050

Broadly, homestead garden cultivation is more accessible to rural households (including the poor) compared to other forms of agricultural activity, for instance, cattle production and the cultivation of large fields. However, in terms of proportion within each wealth group, the rich wealth group is more likely to have more homestead garden cultivators than non-cultivators.

Rich households often have water tanks installed to harvest rainwater from the rooftops. This water is often used to irrigate homestead gardens. While there are community taps which supply running water at different community water points, rich households can invest in water pipes to draw water to their owns residential sites. Most homestead gardens rely on rain water yet some homesteads with water taps on their residential sites occasionally irrigate their crops. Besides having the resources to cultivate homestead gardens, wealthy households often have homesteads with proper and well-maintained perimeter fences. This keeps their crops safe from the animals. For most households, family labour is used in the cultivation of homestead gardens. However, some rich households hire paid labour to work in their homestead gardens. Some individuals from poor households occasionally offer their labour to their rich counterparts in what are essentially patron-client relationships. Hired labour is often used for tasks like erecting and maintaining the perimeter fence for the homestead gardens. People also use hired labour for turning the soil before planting in their homestead gardens. In some cases, this may require the use of a span of oxen (ox-drawn plough) or hiring a tractor. However, these are once-off activities not performed on a regular basis. In most instances, small farming implements (garden fork and spade) are used in turning the soil especially when the garden is cultivated regularly. Below I discuss the various reasons mentioned for not cultivating homestead gardens amongst households with access to this type of arable land.

The differentiated nature of homestead garden cultivation whereby rich households are more likely to cultivate their gardens relative to poor households has been noted. Nevertheless, it still remains that homestead garden cultivation has fewer entry barriers compared to the cultivation of large fields. Below I include the case history of a poor household which has however managed to invest small amounts of resources at its disposal into homestead garden cultivation. In previous years this household had been productively cultivating its large field. Upon losing cattle to livestock thieves, this household was never able to restock their herd. The husband also passed on and it increasingly became difficult to mobilise resources for cultivating the large field. Instead of abandoning cropping altogether they redirected small amounts of money from social grant earnings and remittances and invested in homestead gardening.

7.3.1 Mrs Mokoena: From field cultivation to homestead garden cultivation

Mrs Mokoena was born in 1952 in Letlapeng, Mt Fletcher. She left Mt Fletcher in 1970 and moved to the Mariazell Mission in 1970 where she got a job as a social worker. In 1971 she met her husband who was from Litichareng at the Mariazell mission. Her husband was also working at the mission as a tractor driver and they got married in the same year. They built their homestead in Litichareng which they maintained whilst they continued to stay at the mission. During their stay at the mission they were actively involved in farming. Mrs Mokena's husband passed on in 1987 and she left the mission to settle permanently at their homestead. At the time of the interviews, the Mokoena homestead had fallen on difficult times and had withdrawn from field cultivation since the year 2000. The only sources of income were an old age grant, child grant and infrequent remittances. Yet their fairly precarious circumstances did not preclude them from utilizing their garden. This is what the household head had to say:

> Nowadays without cattle the situation is tough, we have no choice. We can't use the fields it's expensive. We can't afford to hire tractors and for most of us to eat we have to rely on supermarkets. I can't go back to cultivating my field. I can only grow some food here in the garden. That's the only thing I can manage to do. My homestead garden helps because food from the supermarkets is expensive. I get fresh food from my garden, and I don't always have to buy. I save money a lot. My garden is very lucrative at times. I keep the money. I make money from selling the pumpkins, they are very big and at times I can sell just one for R 100. I usually sell to the community. I also grow some tomatoes. I have just harvested three 20 litre buckets of tomatoes and sold them for R120 each. I took the money and bought cosmetics for resell here in the neighbourhood. I use the garden mostly to raise money so I can have capital to buy things and resale. I always put some money aside though, every time I sell my produce so that I may be able to replant every time after harvest. I usually need about R400 on average to plant the whole of my garden. I don't have problems with pests but usually buy a pesticide to control pests and it only costs R18 (Interview with Mrs Mokoena, 2012).

The case of the Mokoena matriarch is illustrative of how households may put money into homestead gardening and still be able to contribute to their daily reproduction needs under less risky conditions. The household also makes a small profit which is invested into petty trade. Money obtained from petty trade is then used to purchase inputs for the homestead garden. For many households, abandoning cropping altogether is not an option. Many households still consider farming and cropping in homestead gardens to be important considering that they would be worse off if they 'ate from the shops'. Oral accounts revealed that buying food is expensive

for many households. While some food items may be bought from the shops, a homestead garden provides an important subsidy to a household's food expenses. Field cultivation involves high input costs (for seeds and fertilizers) as well as the possibility of losses associated with adverse climatic conditions, for instance, drought, and the destruction of crops by livestock especially in Ongeluksnek where lack of adequate grazing pastures has seen animals destroying crops in unfenced fields.

7.3.2 Reasons for not cultivating homestead gardens

Below I discuss the problems and challenges that inhibit homestead garden cultivation in the study area. This discussion is based on the reasons that individuals provided for not utilising their homestead gardens. A number of reasons were mentioned for not cultivating gardens amongst those household with access to this type of land. Table 14 shows data on the reasons provided for not cultivating homestead gardens. Of the 123 households that own homestead gardens there are 45 households that reported to have not used their homestead gardens in the previous year. About 15.56 percent of households mentioned lack of a proper fence as the main reason for not cultivating their homestead gardens. Homestead gardens are not only vulnerable to large livestock like cattle and horses, and other grazing animals (sheep and goats). Small sedentary animals like pigs and poultry are also a problem. This is the case especially where there are no proper enclosures like pigsties and fowl runs. This is usually a source of conflict amongst neighbours.

> We have four pigs which our neighbour looks after. Our pigsty is very small and not well maintained so the pigs usually break free easily. We don't have a man in this home to help with building a pigsty or doing all the heavy work. So our pigs would break free and destroy crops in our neighbours' homestead gardens (Interview with Thibeli, 2012)

This is usually a source of conflict amongst neighbours. Besides animals from other homesteads, some people have crops destroyed by their own animals. Without proper, well-maintained fences and animal enclosures, some households are discouraged from cultivating homestead gardens. In households where there is no adult male to perform laborious tasks like building a pigsty or a fowl run, the abandonment of homestead garden cultivation is common.

Labour is important in the cultivation of homestead gardens. In the survey, 11.11 percent of the households indicated that they did not cultivate their homestead gardens because of labour shortages. In some households members of the younger generation are in employment in the urban areas or trying to find work. For others younger people are no longer pliant and do not willingly offer their labour. Where older people no longer have the capacity to work and have no younger people to help them work the land or cannot afford hired labour, homestead gardens are often left to lie fallow. About 51.11 percent of the households not cultivating the homestead gardens mentioned the lack of cash resources to buy inputs as the main reason for not using their homestead gardens. The cultivation of homestead gardens does not require substantial resources like large fields. However, for some households especially those with no access to reliable income in the form of an old age grant or regular remittances, the more difficult it becomes to afford even the small amount of resources needed to cultivate homestead gardens. The differentiated nature of homestead garden cultivation with more rich households cultivating their gardens bears testimony to this.

Table 14: Reasons for not cultivating homestead gardens (n=45)

Reasons for not cultivating	No. of households	Percentage
No fence	7	15.56
No labour	5	11.11
No cash resources for inputs	23	51.11
Moved recently	3	6.67
Poor drainage and fertility	7	15.56
Total	45	100.00

Some households (6.67 percent) reported that they had moved recently and were still in the process of establishing themselves before engaging in the cultivation of homestead gardens. However, these are not entirely new people or outsiders being allocated land. These are households who had been based in urban areas for a long period and made very little investment in their rural homesteads. Upon retirement or retrenchment, they use their resources to revive the rural homestead. This not only involves renovating dilapidated buildings but also erecting a

perimeter fence and hiring a tractor or span of oxen to plough the homestead garden which would have been fallow for a prolonged period of time. Others (15.56 percent) indicated that they had not cultivated their homestead gardens because of drainage problems. As has already been noted in the case of field cultivation there are some fertile dark clay soils in the area which are however difficult to cultivate especially in rainy days. Working this type of soil needs to be done well before the rainy season has peaked. Drainage problems may however be overcome by mobilising resources and preparing the soil before the rainy season begins. In many respects, the failure to deal with drainage problems is a manifestation of lack of access to resources in good time (before the peak of the rainy season).

7.3.3 Types of crops grown in homestead gardens

There are seventeen types of crops grown in the homestead gardens. Table 15 shows the number and percentage of households growing each crop type in the homestead gardens. Data shows that the five most cultivated crops are turnips (65.38 percent), spinach (62.82 percent), maize (48.72 percent), cabbages (46.15 percent) and carrots (37.18 percent).

Table 15: Types of crops grown in homestead gardens

Type of crop	No. of households growing crop	Percentage of households growing crop
Turnip	51	65.38
Spinach	49	62.82
Maize	38	48.72
Cabbages	36	46.15
Carrots	29	37.18
Potatoes	27	32.62
Beetroot	24	30.77
Pumpkins	20	25.64
Onions	17	21.79
Beans	13	16.67
Tomatoes	14	17.75
Mustard	9	11.54
Chinese greens	7	8.97
Green pepper	6	7.69
Lettuce	3	3.85
Butternut	2	2.56
Eggplant	1	1.28

In contrast, the five least cultivated crops in the area are eggplant (1.28 percent), butternut (2.56 percent), lettuce (3.85 percent), green pepper (7.69 percent) and Chinese greens (8.97 percent).

Most households plant turnip because it is relatively easy to grow and once the seedlings are planted they tend to require less attention in terms of weeding than other vegetables. Turnip seedlings are also widely available in the streets of Matatiele and can be bought from street traders. Maize is also widely grown not only for consumption, mostly as green maize, but is also used to feed small livestock, mostly poultry. The average number of crops grown amongst the homestead garden cultivating households is six. Thus most households in the area are involved in the intercropping of maize and different types of vegetables. The fairly diverse type of crops grown in the homestead gardens in the area is consistent with patterns in other parts of the Eastern Cape. Fay's study in Hobeni, Eastern Cape reveals increasing intensification and diversification of garden cultivation alongside the decline in the cultivation of larger fields. Fay (2013:252-253) argues that the decline in field cultivation has been accompanied by an increase in crop diversity and input application. For instance, the crop mix (amongst those who still cultivated fields) remained low and consistent. Yet in homestead gardens the variety of crops cultivated increased substantially. The mean number of crops cultivated for the sample as a whole increased from 2.9 in 1998 to 3.6 in 2009.

7.3.4 Use of homestead garden produce

In this survey (see Table 16) respondents were asked to indicate what they had used their garden produce for. All the households cultivating their gardens indicated that indicated that they used the garden produce to feed their families. Informants often argued that, 'food is expensive', 'it's not cheap to eat from the shops', 'at least we don't have to buy everything from the shops', 'I cultivate the homestead garden to feed my family'. Of these households 48.72 percent of the households reported that, in addition to household consumption, they also sold their produce in the neighbourhood. Besides feeding their families, a smaller percentage (15.38 percent) of the households reported that they also give vegetables for free to friends to relatives and friends or exchange with their neighbours. Hebinck and Monde (2007:203) report similar findings in the rural villages of Guquka and Koloni, Eastern Cape. They note that in Guquka village, about 80 percent of the produce was consumed at home, 10 percent was sold and 10 percent was given to relatives and friends. In the village of Koloni, 62 percent of the produce was consumed at home,

35 percent was sold and 3 percent was given away. In their study it emerged that home consumption requirements were the main deciding factor in their choice of crops.

The cultivation of homestead gardens plays an important role in subsidising household food expenses. Households in the survey sell their vegetables to their neighbours and the only other market available is the social grant market. There are a handful of households that have reported selling vegetables to teachers in neighbouring schools. There is one community project which attempted to produce vegetables for sell to distant markets in the city. However, it ran aground in its infant phases and never took off. Some of the challenges mentioned include transport problems, lack of resources for inputs and lack of cooperation from the members in providing labour and allocating tasks.

Table 16: Use of homestead garden produce amongst the cultivators (n=78)

Use of homestead garden produce	% of households
Household consumption	100
Household consumption and selling in the neighbourhood	48.72
Household consumption, exchange and giving for free	15.38

Besides selling garden produce, households (15.38 percent) are often involved in reciprocal and mutual exchange of vegetables. In some cases a neighbour or member of the community simply asks for vegetables and does not have to pay anything in return. In some instances, others give vegetables for free. Below are some excerpts from interviews with homestead garden cultivators. These excerpts reveal that homestead garden produce is exchanged or given for free to neighbours as part of mutual or reciprocal relationships or social assistance.

> I grow vegetables, maize, pumpkins and beans in my homestead gardens. We get three bags of maize from the homestead gardens. But we eat most of the maize when it's still green. It's difficult to say how much exactly comes out of the gardens. I also get pumpkins from the garden and give most of them to neighbours because they rot if are

> keep them. The beans we start eating them when they are green (Interview with Seelo, 2012).
>
> I usually plant vegetables and potatoes in the garden in September and start eating the vegetables in December. I have a tap nearby so with all this water our garden usually sustains us throughout the year. The vegetables are mostly for us to eat. We hardly ever sell and may give neighbours and family friends and my in-laws if they are in need. The vegetables don't do well on this soil so we also don't get a lot. I sell the potatoes though. I plant potatoes two times per year and I usually plant three quarters of my garden. I mostly get 20 bags or 20 litre buckets potatoes from my garden every time we harvest. Last December (in 2011) we got 20 bags and I sold 12 bags for R15 each here in the neighbourhood. I gave four bags to my in-laws and sent another 4 bags to Lesotho so that my mother and my siblings could also share amongst themselves. I was left with 2 bags which I kept for myself and my son. We are only two here much of the time since my husband is away on duty so if we keep a lot of potatoes they will rot (Interview with Nomnyamezeli, 2012).

From the above, it is clear that produce from homestead gardens is not only used for household consumption or sold, but it is also exchanged between households. When a household has more potatoes and less or no vegetables they may exchange their potatoes for vegetables. Garden produce is also given to relatives especially if they are in need. This shows that homestead garden produce is used for multiple purposes other than household consumption and selling for cash.

Women are primarily involved in the cultivation of homestead gardens. Homestead gardens play an important role in meeting the daily reproduction needs (supplying food) for many rural households in the villages. Oral accounts indicate that men were more involved in managing the cultivation of larger fields and making decisions about the use of produce from these fields. In contrast, women were free to manage the homestead's smaller fields (*isivande*) and homestead gardens. Crops harvested from larger fields were usually stored for future use. Conversely, small fields and homestead gardens usually provided the family with greens once the crops were ripe. During my field work I encountered one household where the homestead garden was partitioned into two sections. One section belonged to the wife and the produce was primarily meant for household consumption. Proceeds from selling crops from the wife's section were also used to subsidise daily household expenses. The husband indicated that most of his crops were for selling to meet his own personal needs like buying tobacco and beer. They reported that this was

an arrangement to ensure that there is no conflict regarding the use of the garden produce or money from selling the produce (Interview with Simon, 2012).

7.3.5 Some key patterns on homestead gardens

The data presented here is consistent with findings from other studies which also confirm the shift from field cultivation with more households channelling their resources into the cultivation of homestead gardens (Andrew and Fox 2004; Fay 2011). Andrew and Fox (2004) studied land use practices in the village of Nompa, Shixini using aerial photographs, archival materials and in-depth interviews and concluded that instead of a decline in agriculture there has been a shift in cultivation patterns: while farmers have generally abandoned the cultivation of the distant maize fields there is evidence of increased intensive inter-cropping of maize and other food crops in homestead gardens. Fay (2011) makes similar findings in a study of cultivation trends in Mbashe local municipality's Xhora district in the Eastern Cape. This ethnographic study reveals that there have been long-term continuities in the expansion and intensification of cultivation in homestead gardens manifested in the diversity of crops cultivated in the gardens, in the cultivation of fruit trees, and the intensity of input application. These and other studies seem to suggest that there is no decisive shift from non-agricultural activities to full proletarianisation in an urbanised and industrialised economy.

In this study it is clear that while the cultivation of homestead gardens in the villages has relatively lower entry barriers, compared to field cultivation this agricultural activity is nevertheless also differentiated. In most instances, those who are newly arrived after spending many years in urban areas without investing in the homestead need time to be established before commencing homestead garden cultivation. Rich households on the other hand have the resources to engage in the cultivation of homestead gardens. Some have installed water taps in their homestead yards, allowing them to supplement rain-fed cultivation. In some cases rich households have water tanks which allow them to harvest rain water from the rooftops. This is an important source of water for supplementing rain-fed cultivation in homestead gardens. Poor households on the other hand have to solely rely on rain water since they do not have the resources to invest in rain water harvesting infrastructure. In addition, there are competing household social reproduction needs like purchasing food, buying uniforms and paying school

fees. These are often met from social grant earnings or remittances. In some households the breadwinner is old age grant recipient. Without other sources of income it becomes difficult to invest in the homestead garden. Households often have to prioritise immediate social reproduction needs.

Most of the households which dropped out large field cultivation have shifted their resources to the cultivation of homestead gardens. The cultivation of larger fields requires more resources in the form of inputs (seeds and fertilizers). Besides inputs, the lack of fences in the area makes it difficult to engage in field cultivation. This needs to be seen in the context of competing needs namely cropping in large fields on the one hand and livestock production on the other hand. Without proper fences, livestock tend to damage crops in the fields and this has discouraged some households from continuing to cultivate their fields. In some cases, villagers have argued that there are times when livestock owners have deliberately vandalised fences and allowed their livestock to destroy crops. This, as some villagers have argued, shows that the primary problem is the scarcity of land in the area. The long-term solution is to make more land available to meet the needs of both agricultural activities. The rural villages are located in a small strip of land and are surrounded by commercial farms and other large land holders like the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and Mariazell Mission. Fencing and demarcating land will only provide some temporary respite without make more land available for livestock production.

7.4. Livestock production in Ongeluksnek villages

This section examines livestock production in the study villages. Empirical evidence is presented on the extent of livestock ownership amongst the rural households in the area. This includes data on the general distribution of different types of livestock and also qualitative data which is essential in providing explanatory insights on the trends in livestock ownership. The section will also discuss the challenges experienced by the rural households involved in livestock production. Livestock production, unlike cropping in larger fields, has remained resilient. Nevertheless, it is important to underline the fact that livestock owning households in Ongeluksnek generally operate in a constrained environment. Before presenting the empirical data on livestock production in the study villages, I review the literature on livestock production in South Africa's

communal areas. These perspectives will be relevant in situating some of the insights that will emerge from this data.

Ainslie (2002:1) outlines some of the biases in conventional thinking concerning livestock production systems in communal areas of South Africa. First, rangelands in communal areas are, as opposed to commercial agricultural enterprises, often assumed to be vastly overstocked and on the brink of ecological collapse. Second, this state of decline, it is argued, is inherent in the free-rider problem typical of communal systems wherein there is no incentive to manage grazing hence the use of grazing resources takes place in a 'free for all' environment. Third, "off take (to the market) is negligible, invariably well under 10% of total herd size per annum, and consequently these production systems are wasteful in terms of their use of scarce grazing land" (Ainslie, 2002:1). In addition, livestock production techniques in the communal areas tend to be backward and exhibit little or no regard for scientific production techniques, for instance, herd improvement through selective breeding or diseases control (see Ainslie, 2002:1).

Cousins (1997) notes that conventional thinking suggests that for livestock production by small-scale farmers to be 'viable' it has to involve production for formal markets (abattoirs and butcheries). This overlooks the multipurpose functions of livestock production in communal areas. However, it is now widely accepted that rural people in communal tenure areas have widely ranging reasons for keeping livestock. In short these reasons include keeping livestock as stores of wealth, for reasons of utility, such as the provision of milk, draught power, manure and less frequently, meat (Cousins 1997:32). Furthermore, there is evidence that the kind of cattle prevalent in the Transkei ('multi-purpose' herds) provide higher returns, at high stocking rate, than returns to beef herds which are maintained at conventional stocking rates.

In Lusikisiki Kepe (2002:69) argues that the skewed distribution[13] of cattle ownership whereby cattle holding is concentrated amongst fewer households may conceal the different social institutions through which rural households share the benefits of cattle. These institutions range from those that mediate access to and control over cattle, to those that mediate access to and control over benefits deriving from cattle. These social mechanisms include kin livestock sharing

(*ukufuyis*a), inheritance (*ilifa*), livestock loaning (*ukusisa*), lobola (*bride wealth*), the market, ploughing companies (*inkampani*), etc. (Kepe, 2002:68-72). However, Kepe also notes that the livestock production systems in the area are also confronted with such challenges as lack of labour as the youth increasingly pursue education and the prevalence of cattle theft.

From the above, it is clear that livestock production needs to be appreciated beyond the narrow economistic perspectives that give primacy to production for the market. It is fundamental to acknowledge the place of livestock in broader livelihoods system of rural households. This also includes an appreciation of the role of small livestock. Conventional thinking tends to attach a lot of importance to cattle production and this often involves overlooking the contribution of small livestock to rural livelihoods. Below I present empirical data from the study villages.

7.4.1 Livestock ownership patterns

The table below (Table 17) shows the ownership distribution by households of different types of livestock in the Moeketsi area. From the data, it is evident that 59.7 percent of households in Moeketsi do not own cattle. About 17.7 percent of the households own between 1 to 5 cattle while 10.5 percent of the households own between 6 to 10 cattle. Survey statistics show that 12.1 percent of the households own more than 10 cattle. Statistics on horse ownership show that 71.0 percent of the households do not own horses. Conversely, 27.4 percent of the households own between 1 to 5 horses. A smaller proportion (1.6 percent) of households owns between 6 and 10 horses while there are no households in the survey which own more than 10 horses. A huge proportion (82.3 percent) of households in the survey does not own sheep. Only 6.5 percent of the surveyed households own between 1 and 5 sheep. About 4.8 percent of the households own between 6 and 10 sheep. Another 6.5 percent of the households own more than 10 sheep. Statistics on goat ownership show that 82.3 percent of the 124 households do not own goats. Amongst those who own goats, 7.3 percent own between 1 to 5 goats while 5.6 percent own between 6 to 10 goats. Only 4.8 percent of the households own more than 10 goats. The majority of households (77.4 percent) in the survey do not own pigs. Conversely, 21.0 percent of the households own between 1 to 5 pigs while only 1.6 percent owns between 6 to 10 pigs. There is only 31.5 percent of households in the survey which do not own poultry. Approximately 24.2

percent of the households own poultry ranging from 1 to 5. About 12.9 percent of the surveyed households own between 6 to 10 poultry while 31.5 percent of the households own more than 10 poultry.

Table 17: Ownership distribution by households of livestock in Moeketsi (n=124)

	households owning cattle		households owning horses		households owning sheep		households owning goats		households owning pigs		households owning poultry	
Ownership range	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
none	74	59.7	88	71.0	102	82.3	102	82.3	96	77.4	39	31.5
1-5	22	17.7	34	27.4	8	6.5	9	7.3	26	21.0	30	24.2
6-10	13	10.5	2	1.6	6	4.8	7	5.6	2	1.6	16	12.9
>10	15	12.1	0	0	8	6.5	6	4.8	0	0	39	31.5
Total	124	100	124	100	124	100	124	100	124	100	124	100

From table 17, it is evident that amongst the livestock keeping households, there are generally more households who own poultry. Cattle ownership is also one of the relatively common livestock production activities in the study area. Comparatively, there are generally fewer households who keep pigs and small grazing livestock like sheep and goats.

Table 18 displays ANOVA results comparing means of livestock ownership between male and female household heads. It is evident from this analysis that there gendered differences in livestock ownership with respect to cattle ownership. The mean number of cattle owned by female household heads is 2.85 while for male headed households the mean is higher (4.95). There are also differences between the two gender groups in horse ownership. The mean for horse ownership is 1.07 for male headed households and 0.50 for female headed households. There are no significant differences of means between male and female heads of households in terms of sheep ownership. Cattle are an important store of wealth amongst rural households and this agricultural activity tends to be male dominated. Men often view cattle as a retirement fund (Ferguson, 1994) and it is also not easily spent as is the case with cash income (Ainslie, 2005).

Table 18: Comparing means, gender of household head and livestock ownership (n=124)

Gender of household head		cattle owned	horses owned	sheep owned	goats owned	pigs owned	poultry owned
Male (n=42)	Mean	4.95	1.07	2.57	1.76	0.38	10.10
Female (n=82)	Mean	2.85	0.50	2.12	2.11	0.38	6.70
Total	Mean	3.56	0.69	2.27	1.99	0.38	7.85
	p-value	**0.10**	**0.04**	0.75	0.82	0.99	**0.05**

***Statistically significant results shown in bold.**

The mean number of sheep owned for male-headed households is 2.57 while for female headed households the mean for sheep owned is 2.12. There is some difference in means for male and female headed household heads in terms of goat ownership. The mean for male headed households is 1.76 while for female headed households the mean is 2.11. The means for these two groups are not different with respect to pig ownership. However, there are significant differences between the two groups in terms of poultry ownership. The mean number of poultry owned is 10.10 for male-headed households. Conversely, the mean for female-headed households is lower (6.70). The rearing of small livestock has low entry barriers compared to cattle rearing, for instance. For that reason, small livestock production is often seen as the domain of women. In the Moeketsi area, small livestock is generally vulnerable to thieves.

Sedentary animals like poultry and pigs also destroy homestead garden crops if they are not kept in properly built enclosures. For many female-headed households there is often a shortage of male labour and cash resources to build secure structures for the animals. Sedentary animals like grazing animals can be a source of conflict because homestead gardens are in the vicinity of the homestead where sedentary animals tend to be confined. Women often presented this as a problem. The data suggests that men are more likely to own more cattle and horses in particular. Horses are also an important means of transport for men in the Moeketsi villages and the broader

Ongeluksnek area while cattle are still considered an important store of wealth especially used as a retirement fund by migrant workers (see Ferguson, 1994).

7.4.2 Multiple livestock uses in Ongeluksnek

The research revealed that rural households use animals for a wider range of purposes other than selling to earn cash income. While livestock production is important for economic reasons, it may be limiting to look at the rearing of animals in rural areas from purely economic lenses. People also keep livestock for multiple purposes which include livelihood, religious and cultural reasons. The most commonly mentioned functions of livestock in the study area include draught power, collecting manure in cattle kraals for homestead gardens and in the past for large fields. Besides providing manure cattle also provided milk for some households.

Figure 7: Animals provide manure for homestead gardens

Oral accounts indicate that slaughtering small livestock like pigs and poultry for meat is fairly common amongst the rural households. Poultry usually provides meat on a more regular basis while pigs are usually slaughtered in winter. People argued that most of them have no refrigerators and they often chose to slaughter pigs in winter because it is much easier to store the meat when the temperatures are low. The ‘cattle bias’ has often resulted in policy bias

towards beef production for the market as the prime livestock production activity. Yet small livestock have an important role to play in the livelihood systems of rural households. Shackleton, Shackleton and Cousins (2000:2) argue that while 'the range of benefits derived through livestock ownership has been widely documented, this has often not been adequately situated within a livelihoods framework or a complete valuation of all goods and services'. These scholars assert that "the contributions of livestock to rural households have been underestimated in economic and livelihood security terms for several reasons, including a focus on productivity, limited consideration of non-monetised products and services, and neglect of small livestock, such as goats, or poultry" (Shackleton *et al*, 2000:2).

Besides the ordinary everyday uses of livestock like providing manure, milk and meat and draught power livestock is important for ceremonial and cultural reasons. In the study villages, slaughtering animals for funerals and cleansing ceremonies after a funeral were some of the most cited cultural reasons for slaughtering animals especially cattle. The excerpt below illustrates some of the cultural uses of livestock:

> Nomazizi's husband passed on recently, in June 2012. We have just sold two goats for R700 each for her cleansing ceremony in May. We need to provide new clothes for her when she removes the black clothes she wore upon her husband's death. The in-laws were supposed to provide two cows for the cleansing ceremony. One cow is for cleansing our daughter and another one for cleansing the children. But they informed us they could not afford two cows and so they will use one cow for both Nomazizi and her children's cleansing (Interview with Valatshiya, 2012).

During one of my life history interviews my respondent mentioned that he was poor and suffering. However, there were six cattle in the kraal and when I asked him if it was not possible to sell at least one cow, he retorted, almost pitying me for being naive, 'what am I going to be buried with?' (*ndizongcwatywa ngantoni?').* He was basically arguing that selling cattle was not something to be encouraged since he might end up with no cattle even for his own funeral. My qualitative research revealed that people including poor households saw livestock rearing as imperative mainly for cultural reasons. Even in instances where a household cannot accumulate more cattle having one or two cattle in the homestead is seen as necessary. The story of Emelia is particularly illustrative. Emelia is a widow who retired from Mariazell Mission but returns on a part-time basis to perform some domestic duties in exchange for food for her children and some leftover food for her pigs. She also relies on her old age grant for survival. However, this widow

had to use some of her savings at the time of her retirement to buy a cow. What she had in mind was not to accumulate livestock. For her this is some form of ceremonial fund so that at least a cow may be slaughtered in the event that she passes away.

> I bought a cow when I retired in 2010. I need a cow when I die. I am an adult so if my cow is not slaughtered on my funeral my spirit will not rest in peace. I will not rest in peace and my children will have to conduct a traditional ceremony to appease my spirit. And in that ceremony they need to slaughter a cow. If I don't have any cattle myself that's a problem. If my children don't perform a ceremony that burden will fall on my grandchildren. With this young generation they wouldn't know where to start or what to do (Interview with Emelia, 2012).

Livestock form an important part of the ceremonial fund in many rural areas of South Africa. In their study of livestock production in Maluti, Ntshona and Turner (2002:86) note that people in rural areas ascribe great value to cultural uses of their livestock. For instance, "ancestor worship and other activities perceived as necessary by local clans are taken very seriously". Besides ancestor worship, funerals and cleansing ceremonies, rural households use livestock for such rituals as initiation ceremonies (when younger men go through the rite of passage to become men); they are used to pay *lobola* and may also be used at wedding ceremonies. Accordingly, livestock are an important aspect of reproduction amongst rural households. Different types of livestock contribute to the ceremonial fund. As Wolf (cited in Bernstein, 2010:20) argues, the ceremonial fund essentially refers to "the allocation of products of labour to activities that create and recreate the cultures and social relations of farming communities".

Figure 8: A woman sells pork meat and will use the money to upgrade the pigsty and buy groceries for her visiting children

7.4.3 Differentiation and access to livestock

In rural settings livestock ownership especially cattle tends to be differentiated with rich households owning large livestock units while poor households own fewer or no livestock at all. However there is a wide range of institutions that ensure access to livestock even amongst the poor households who would normally not own cattle. This has been widely noted in other research studies on livestock production (McAllister, 1992; Bank and Qambata, 1999; Kepe, 2002 and Ainslie, 2002 and 2005). In my own research setting, there are a number of social arrangements which work to allow poor households or those households with no cattle to access some cattle.

In my research setting there is a version of *ukufuyisa*. Pensioners and urban-based people often entrust their relatives especially those without cattle with their livestock. This arrangement allows the poor households to access cattle. During this time they may have access to draught power, milk and manure. In most instances, the original cattle owners allow these poor

households to slaughter an animal in the event of unfortunate events like funerals. An elderly woman who was looking after her brother-in-law's cattle revealed the importance of such arrangements. Koko, is a widow with no cattle of her own. She looks after her city-based brother-in-law's cattle. According to Koko:

> We keep cattle for my husband's brother. We don't have cattle of our own. Its five cattle that we are looking after.... But they [cattle] help because when someone passes on he just says 'take a cow from the kraal and bury my brother'...So when my two sons passed on he just instructed us to get a cow from the kraal and slaughter for the funeral. Even the cow that we slaughtered at my husband's funeral, he is the one who gave us. He pays the money for the herd boy maybe just four times per year (Interview with Koko, 2012).

McAllister (1992:216) notes that "the concentration of a large proportion of livestock in relatively few hands does not mean that only the owners of the animals benefit from communal grazing". The long-term lending and borrowing of animals ensures that livestock are widely distributed and that many people other than the owners benefit from them (McAllister, 1992: *ibid*).

Inheritance is another route to livestock ownership. During my field work I met Mr Mubhele, a forty year old man who had left a full-time job in the city and returned to his rural village to take care of livestock following the death of his father. As the only surviving son, Mr Mubhele could exclusively inherit his father's cattle. Now he has employed a cattle herder who keeps the cattle in the mountain grazing outposts. While he did not have a high paying job Mr Mubhele resigned from full-time employment with the knowledge that he had his cattle investment to fall back on. Explaining why he chose returning home over a job in the city, Mr Mubhele simply intoned, 'we are people of livestock' (*singabantu bemfuyo*). Mr Mubhele noted that he did not need much convincing to return to his rural homestead and take care of livestock. Livestock are an important store of wealth amongst the rural households. They are an important form of retirement fund for migrant labourers. On that basis, cattle are an important asset in the pursuit of the ideal of building a proper homestead.

In the study setting it is evident that access to land alone is not enough to allow a household to engage in cultivation. In most instances households have no access to other factors of production

which include draught power or oxen to plough their land. Thus, draught power is one of the critical resources required for farming. For households with land and no resources to plough, especially cattle, sharecropping seems to be the easiest way of accessing cattle. Carswell (2002) notes that this is a form of short-term livestock accessing arrangements whereby access to oxen is linked to access to land and oxen are used in exchange for part of the harvest. In such cases, a household with access to land but with no oxen may enter into arrangements with a cattle owner to provide draught power for ploughing and planting and share the harvest with the cattle owner (Carswell, 2002). Cooperative work arrangements amongst rural households allow the poor households without cattle to offer other critical inputs like their labour or other farming implements in exchange for access to a span of oxen. This is evident in the following excerpt:

> I have nine cattle and I have just sold one...I use my cattle for draught power when I plough my homestead garden. I team up with neighbours who have an ox-drawn plough. They use my cattle and their ox-drawn plough to till my garden. In return for using their labour and their ox-drawn plough they then plough their own garden (Interview with Pontso, 2012).

McAllister (1992) also confirms the importance of cooperative work arrangements for accessing cattle amongst rural households with no cattle. According to McAllister (1992), 'work in rural areas is usually done a cooperative basis whereby one party contributes cattle, another labour or implements'. This is common when ploughing and planting in larger fields (McAllister, 1992:216).

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Lobola is an important ceremonial activity that marks the joining of two families and this involves payment of the bride price in the form of cattle. Even in instances where money is used this money is usually the equivalent value of cattle required by the wife's family. In the study villages the older generation often complained that younger people often did not observe the *lobola* practice. However, while it has experienced decline, the institution of *lobola* has remained resilient and the transfer of cattle between households remains a central aspect of this practice. My field research has revealed that in some cases people use small livestock like goats and sheep for paying *lobola* when they have no access to cattle. The following vignette is illustrative:

> We don't have cattle. The only thing we have are six goats which we got from as part of Nomazizi's bride price. Nomazizi got married in 2006 and these goats were paid in 2010. Nomazizi's husband was hard working and got sick in the mines. Had he lived he would have paid us more lobola. He paid 10 goats because they did not have cattle. Our son in law paid 10 goats as part of lobola and we sold some of the goats because my husband had no old-age grant at the time. Some of the kids also died. Now we are left with six (Interview with Valatshiya, 2012).

Thus, instead of having their children cohabit, some parents are prepared to accept small livestock for *lobola* payments than no livestock at all. In many oral accounts, the older generation bemoaned the lack of respect for the institution of marriage amongst the younger generation and this entailed not paying *lobola* on the part of prospective husbands.

The qualitative research also revealed instances where members of poor households, specifically men, offer their labour to rich cattle-owning households as cattle herders. In return, they are paid in cattle instead of cash. The general trend is that the cattle herder is paid one cow per year. As one of the informants whose household had many cattle noted, "When my husband moved from Masupha and came to settle with me in Mutsini, he came with cattle, goats and sheep. My husband never had a formal job. He laboured herding cattle and was paid with cattle. He was given a cow every year" (Interview with Zibi, 2012). Another informant who returned from the city after years of employment also acquired cattle in the same way. In his words:

> When I got here from Durban I started working for my neighbour herding cattle. I used to get R200 per month for herding cattle... I only stopped working as a cattle herder at the end of 2007. The whole of 2007 I didn't get paid in cash. So at the end of 2007 I got a heifer from my employer. Now I have five cattle of my own. I only exchanged one cow for a horse (Interview with Zibi, 2012).

Oral accounts thus indicate that this is a common strategy for poor individuals with no cash resources to acquire cattle. In some cases people do not have the resources and social networks to engage in migrant labour. It is also common for returnees with no savings or pension from several years of employment to offer their services as cattle herders and at least build a small herd of cattle in the later years of their life.

7.4.4 Constraints to livestock production in Ongeluksnek

I have already explained the constraints around land shortages in Moeketsi villages and the implications for agricultural production. Land shortage has had an adverse impact on the viability of livestock production in the Moeketsi rural villages. The rearing of grazing animals continues in a constrained and precarious environment. This unfavourable environment tends to place a limit on accumulation of wealth through livestock production. Labour, especially the ability of household heads to extract labour from the younger generation, is no longer guaranteed. Younger household members are often making efforts to gain a foot hold in the urban areas and are not always available to assist their parents in looking after the livestock. The older generation often complained about 'laziness' on the part of the younger generation, lack of commitment to farming and access to social grants as reasons why their children lacked interest in farming. The involvement of younger people in farming in the countryside is a contentious issue. In another context, Kepe and Tessaro (2014) have suggested that the underlying reason behind the lack of interest in farming on the part may be the precarious position of agriculture and the increasingly declining returns in farming. Thus they argue that if agriculture was remunerative perhaps younger people would not need a lot of convincing to actively engage in farming.

In Moeketsi some stockholders have found it difficult to expand and accumulate more livestock as a result of the risky environment because of theft and lack of adequate grazing land. In some of my interviews some cattle owners for instance reported that they were reluctant to expand their herds because of the insecurity that comes with having a big herd of cattle, limited availability of labour and the management effort. This is more so in the case where the younger generation is not available to contribute in terms of labour. Thus, in spite of the importance of cattle and the appeal that may lie in accumulating large numbers of livestock, some people have consciously shied away from doing so. One of the cattle owners I interviewed noted:

> The biggest herd I have ever had is 30 cattle, between 1994 and 2000. I often sold cattle to close gaps in my life especially sending my children to school. Now I don't want to have more cattle. I kept more cattle because my sons were still here and it was easy to look after the cattle. Now I don't want them to be more than 15. I can't trust the current people to herd my cattle (Interview with Seelo, 2012).

In spite of some challenges experienced in rearing livestock, complete withdrawal from livestock production is not an option for many people. Cattle owners opted to keep smaller and manageable herds and selling their cattle was also not a decision to be taken lightly. It is better for one to hold on to one's cattle as opposed to selling since there is a risk of never managing to replace the cattle. As one livestock owner noted, "now I can't sell cattle. I have to keep them because once I lose them I won't be able to restock and build my herd again. A bull for example costs R17 000 which is a lot of money" (Interview with Mutaung, 2012). The resilience of livestock production can also be explained by cultural imperatives. Livestock play an important role in the ceremonial life of rural households. Most villagers argued that livestock particularly cattle for such rituals as funerals. Bank and Qambata (1999) make similar observations on shifts in agrarian livelihoods in the village of Ngxingxolo, Eastern Cape. These authors found that most household heads were content with keeping 'one or two' cattle for prestige and for cultural imperatives like rituals. The villagers in their study argued that disease, drought and stock theft made them wary of cattle as an investment. While male household heads were more likely to accumulate cattle, the highly precarious environment made them view cattle rearing with considerable caution (Bank and Qambata, 1999:92).

In Moeketsi, people have adopted different strategies to cope with challenges confronted in livestock rearing. The relatively wealthy households that can afford to hire herders to tend their animals keep their livestock in the surrounding mountains on small patches of land (*imidibo)*. These cattle outposts are essentially the remaining good pastures in a largely overgrazed landscape. The grazing pastures in the mountains have good grass and fresh water. People also argued that in the mountains there are no homesteads gardens and this allows the animals to graze in a more open and free space. Animals which are kept in the mountains are generally of better quality than those that are kept in the villages. Livestock owners often hire people from Lesotho to look after their livestock. These labourers stay in the mountains in makeshift structures for longer periods. There are also kraals where the animals are enclosed at night. Usually a group of three or four men stay in close proximity and take turns to watch the livestock at night. The workers only visit the villages to replenish supplies or to report sick animals or when an animal dies. Mrs Zibi is one of the one of the stock owners who relies on the mountain pastures. In her words:

> I keep my cattle in the mountains. There are lots of homesteads around here. This causes conflict, conflict with neighbours when you have your cattle roaming around in the vicinity of the homesteads, where people have homestead gardens. I have a cattle herder staying in the mountains looking after my cattle and other livestock. I have 25 cattle, 20 sheep, 75 goats and 5 horses and they are in the mountains. I just go there two times per month to give him food. I buy him 12 kg of potatoes, 2 kg of sugar, a cabbage, 5 kg beans, and a small portion of meat and 2 litres of cooking oil per month. I usually buy a 50 kg of maize meal and its lasts for more than a month so I only buy maize meal when he needs it. I pay my cattle herder R1200 per month. He has been with me for some time now. He started working for me in 2003 and I would increase his pay by R50 every month until his pay got to R1200 (Interview with Zibi, 2012).

Others, also relatively well-off, pay a monthly fee to neighbouring farms for access to grazing land. Those who mainly cannot afford hiring herders or are averse to risks involved in keeping their livestock in the mountains tend to kraal their animals at night. Neighbours often jointly hire a worker to look after their livestock. In these arrangements, livestock owners make contributions (depending on the number of cattle) towards the wage of the worker. In other instances this takes some form of assistance when a relatively well-off stock holder allows a poor neighbours' livestock to be part of their herd and to be looked after by their workers for a small fee. This practically means that those who cannot afford to hire an employee of their own may piggyback on their neighbours by subsidising their workers wage through a small contribution. They do not necessarily have a direct relationship with the worker in that they pay their small contribution to the original employer. The original employer is responsible for the wages and welfare of the worker. Others rely on relatives and neighbours to look after their livestock. Payment in these arrangement varies may take the form of cash and/or groceries. A pensioner with no children of his or her own, or whose children are in the cities for instance would often have relatives look after their cattle.

> Now I have someone who looks after my cattle. It's my relative, one of my sister's sons from Mutsini. He helps me look after my cattle and I pay him R700 per month. He has three wives and hardly supports his children. So I felt that instead of just letting him sit at home let me find him something to do. He herds the cattle during the day and we kraal them in the evening (Interview with Morena, 2012).

In other arrangements, there is no cash involved. A stock owner may buy groceries every month as a token of appreciation. The family providing the labour also gets milk and may use the cattle for draught power when necessary.

To conclude, the data presented above shows that livestock production in the area of Moeketsi remains resilient. The shortage of grazing land and stock theft are some of the constraints that livestock producers have to contend with. However, livestock constitutes an important part of the livelihood system of rural households. This activity is also differentiated. Differentiation in livestock ownership is more pronounced with respect to cattle production. Wealthy households tend to own more cattle than poor households. However there are social mechanisms that ensure the benefits of livestock ownership are enjoyed even by those households which do not own cattle.

7.5 Conclusion

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter shows that field cultivation has indeed collapsed in Moeketsi. However, it is apposite to think in terms of a shift in cultivation patterns as opposed to seeing the decline of cropping in absolute terms. While field cultivation has declined, many households in the Moeketsi villages have continued to utilise their homestead gardens. The cultivation of larger fields requires a significant amount of resources which becomes a huge impediment in a context where critical resources for farming at the disposal of rural households have diminished in recent times. However, cropping in homestead gardens has lower entry barriers and is a less risky investment relative to cultivation of large fields. It is relatively less difficult for even the poor households to mobilise resources for homestead garden cultivation.

Shackleton, Shackleton and Cousins (2001:590) note that there are two major foci for agriculture in rural villages. Thus, rural households may practice gardening or cultivate in the immediate vicinity of the house and this may range from a small patch of only a few square meters or it may be large, up to three or four hectares. There is also cultivation on large arable fields which may be close to the homestead or several kilometres away depending on agro-environmental conditions and local zoning regulations. However, it is often not clear from most previous studies reporting on ‘arable land’ or ‘fields cultivated’ per households whether they consider only the formally designated arable plots or they also consider the cultivation of the homestead plot. These scholars argue that there are very few rural households that do not engage in cultivation within the vicinity of the homestead. Previous studies that report only a minority proportion of

households engaged in agriculture or farming most likely overlook homestead gardens and focus only on formally designated arable plots.

Besides cropping in homestead gardens, the empirical data presented above indicates that livestock production has continued to be a resilient component of agricultural production in the rural villages of Moeketsi. Such impediments as lack of adequate grazing land and the risk of theft continue to be prevalent. It is important to unpack which aspects of agricultural production have declined, and what exactly constitutes de-agrarianisation as opposed to a blanket approach in the conception of de-agrarianisation in the countryside. In the next chapter I will discuss both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood sources in the rural villages of Moeketsi. This will provide insights into the significance of agricultural livelihood sources within the overall livelihood system.

Chapter 8: Rural Livelihoods, Diversification and Differentiation in Ongeluksnek, Matatiele

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past[14].

8.1. Introduction

The primary focus of this chapter is on rural livelihoods diversification specifically the combination of agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods in the villages of Ongeluksnek. Initially, the chapter will focus agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods income sources amongst adults in Ongeluksnek villages. The second part will discuss the results of the wealth ranking exercise, survey data on assets and qualitative material from life history interviews to explore livelihoods and patterns of differentiation in the study area. Finally, this chapter will examine livelihood pathways and trajectories in the villages of Ongeluksnek.

However, the broader, underlying aim of this chapter is to examine the extent to which diversification of livelihoods is linked and or imbricated in processes of social differentiation[15]. In the previous chapter I reviewed the literature on rural livelihoods and diversification. I will draw on some of the key ideas from this wider literature to analyse livelihoods in Ongeluksnek. I briefly recapture some of these key ideas that will inform my own analysis. Scholars have emphasised the importance of examining social inequalities and differentiation within (intra-household) and amongst rural households (inter-household) in livelihoods research (Scoones, 2009; Murray, 2002).

It is also vital to appreciate the broader, underlying social and economic processes which permeate the context within which rural households pursue their survival and accumulation activities. It follows that success or failure in the pursuit of livelihood activities is not merely a matter of individuals using their ingenuity to make strategic choices or what O'Laughlin (2001,

[14] Karl Marx (1852). The Eighteenth Brumarie of Louis Bonaparte. Mc Lellan, D (ed) Karl Marx: Selected Writings. Oxford University Press, Oxford (1977).

[15] As Bernstein and Woodhouse (2001:316) note "while diversification is often emphasized as a livelihood/reproduction strategy–especially in rural areas characterized by risky environments and/or market conditions (and the generalized social insecurity of Africa's protracted crisis of development) –it is subject to class differentiation generated by commoditization" (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001:316).

2002) has characterised as 'strategic gaming'. Instead, individuals and households are imbricated in structures of power and inequality which shape their reproduction and accumulation activities. Following O'Laughlin (2001, 2002), I argue that livelihoods analysis and class analysis should not be seen as binary opposites or mutually exclusive approaches. If a livelihoods analysis is applied with care and nuance it can be used to explore the underlying tendencies in differentiation and social inequalities.

The long-term dimension in rural livelihoods research, ascertaining pathways or trajectories of change, is critical to our knowledge of the nature of agrarian change. Insights into long-term patterns in rural livelihood systems enhance our understanding of changes and transformations in the rural economies and beyond. Consequently, my analysis of livelihoods diversification in Ongeluksnek will not focus only on macro-scale social and economic inequalities. I will select a smaller sample of households and examine what picture these case histories portray about micro-scale trajectories of change and livelihood pathways in the study setting. I find Scoones *et al*'s (2010) livelihoods typology to be particularly relevant. First, Scoones *et al'*s livelihood typology gives primacy to the often neglected long-term perspective in livelihoods analysis. Second, to a large extent their formulation is sensitive to processes of rural differentiation and inequality. However, I will return to the livelihood typologies in the last section of this chapter which will examine a sample of 90 households to ascertain the different pathways and trajectories unfolding in Ongeluksnek.

8.2 Agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods

In this section I discuss empirical evidence on agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood sources in Ongeluksnek. In the following discussion I will use both survey data and material from life history interviews to examine the different ways in which different rural households combine both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood sources for purposes of both reproduction and accumulation. In the South African context, some studies have argued that as a result of proletarianisation there is an increasing shift from agrarian livelihood systems to non-agrarian livelihood systems (Mayende, 2010a, 2010b; Hendricks, 1990, 1995). In the context of Ongeluksnek empirical evidence reveals that agricultural livelihood sources still play an important role in the livelihood systems of rural households. Other empirical studies conducted in the Eastern Cape also demonstrate that agriculture remains significant in the construction of

rural livelihoods (McAllister, 2000; Andrew and Fox, 2004). In spite of the reality of de-agrarianisation and its concomitant, de-peasantisation, empirical evidence suggests that these tendencies are neither inevitable nor irreversible. This is contrary to the argument advanced in the simplistic version of the proletarianisation thesis: that a fundamental shift from agricultural livelihoods to non-agricultural forms of livelihood is imperative as industrialisation and development take root. As O'Laughlin (2002) argues:

> Proletarianisation does not necessarily imply that everyone becomes and remains a wage-worker. Capitalist economies are characterised by the continual movement of people between wage-labour, non-marketed labour (particularly in the case of women and children), self-employment and unemployment. Nor does proletarianisation have as a precondition the loss of land (O'Laughlin, 2002:516).

Broader processes of de-agrarianisation, de-peasantisation and proletarianisation have not necessarily culminated in the disappearance of agrarian livelihood systems. These processes have often been portrayed as inexorable and pervasive yet the 'disappearance of the peasantry' is not a simplistic and unproblematic matter. This brings to the fore the fundamental question of how to characterise rural households, the so-called 'peasants' or 'small-scale farmers' who continue to straddle both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood domains for reproduction and accumulation purposes. Bernstein's (2010) formulation of 'classes of labour' is analytically useful in understanding the 'structural position' or 'the conditions of existence and reproduction' (Neocosmos, 1993) of rural households in the contemporary capitalist world. I will return to these issues in summarising the section on agricultural and non-agricultural income sources in Ongeluksnek.

8.3 Household income sources in Ongeluksnek

As has been noted in chapter five, the unit of analysis in this study is the household. However, this chapter does not only highlight the distribution of income within households. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter also focuses on aggregate statistical data on the distribution of income amongst the adult population. It is thus important to also examine the distribution of income sources amongst the adult population so as to have a more comprehensive picture of the nature and extent of livelihood diversification in the study area. Table 19 shows the distribution of income sources amongst the sampled households. The data shows that 27.42 percent of the

households have members who earn an income from formal jobs. About 26.61 percent of the households in the survey include members with an income from temporary work while households with casual work as an income source constitute 21.77 percent. The survey also included questions on remittances. The results indicate that 26.61 percent of the households in the survey include members who earn an income from remittances in cash. However, households with access to remittances in kind constitute a very small percentage (4.03 percent). Very few households with members involved in self-employment activities (1.61 percent) make use of hired labour. Households whose members are involved in self-employment activities with no hired labour constitute 27.42 percent of the population. It is noteworthy that a huge proportion of households in the survey include members who earn an income from farming on household land. It is clear form these figures that farming on household land remains an important source of income for most households.

Table 19: Distribution of Income sources amongst households in Ongeluksnek (n=124)

Income sources	No of households	(%) of households with income source
Permanent jobs	34	27.42
Temporary work	33	26.61
Casual work	27	21.77
Farming on household land	102	82.26
Self-employed, no employees	34	27.42
Self-employed, employees	2	1.61
Old age pension	68	54.84
Private pension	0	0
Disability grant	4	3.23
Child support grant	69	55.65
Foster care grant	6	4.84
Remittances (cash)	33	26.61
Remittances (kind)	5	4.03

State transfers in the form of social grants are also vital to the livelihood strategies of the households in Ongeluksnek. From the survey, it is clear that child support grants and old age grants are the most common types of social grants in the area. About 55.65 percent of the surveyed households have access to child support grants while 54.84 percent of the households have access to old-age grants. However, households with access to foster care grants and disability grants are few. Only 4.84 percent of the household shave access to foster care grants while 3.23 of the households have members who earn an income from disability grants. The

emerging trend is that there are generally more households whose members have income from farming on household land and social grants (specifically child support grants and old age grants). Fewer households have access employment in the form of formal jobs, temporary work and casual jobs.

8.4 Income sources in the villages of Ongeluksnek

The table below (Table 20) shows the distribution of incomes sources across the three villages in Ongeluksnek. There are more income sources for adults in Litichareng (42.60 percent) while in Thaba Chicha the total income sources constitute 31.87 percent of 615 income sources for all adults in the survey. In Mutsini the total income sources for adults represents 25.53 percent of the 615 income sources for all adults in the survey. The high proportion of income sources in Litichareng may be attributed the fact that this village not only has the highest number of adults individuals but it also has the highest number of child support grants and old age grants. The data is also revealing in terms of the contribution of different sources of income to livelihood in each village. From the data it is evident that farming on household land, child support grants and old age grants consistently feature as livelihood sources with the highest percentage contribution to total income sources in all the three villages. In Mutsini village there are 157 livelihood sources and farming has the highest percentage (23.57 percent), followed by child support grants (19.75 percent) and old age grants (12.74 percent). In Litichareng there are 262 income sources. Child support grants have the highest percentage contribution (24.43) while farming contributes 21.76 percent followed by old age grants with a percentage contribution of 12.6 percent. The same pattern seems to be evident in Thaba Chicha village. In Thaba Chicha there are 196 income sources and child support grants (26.53 percent) have the highest percentage contribution. This is followed by farming on household land (23.47 percent) and old age grants (13.27 percent) respectively.

Table 20: Distribution of income sources in the villages of Ongeluksnek (n=483 adult individuals)

Income sources	Mutsini (n= 143 adult individuals)		Litichareng (n=194 adult individuals)		Thaba Chicha (n=146 adult individuals)		Total (n=483)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Formal/permanent job	10	6.37	12	4.58	18	9.18	40	6.50
Temporary	13	8.28	33	12.60	13	6.63	59	9.59
Casual work	18	11.46	19	7.25	6	3.06	43	6.99
Farming on household land	37	23.57	57	21.76	46	23.47	140	22.76
Self-employed, no employees	9	5.73	12	4.58	14	7.14	35	5.69
Self-employed, employees	2	1.27	3	1.15	0	0.00	5	0.81
Old age grants	20	12.74	33	12.60	26	13.27	79	12.85
Disability grant	2	1.27	0	0.00	5	2.55	7	1.14
Child Support Grant	31	19.75	64	24.43	52	26.53	147	23.90
Foster care grant	0	0.00	9	3.44	0	0	9	1.46
Remittance (cash)	14	8.92	17	6.49	13	6.63	44	7.15
Remittance (kind)	1	0.64	3	1.15	3	1.53	7	1.14
Total	157	100	262	100	196	100	615	100
Distribution across villages	25.53%		42.60%		31.87%		100%	

Not all forms of social grants score high in terms of percentage contribution to total income sources in each village. In Mutsini disability grants constitute 1.27 percent of the total income sources while in Litichareng foster care grants contribute 3.44 percent of the 262 income sources for surveyed adults in the village. However, there are no foster care grants amongst the surveyed households in the villages of Mutsini and Thaba Chicha while in Litichareng there are no disability grants do not feature amongst the surveyed adults. Farming on household land constitutes 23.57 percent of total income sources in Mutsini, 21.76 percent of the total income sources in Litichareng while in Thaba Chicha farming has a percentage contribution of 23.7 percent to the total incomes sources in this village. In contrast, formal jobs constitute 6.37 percent of total income sources in Mutsini and 4.58 percent of income sources in Litichareng. In Thaba Chicha the percentage contribution of formal jobs to total income sources in the village is slightly higher at 9.18 percent. Nevertheless the percentage contribution of formal jobs to livelihoods is lower than that of farming across the three villages.

8.5 Income sources for adult males and females in Ongeluksnek

Table 21 displays income sources for adult males and females in Ongeluksnek. As has already been noted there are 615 different income sources for all adults in the households in the survey. Interestingly, the adult females in the survey derive their livelihoods from 467 (75.93 per cent) of

the 615 income sources. Conversely, the adult males in the survey take up 148 (24.07 percent) which is a much smaller proportion of the total income sources. Proportionally, the most prominent types of income sources for female adults in households which explain this skewed distribution are social grants (child support grants and old age grants) and farming on household land.

Table 21: Income sources of adult males and females in Ongeluksnek (n=483 adult individuals)

Income sources	Males (n=186)		Females (n =297)		Total (n = 483)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Formal/permanent job	20	13.5	20	4.28	40	6.50
Temporary	26	17.6	33	7.07	59	9.59
Casual work	30	20.3	13	2.78	43	6.99
Farming on household land	37	25.0	103	22.06	140	22.76
Self-employed, no employees	6	4.1	29	6.21	35	5.69
Self-employed, employees	2	1.4	3	0.64	5	0.81
Old age grants	20	13.5	59	12.63	79	12.85
Disability grant	5	3.4	2	0.43	7	1.14
Child Support Grant	1	0.7	146	31.26	147	23.90
Foster care grant	0	0	9	1.93	9	1.46
Remittance (cash)	1	0.7	43	9.21	44	7.15
Remittance (kind)	0	0	7	1.50	7	1.14
Total	148	100.0	467	100.0	615	100.0
Gender distribution	24.07%		75.93%		100%	

From the data it is evident that there are different patterns for adult males and females in terms of percentage contribution different incomes. To illustrate, adult males have 148 income sources and the five sources of income with the highest percentage contribution are farming, casual work, temporary jobs, formal employment and pensions. Farming on household land represents 25 percent of total incomes sources for adult males. Casual work and temporary work constitute 20.3 percent and 17.6 percent respectively, while formal jobs and old age grants each constitute 13.5 percent of the 148 incomes sources for adult males in the sample. Conversely, for adult females the five most significant income sources in terms of percentage contribution are as follows: child support grants (31.26 percent), farming on household land (22.06 percent), old age grants (12.63 percent), remittances in cash (9.21 percent) and temporary jobs (7.07 percent). Accordingly, it is clear that sources of income like casual work, temporary jobs, and formal jobs are proportionally more important for men than women. In contrast, child support grants and old age grants are more important for women relative to men in terms of percentage contribution.

Farming features as an important source of income for both adult males and females. Men have the lowest percentage contribution from remittances in cash (0.7 percent) and child support grants (0.7 percent) while there are no remittances in kind and foster care grants for this group. Revealingly, formal employment, temporary and casual jobs are proportionally (in terms of percentage contribution) more important for adult males than females. Yet more people in both groups however have income sources from farming on household land. What this means is that generally formal employment and other forms of jobs seem to have a lesser percentage contribution than farming on household land for both adult males and females. The following discussion will entail more detailed analysis of the individual sources of income presented in the above tables.

8.5.1 Permanent Employment

Both adult females and males have an equal number of jobs. Also, the figures for permanent jobs reveal that this income source has the lowest contribution in terms of total income sources. There are 40 formal jobs which is equivalent to 6.50 per cent of the 615 total income sources for all adults. In terms of proportion, formal jobs have a comparatively higher contribution (13.5 per cent) to the total income sources of adult males (148) compared to their share (4.28 percent) in the total income sources of adult females (467). In the research context, formal jobs often consist of civil servants working as teachers, nurses, policemen and other government bureaucrats. Other employers which offer some permanent jobs within the local area are the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and Mariazell Mission. Some individuals are employed in nearby towns like Matatiele and Mthatha while others work in cities like Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. The problem of unemployment in rural locales like Matatiele cannot be understood outside of its wider context. In recent decades there has been a restructuring of the mining industry. The bulk of unskilled mine workers experienced retrenchment while, in the main, an elite segment of skilled professionals was retained (Murray, 1995). Within the context of the Eastern Cape industrial hubs created to promote industrial growth in the former homelands also collapsed. In the post apartheid era, structural unemployment persists as is evidenced by the limited labour absorptive capacity of the formal economy (Bank and Minkley, 2005).

Matatiele is a small rural town without an industrial base. It is surrounded by commercial farms. Ongeluksnek farms which occupy the vast extent of land between Matatiele and the southern Drakensberg have experienced incessant de-capitalisation with the withdrawal of white commercial farmers in the early 1970s. Villagers have argued that during the time of the whites the commercial farms provided employment opportunities. The farms provided an alternative to employment in distant places. In contemporary times, those who are retrenched or fail to secure employment in the urban areas are now left with fewer options.

In the Ongeluksnek villages, Mariazell Mission, the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and the government-sponsored short-term employment programmes are important sources of employment for local households. The story of Maboomo provides insights on the impacts of unemployment on local livelihoods. Maboomo's husband got retrenched within the first five years of their marriage. Since the retrenchment in 1997 the only job her husband has secured is temporary work in the government-sponsored public works programme. When their first-born passed on in 2010 they could not have the funeral at their homestead because they did not have a proper house to host the funeral. Without a secure and remunerative job for her husband there were no material resources to build the homestead. After having the funeral at the greater homestead they never moved back to their own homestead as they were struggling to survive on their own. Below is an excerpt from her life history:

> My husband was working in the mines at the time but was retrenched from his job in 1997. Many people were losing their jobs in the mines and my husband was amongst the people who were unlucky to lose their jobs then. We had our own residential stand that we got from my husband's uncle, his father's elder brother. At that residential stand we only managed to build one rondavel. When my first born whom I got in 1987 passed on in 2010 we couldn't have the funeral at that homestead. It was not going to work for us to have the funeral at our homestead since we only had one rondavel. So we moved to his (husband) parent's homestead to have the funeral. Since the funeral in 2010 we have been staying here...My husband has a temporary job with the Expanded Public Works Programme. They work on the gravel road in the community and he goes to work two times per week. Since he left the mines, my husband has struggled to get a permanent job (Interview with Maboomo, 2012).

Mine restructuring, for profitability reasons, has resulted in only a select segment of professional and skilled miners becoming preferable to the large numbers of low-skilled miners predominant in the previous decades. The dismantling of the industrial hubs meant to boost regional

economies during the homeland era also saw the demise of some critical sources of employment in the Eastern Cape Province. In the post-apartheid era, the impacts of structural unemployment have been particularly acute in smaller towns like Matatiele which have often experienced a dearth of productive economic activity.

8.5.2 Temporary or contract jobs

Amongst the 615 total incomes for all adults in the survey temporary jobs constitute 9.59 per cent. For adult males there are about 17.6 percent of the 148 total income sources for all adult males. Adult females have 33 temporary jobs and these form 7.07 per cent of the 467 total number of income sources available to this gender group. Proportionally, temporary jobs are important for men relative to women as a source of income.

In the study area, temporary jobs come mainly in the form of government poverty relief initiatives. In the villages I studied the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which involved road maintenance, and the Working for Water (WFW) which was introduced to eliminate alien plants mainly the wattle tree, are operational. The EPWP is sponsored by the Department of Public Works while the WFW is funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Kotsoana's livelihood account is illustrative of the lack of employment opportunities for many young rural dwellers and their reliance on temporary and casual work for survival. Kotsoana has had to endure educational disadvantages since she dropped out of school at a young age. For survival she relies on casual jobs in the community and experiences some financial respite from the EPWP. Below is an excerpt from Kotsoana's life story:

> I was born here in Litichareng at this homestead in 1968. My parents built this homestead in 1968. My father was from Thaba Chicha. My father was working in Cape Town. My mother is from Mabenyeni. We were five in my family and all my siblings passed on. I am the only one left now. Life is hard now because there are no jobs. I am struggling much of the time. I just rely on temporary jobs to survive. Right now I am working for the expanded public works programme maintaining the road. My father worked at a hotel in Cape Town and resigned in 1996. He passed on in 2006. My mother was a housewife and never worked. She passed on in 1986. My father never had a field. I don't have a field. I only have a garden at the homestead. That's what my parents left for me. My father had cattle but we sold the cattle when he passed on. I went to school up to standard 8. I was studying at Moeketsi. It was in 1995 when I left school. I didn't have money to pay for my school fees. My father never had enough money. I never left Litichareng. I

> have just worked doing casual jobs within the community. When I left school I depended on my father's old age grant until he passed on in 2006. Most of the time I did domestic work, washing dishes and doing laundry, cleaning houses and the people's yards in the community. Currently I still do domestic work for my neighbour. I get paid R300 per month for helping her with domestic chores once per week. I use this money to supplement my pay from the Expanded Public Works Programme (Interview with Kotsoana, 2012).

Rural dwellers without an urban base, or who have failed to secure employment in the cities often revert to these local jobs to earn a living. Instead of securing permanent employment household members often found themselves combining different temporary jobs for survival. Other important sources of temporary jobs are the local employers like the Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve and Mariazell Mission.

8.5.3 Casual work

Survey data shows that casual work contributes 6.99 percent of the 615 total incomes sources for all adults. However, casual work seems to be a very significant source of income for adult males relative to adult females. In the survey there are 30 income sources in the causal work category for adult males and these constitute 20.3 percent of the 148 total income sources available to all adult males. Adult females have 13 income sources in the casual work category and this translates to 2.78 per cent of the 615 total income sources available to all adult females. Casual work denotes irregular and precarious menial or piece jobs. These are usually performed locally by poor individuals who are not in a position to migrate to urban areas or those already in towns and cities and have failed to secure employment. Migration to small towns like Matatiele or even larger metropoles is increasingly not a guarantee of improvement in the level of livelihood. Most of the younger people who migrate to towns and cities are often trapped in precarious, menial jobs.

During my field work, questions around the type of jobs young migrants were pursuing were sometimes met with indifference and people often used the term *isikorobo* (to scrub) to refer to the insecure and menial jobs that some of their younger kin were involved in (see Spiegel, 1990:207). People often remarked *uyakoroba nje* (he or she is just scrubbing) or *ubamba izikorobo* (doing or in-between scrub/menial jobs). Spiegel (1990) learned about the term

sekorobo[16] in his study of Mabua village in Matatiele. The term was commonly used to denote exploitative local piece jobs (Spiegel, 1990:207).

8.5.4 Remittances

Remittances in cash constitute 7.15 percent of total (615) income sources while remittances in kind constitute a paltry 1.14 percent of total adult incomes sources. Interestingly, there are no remittances in kind for adult males. In contrast, remittances in kind constitute 1.50 percent of total income for adult females. Even more striking are the patterns on cash remittances. The data reveals that cash remittances constitute only 0.7 per cent of the 148 total income sources for adult males. However, for adult females cash remittances constitute a relatively higher proportion. Thus, for adult females 9.21 percent of their total income sources are remittances. It is therefore clear that women tend to be more reliant on remittances than men. However, the overall trend is one of less prominence for remittances as a source of income relative to other livelihood sources like farming, social grant earning (child support grants and pensions) and temporary jobs. This should be seen against the backdrop of the historical role of remittances as the primary resource for 'building the homestead'.

Qualitative discussions have revealed that there are many instances where people move to urban areas seeking job opportunities only to end up trapped in precarious and low-paying temporary or piece jobs. Failure to secure stable employment has undermined the ability of many migrants to remit income to their rural homesteads. Oral accounts have revealed that many young migrants fail to secure a foot hold in the labour market and are always in between menial jobs also known as *izikorobo*. Others simply abscond and disappear into the city (*ukutshipa*). In some cases people have established an urban base and only identify with and maintain ties with their natal rural homesteads for cultural and ceremonial reasons. In such cases people invest more in their urban life, buying a house and sending their children to university in the cities. This typifies the multi-homestead households with more resources being invested in the urban household while occasional visits (usually once or twice per year) are made to the natal rural homestead. Oral accounts revealed that even some well-off urban-based people do not always remit money to their relatives in the rural areas especially if they have an established urban base.

[16] Sekoropo or Likoropo (plural) denotes piece jobs derived from Afrikaans skrop: scrub which commonly described hard-labour short-term domestic work offering little if any security. This also underlines an opposition between authentic humanitarian Sesotho and an exogenous exploitative way of the whites (Spiegel, 1990:204).

Noli is a poor woman who looks after her daughter's homestead. Her son-in-law and daughter have become rooted in the city and hardly make any remittance payments. Their visits are also infrequent. In her words:

> My daughter who is a teacher in Underberg cannot help me most of the time because she has three children at university and she hardly has money for me. She has five children and three of them are now at university...My daughter and her husband now have a house in Virginia, in the Free State. They keep this homestead so that they have their own space when they visit. The husband's parents are also here in Mutsini. The husband works as a miner in Virginia. On holidays he fetches his wife from her school in Underberg and they spend the holidays in Virginia with their children. The husband and the children visit when there is a traditional ceremony or a funeral in the family. It's only my daughter who visits me. She visits once per year (Interview with Noli, 2012).

In spite of the above, remittances are important to some rural households. For some they are the primary source of income used for building the homestead and accumulation. This is particularly true in cases where remittance money is linked to a stable formal job. Mrs Tolo's husband is a civil servant with a permanent job and he regularly remits money to his wife.

> I get money from my husband every month. I have never been to my husband's workplace, in Mt Ayliff where he stays most of the time. Most of his money he sends home. Whatever is left is small change. All the money comes to me and the children. If ever there are other women in his life I don't really worry about it. My husband sends me at least R4 000 per month. At times as much as R6 000 per month (Interview with MaTolo, 2013).

> My daughter is now the pillar of this homestead. She takes care of all my household expenses. I get money from her, she buys me groceries and even my medical bills and all the medication I need she takes care of that. I get an old-age grant but she never asks me about the money at all. She buys me groceries every month for at least R600, she gives me R400 every month that I keep as pocket money and also to pay people who help me with odd jobs at my homestead since I'm staying alone most of the time. She hires a tractor for me to cultivate my homestead garden and also hires a tractor whenever I need firewood. I take care of all the domestic chores. I'm still very health and I'm happy here. I don't want a domestic worker to stay with me here. I'm really happy to be alone (Interview with Pontso, 2012).

However, it is important to note that the historical role of remittances as the primary source of income for 'building the homestead' has increasingly been undermined by the lack of jobs. Remittance money is still important for rural households yet fewer households have access to this income. For those who still have access to this source of income it now increasingly plays a

supplementary role whereby it is combined with other sources of income like social grants as part of diversified livelihood strategies.

8.5.5 Self-employment with employees

Data on sources of income shows that self-employment activities which involve the exploitation of labour form a small proportion (0.81) of total income for all adults (615). In terms of gender distribution self-employment with employees constitutes 1.4 per cent of the 148 adult males total incomes sources. Conversely, self-employment constitutes 0.64 percent of the 467 adult females total income sources. The income category 'self-employment (with employees)' usually includes those wealthier households in the villages engaged in accumulation activities. This may be in the form of agricultural or non-agricultural forms of petty commodity production. Accumulating households tend to make use of hired labour especially that of individuals from poor households. Besides the hiring of local people, rich households in Ongeluksnek also employed people from Lesotho as cattle herders and domestic workers. Petros is one of the migrant workers from Lesotho employed by a local cattle owner. In his words:

> I came to South Africa when I realised that my parents didn't have money and were suffering. I had also never worked since jobs are hard to come by. I look after Mr Maqhuba's cattle and sheep. I look after 42 cattle and 74 sheep. Mr Maqhuba visits every two days to see if his livestock are doing well. I earn R700 per month for looking after his livestock. I also get 20kg of maize meal every month. My child is 4 years old and lives with my parents. I give them money for food. There is no work back home and life is better now that I work here. I can help my family. I don't want to suffer. It's better for me to come and work here. The situation back home is bleak and I am their only hope. For them to eat and have clothes they look up to me. So my hope is to continue working so that I can take care of my family (Interview with Petros, 2012).

Livestock accumulation (especially cattle rearing) is one of the agricultural activities through which wealthier households store wealth. Wealthy households are also involved in non-agricultural forms of petty commodity production for accumulation purposes. These entail such activities as investing in trading stores or spaza shops, operating a transport or tractor business. One of the local accumulators, Mr Sello, invested his retirement savings in a transport and trade business in 1993 after 22 years of employment in the textile industry in Durban. While Mr Sello has scaled down his business activities because of old age his livelihood trajectory is illustrative of the importance of investments from wage employment for rural accumulation.

> I started working in 1971 and only enrolled for my Matric in the early 1980s to improve myself and get promoted at work. On my arrival in Durban I worked for a textile factory as a machine operator. After two years I was prompted to a pattern setter and was now based in the setting and design office. I was the link between the pattern design department and the technical department. I stayed with the same company for twenty two years, from 1971 to 1993, until they declared themselves insolvent. I didn't want to continue working so I decided to come back home. In 1994 I settled at my rural home and bought an open truck. I started a trading business. I was buying and selling maize, maize meal and maize seeds. I started transporting people, the old and the sick. It got so profitable that I was able to buy a house in Mt Fletcher where I have tenants. All my children are grown up now and all of them are working so I stopped pushing myself hard (Interview with Sello, 2012).

Rural accumulation is thus often based on resources mobilised from wage employment either during the time of employment (simultaneous straddling) or as savings upon retirement (sequential straddling) (see Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001:316) as is the case with Mr Sello. His transport business became profitable allowing him to acquire a residential stand and building a house in a nearby town. He still provides transport services to locals when needed but now relies mainly on income from his property and remittances from his children.

8.5.6 Self-employment with no employees

Self-employment activities with no employees constitute 5.69 per cent of the 615 incomes sources of all adults in the survey. However, for adult females self-employment with no employees seems to be slightly more important compared to adult males. In the survey, self-employment activities with no employees translate to 4.1 percent of the 148 total income sources available to adult males. For adult females self-employment activities with no employees constitute 6.21 per cent of the 467 income sources available to all adult females in the sample.

For men, self-employment entails such activities as carpentry, welding and shoe repairs. In the study villages, women tend to predominate in self-employment activities like brewing and selling traditional beer, shebeening and low-value petty trade activities (selling air time, candles and paraffin). Women often find it relatively easy to be involved in these activities because of the low entry barriers. For instance, small amounts of money are often required to buy the ingredients for brewing opaque beer. The need to supplement household income is the primary reason why women pursue these activities. Income from social grants and remittances is usually not enough to meet daily reproduction needs. Below is a vignette from Mathebane's livelihood

account. It highlights some of the costs involved in brewing traditional beer and its centrality it augmenting household income.

> I brew beer during the month in between social grant payments in order to survive. I buy *umthombo* (king kong) for R7.50 and one kilogram of brown bread flower for R10. I also buy a 5 litre bucket of maize meal for R25. With all these ingredients I make two 25 litre buckets of traditional beer (*umqhombothi*). I then make the *umqhombothi* two times per week or eight times per month especially when I have financial problems. Each 25 litre bucket of traditional beer gives me R95 in income. The cost of ingredients for producing a 25 litre bucket of beer is about R21.25. So my profit each time I brew is R74. So I earn close to R150 in profit for the two 25 litre buckets of traditional beer per week. If I'm not in financial problems I usually brew beer once per week. All the money I get from brewing beer and from the child support grants I use it for buying food and clothes for my children. I also buy a 50kg bag of maize meal from a wholesale and sell it in smaller quantities of five litre buckets. I sell one five litre bucket of maize meal for R25. I am newly arrived and am not yet part of a *stokvel*. If you don't make your monthly payments you lose all your money. So I need to be stable financially or to have someone who can help me out with monthly contributions for me to join a *stokvels* (Interview with Mathebane, 2013).

Women also have more control over income generated from self-employment activities as opposed to remittance money from their husbands, for instance. However, oral accounts reveal that in some instances women have been discouraged from selling traditional beer or holding *stokvel* parties in the community. One of the main reasons is that some of these drinking sessions often result in violence. As one woman noted:

> I used to brew traditional beer for sell at my homestead but I have since stopped doing that. The profits for traditional beer are very small and since most of the time my husband is at work I had problems with drunken people becoming violent and difficult to control. And also when people buy beer on credit they don't always pay me the money they owe me. So I have since abandoned brewing beer although it did contribute some small amount to meet our needs (Interview with Mdladlamba, 2013).

However, it is the households with no elderly male figure who mentioned the problem of violence as a hindrance to their activities. While some informants argued that the traditional authorities often discouraged beer brewing and shebeening, these activities remain common amongst women in the area.

8.5.7 Social grants

Social grants are an important source of livelihood for many households in Ongeluksnek. In this survey the most significant types of social grants in terms of their contribution to livelihoods are child support grants and old age grants. As a proportion of the total number of income sources for all adults, child support grants represent 23.90 percent while old age grants constitute 12.85 per cent. However, the gender distribution of social grants reveals that most of those who derive a livelihood from these income sources are adult females. For instance child support grants constitute a paltry 0.7 percent of the total (148) income sources for adult males.

In the research setting, social grants are used for both consumption and productive activities. Households rely on social grants to meet their household needs like purchasing food, buying clothes and paying school fees. Social grant income is also invested in productive activities like petty trade, brewing traditional beer, buying inputs for homestead gardens, and feed for small livestock like pigs and poultry. The survivalist informal sector activities which social grant recipients engage in are usually 'invisible' home-based activities like selling airtime, candles, paraffin matches and cigarettes.

Social grants are an important cash resource that is often used to sustain micro-finance activities within the Ongeluksnek area. Rural households use their cash earnings to participate in rotational savings groups or *stokvels*. Thus, social grants are an integral part of associational life. It is much easier for a social grant recipient to receive small loans from the 'informal' lenders in the neighbourhood and to buy groceries items from the local shops on credit.

Besides sustaining micro-finance activities and associational life in rural settings, social grants also form the basis on which some households are constituted. Old age grants for instance are quite substantial considering the low levels of income in the rural settings. It is not uncommon for relatives and family to agglomerate around old age grant recipients and form households on that basis. Overall, social grants provide a cushion for individuals and households that would otherwise be impoverished and marginalised. A snippet from Makoditswe's life history interview, an 84 year old widow, is illustrative of the centrality of the old age pension for the survival of rural households especially how they act as a buffer from impoverishment and

marginalisation. Highlighting the importance of an old age grant in her life, Makoditswe remarks that the pension is like 'her child' or 'the son of her homestead':

> I don't have a helper and this house I built on my own using my own pension. I don't farm. I don't have anything. I work for people and if someone asks me to weed I work for money or vegetables. From my social grant I buy clothes, blankets and food. My wish is to live in an old age home...I am in a stokvel with my neighbour. I want to avoid conflict with other people. We make contributions every month. Each month we contribute R300. As long as I'm still there and if I don't go to an old age home we will continue with the stokvel. I trust my neighbour. We work well together. I need the stokvel because in December my grandchildren are here. I have to feed them. They don't bring food... I live on my pension. My pension works for me. My old age grant is like a son of this homestead. It's the son of this homestead *(ipension iyasebenza, ngunyana walapha, ngunyana wam*). It's my source of livelihood; I look to it for sustenance (*ndibheke yona nje*). I just got a tractor load of firewood for R600 now that its winter. So the grant is my child. I am happy and I don't want to give people problems. I don't want to be a burden. Not at all. My children passed on I am only left with one daughter. She is married and does not help me much. She has her own problems (Interview with Makoditswe, 2013).

Social grants thus facilitate social reproduction through meeting people's daily needs but also allow for their participation in broader societal activities like stokvels, savings groups and burial societies. In most instances poor households withdraw from savings groups and at times they can suspend burial society payments until the time they qualify for old age grants.

8.5.8 Farming on household land

Agriculture seems to remain an important income source for many adults in the survey. In the survey, farming on household land constitutes 22.76 per cent of 615 total income sources for all adults. In terms of the gender distribution, farming on household land represents 25.0 per cent of total adult male income sources (148). With respect to adult females, farming comprises 22.06 percent of the total number of income sources for adult females (467). Agricultural activities in the Ongeluksnek area have continued to exist in spite of the abandonment of the cultivation of large fields. In my analysis of agricultural production in the area I have noted that before the advent of the AsgiSA scheme some households had continued to cultivate their large fields, albeit in a highly economically-constrained context. Expensive agro-inputs (seeds, fertilizers) and lack of farming equipment like fences emerged as some of the critical hindrances to the cultivation of large fields. However, the abandonment of large fields alone does not define the entire state of farming in the area. A number of activities also constitute important components

of the agrarian lives of rural households. These include the cultivation of homestead gardens and livestock rearing which ranges from grazing animals (cattle, horses, sheep and goats) to small livestock like poultry and pigs.

8.6 Agricultural activities in Ongeluksnek

Below I disaggregate agricultural activities and present data reflecting the extent to which households in the study site are involved in different types of agricultural activities. The survey reveals (see Table 22) that most households in the households (62.5 percent) are involved in homestead garden cultivation while a smaller proportion reported to have been utilising their fields immediately before the introduction of the AsgiSA maize scheme. It is clear that most of the households in the area had abandoned field cultivation while homestead garden cultivation continued to be relatively widely practiced. With respect to small livestock, survey data demonstrates that most of the households (68.5 percent) in the area kept poultry while a smaller proportion (22.6 percent) of the households keep pigs. The data reveals that most households that own grazing animals tend to keep cattle (40.3 percent). Some 29 percent of the households own horses and the figure for both sheep and goats is 17.7 percent.

Table 22: Agricultural activities by households in Ongeluksnek villages (n=124)

	Households involved in activity	
Type of agricultural activity	n	%
Field cultivation (before AsgiSA)	19	15.3
Homestead gardens	78	62.9
Cattle	50	40.3
Horses	36	29
Sheep	22	17.7
Goats	22	17.7
Pigs	28	22.6
Poultry	85	68.5

In the South African context, some have noted the destructive effects of capitalist accumulation (or primitive accumulation) and subsequent proletarianisation as the basis of de-agrarianisation (Wolpe, 1972, Hendricks, 1990, 1995; Mayende, 2010a, 2010b). In this argument some go further and argue that the rural population has been proletarianised and agricultural activity

annihilated. According to Hendricks (1995) “the sweeping nature of the land expropriations, the level of proletarianisation, measured in terms of material dependence upon wage labour” [was] particularly high such that the homelands were “reduced to labour reservoirs or homes for the proletariat with little prospect for commercial agriculture” amongst Africans (Hendricks, 1995:46).

Hendricks (1990:162) also notes that “most reserve dwellers are heavily dependent upon wage labour for their survival and that the fruits borne of rural labour cannot hope to meet the barest requirements for survival even if a significant proportion still retains a semblance of access to means of production”. Consequently, there are limited prospects for any meaningful agricultural activity amongst South Africa's rural households. Li (2009:70) notes that this line of argument is highly linear. It is analytically problematic to assume a simple and direct link between dispossession and the reproduction of workers in the labour reserves, hence the need for a more nuanced analysis. According to Li (2009) some of the “correctives to linear notions of transition that link dispossession too directly, and too quickly, to employers’ need for workers” are useful in the analysis of agrarian change. For instance, Bernstein’s argument on the “failure of the generalized capitalist system to provide a living wage to the dispossessed as the central agrarian question of our times” is among some of these corrective analyses (Li, 2009:70). Bernstein’s formulation on ‘classes of labour’ is more useful in understanding the position of rural households or the so-called ‘peasants’ in contemporary capitalism. In the wider literature there is debate around the increasing role of non-farm income in the reproduction and accumulation strategies of rural households.

The interrelationship between farm and non-farm livelihood sources in the survival and accumulation strategies of rural households may be located in the broader context of global capitalism. Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:179) argue that it is critical to frame the discussion on “the place of small-scale petty commodity producing peasant farming and rural labour in developing capitalist countries” within the wider context of “globalising capital and the ongoing expansion of capital in agriculture”. Bernstein (2010) characterises some rural households as agricultural petty commodity producers, who are increasingly experiencing reproduction

pressures under conditions of global capitalism, and form part of the 'classes of labour'. These include the growing numbers of the working poor who increasingly:

> ...have to pursue their reproduction in conditions of growing income insecurity and 'pauperisation' as well as downward pressures exerted by neoliberal erosion of social provision for those in 'standard' wage employment, who are shrinking as a proportion of classes of labour in most regions of the South, and in some instances in absolute terms as well (Bernstein, 2010:111).

Bernstein (2010) has noted that in the global South the 'fragmentation of classes of labour' is particularly intense. In his words, "the working poor of the South have to pursue their reproduction through insecure, oppressive and typically increasingly scarce wage employment and/or a range of likewise precarious small-scale and 'informal economy' survival activity, including marginal farming" (Bernstein, 2010:111).

In my own study it is evident that there is increasing straddling amongst the rural households as they combine multiple sources of income for their reproduction and in some instances accumulation activities. While there been a shift from field cultivation to homestead gardens this does not necessarily translate into wholesale de-agrarianisation. The formal sector of the economy is equally fragile and does not by any means have the capacity to produce adequate formal jobs. Temporary and casual jobs increasingly become important in a context where structural employment endures. Social welfare transfers are also an important component of livelihoods in Ongeluksnek. As Bernstein (2010) argues, what is often seen as standard forms of employment are either shrinking or in some instances experiencing decline in absolute terms.

In South Africa, du Toit and Neves (2007)) refer to the phenomenon of 'jobless de-agrarianisation' wherein agrarian livelihoods are under duress while non-agricultural (formal) job opportunities remain inadequate. In their research context this has been accompanied by the penetration of large retail capital into the remote rural locale of Mt Frere, further undermining the capacity of local smallholder producers to engage in cropping. However, in Ongeluksnek the decline of field cultivation had already ensued by then, and the AsgiSA maize scheme simply accelerated the process of decline in field cultivation. However, land-based livelihoods in the form of homestead garden cultivation and livestock production remain an integral component of the livelihood system in the Ongeluksnek area. Accordingly, Yaro's (2006:126-127) arguments

on the cyclical and fluid nature of de-agrarianisation are relevant to my own research context. According to Yaro (2006) it is critical to "tease out the tendencies in diversification and the forces responsible for adaptation and the complex mixes of activities, bearing in mind the reversibility of peasant actions" (Yaro, 2006:126-127).

8.7 Wealth ranking in Ongeluksnek

This section focuses on the relationship between the findings from my quantitative survey and those from the wealth ranking exercise. The primary aim of the wealth ranking exercise was to gain insights into local understandings of wealth. Participatory approaches allow the research participants to provide rich and detailed information about poverty and wealth in their own contexts (see Scoones, 1995). The rich and more detailed information may be used in a complementary manner with statistically generated asset groups. In my own research setting, I noted that the use of both the survey method and the participatory wealth ranking exercise allowed for a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the nature of rural inequality and social differentiation to emerge. The wealth ranking exercise started with a listing process where all households in each village were identified. Each name was then transferred onto a card and allocated a number to identify it. Informants were then asked to sort the cards into three piles according to relative wealth (rich, average, and poor). The idea was to explore the extent to which these different sources of empirical evidence explain the tendencies in rural differentiation amongst the rural households. The wealth categories of the households in the survey were thus identified using findings from the wealth ranking exercise. The table below (table 23) shows the households in the survey and their respective wealth categories. It is evident that 60 households (48.4 percent) fall into the poor category and 38 households (30.6 percent) are in the average wealth group while 26 households (21.0 percent) are in the rich category. It is clear that a fairly large (slightly below 50 percent) number of households were identified as poor while the smallest number of households were identified as rich. The results show that there are more households in the lower end of the wealth range.

In the wealth ranking exercise, poor households were often described as those households which 'could barely afford to purchase food and clothing' and 'whose members had problems in securing steady employment and relied on erratic casual jobs'. The wealth ranking exercise also revealed that members of poor households tended to provide menial labour mostly to rich

households. 'Reliance on social grants for survival' and the 'inability to send children to school' were some of the features of poor households identified in the wealth ranking exercise. In terms of accommodation, poor households often could not afford to build or improve their homesteads and it was not unusual for them to live in poorly built houses, mainly mud structures.

Table 23: Distribution of households by wealth rank in Ongeluksnek (n=124)

Wealth rank	n	%	Cumulative %
Poor	60	48.4	48.0
Average	38	30.6	79.0
Rich	26	21.0	100
Total	124	100	

Participants in the wealth ranking exercise characterised households in the average wealth group as 'having access to temporary employment'. It was noted that average households tended to combine earnings from temporary jobs with income from social grants. Discussions also revealed that some average households were involved in home-based, survivalist business activities (selling paraffin, snacks, airtime, meat and shebeening). For many of the average households diversification was undertaken for purposes of survival. In fewer cases, income diversification seemed to have the potential for accumulation or 'stepping up' and going beyond expanded consumption. It was also noted that most of the households in the average wealth category could 'afford to buy food and feed their families'. The ability to send children to school was also identified as another important marker of wealth. According to the wealth ranking participants, most average households could afford to educate their children' locally and in nearby towns. However, average households could not afford to send their children to expensive private schools as was the case with some rich households. It was also noted that average households had fewer cattle, often less than 10, compared to rich households. The average households also had difficulties in mobilising resources for cultivating their large fields.

During the wealth ranking exercise, it was noted that rich households often owned large numbers of cattle, and had the ability to mobilise resources for field cultivation, especially by hiring a tractor. Thus, respondents often remarked that wealthier households could afford to cultivate

larger fields using their own tractor or cattle or alternatively had enough money to hire a tractor or a span of oxen. Investing in the homestead especially building a large, 'modern' house using cement blocks was also considered to be a marker of affluence. In addition, rich households could afford to send their children to 'good' schools, usually in the cities. Finally, a stable formal job was considered to be an indicator of wealth. Households whose members had steady remunerative jobs in the formal sector (e.g. civil servants) were often considered to be well off.

8.7.1 Sources of income and wealth rank

The relationship between the wealth rank of households and sources of income is important and reveals clear differences in livelihood sources across the wealth groups (see table 24).

Table 24: Distribution of income sources by wealth group amongst households in Ongeluksnek (n=124)

Livelihood source	Wealth Rank						Total	
	Poor (n=60 households)		Average (n=38 households)		Rich (n=26 households)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%
Permanent jobs	5	1.8	12	6.2	23	16	40	6.5
Temporary jobs	27	9.7	26	13.4	6	4.2	59	9.6
Casual jobs	19	6.9	16	8.2	8	5.6	43	7.0
Farming	58	20.9	46	23.7	36	25	140	22.8
Self-employment (no employees)	15	5.4	9	4.6	11	7.6	35	5.7
Self-employment (with employees)	0	0	2	1.0	3	2.1	5	0.8
Old age grants	41	14.8	24	12.4	14	9.7	79	12.8
Child support grant	75	27.1	44	22.7	28	19.4	147	23.9
Foster care grant	7	2.5	1	0.5	1	0.7	9	1.5
Disability grant	2	0.7	3	1.5	2	1.4	7	1.1
Remittances (cash)	23	8.3	10	5.2	11	7.6	44	7.2
Remittances (kind)	5	1.8	1	0.5	1	0.7	7	1.1
Total	277	100	194	100	144	100	615	100
Total distribution of income sources by wealth group	277	45.04%	194	31.54%	144	23.41%	615	100%

The basic characteristics of households in each wealth group have been highlighted from the results of the participatory wealth ranking exercise. However, it is important to relate these

locally defined criteria of wealth to the quantitative statistical data from the survey. These different strands of evidence may be corroborated to generate a more in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of socio-economic differentiation.

Data presented in table 23 demonstrates that different sources of income are important for different wealth groups. The poor households have a total of 277 incomes sources. The highest percentage contribution to the total number of income sources for households in the poor wealth group comes from child support grants (27.1 percent). This is followed by farming on household land which contributes 20.0 percent and old age grants (14.8 percent). Temporary jobs represent 9.7 percent while remittances in cash have a percentage contribution of 8.3 percent. Casual jobs and self-employment activities without employees contribute 6.9 percent and 5.4 percent respectively. The lowest percentage contribution to total sources of income for the poor households comes from foster care grants (2.5 percent) remittances in kind (1.8 percent), permanent jobs (1.8 percent) and disability grants (0.7 percent). It is noteworthy in the survey that there are no households from the poor category which reported self-employment involving the hiring of labour as a source of income.

Average households have a total of 194 income sources. The highest percentage contribution to the total number of income sources for this wealth group is from farming on household land (23.7 percent), followed by child support grants (22.7 percent) and temporary jobs (13.4 percent). Other sources of income for the average households represent the following percentages: old age grants (12.4 percent), casual work (8.2 percent), permanent jobs (6.2 percent), remittances in cash (5.2 percent) and self-employment without employees (4.2 percent). In the average wealth category the lowest percentage contribution to total sources of income for these households disability grants (1.5 percent), self-employment with employees (1 percent). Remittances in kind and foster care grants come last both with a paltry percentage of 0.5.

The table shows that, for the rich households, farming has the highest proportion (25 percent) amongst the sources of income. Also significant for rich households in terms of percentage contribution are child support grants (19.4 percent), permanent jobs (16 percent), old age grants (9.7 percent) and self-employment without employees (7.6 percent). Remittances in cash (7.6 percent), casual work (5.6 percent), temporary jobs (4.2 percent) and self-employment involving the hiring of labour (2.1 percent) also feature fairly significantly for richer households. The

lowest percentages of income sources for the rich wealth group disability grants (1.4 percent), remittances in kind and foster care grants (both at 0.7 percent).

The data on income sources has already shown that households in the different wealth groups tend to rely more on certain sources of income than others. It has been noted for instance that the rich households tend to have more access to formal jobs and also invest their resources in self-employment activities which entail the hiring of labour. Poor households mostly do not have access to formal jobs and do not have the capacity to mobilise resources needed to invest in accumulation activities. Poor households in this survey generally rely more on social grants, especially child support grants and old age grants. While rich households do have access to social grants these do not seem to be primary for their survival. The above discussion has merely focused on the distribution of the number of different types of income sources (permanent jobs, temporary jobs, social grants and farming) across the three wealth groups.

In the following paragraphs more empirical evidence is presented to explore the extent to which there are differences between the different wealth groups. Below is data on the analysis of variance (ANOVA) which is used to compare group means. The idea is to ascertain the differences in the mean for each source of income for the different wealth groups. This will provide more insight into the extent to which the different sources of income are important for households within the different wealth groups. Below is a table (see table 25) displaying the results of an analysis of variance comparing the means for selected sources of income across the three wealth groups (‘poor’, ‘average’ and ‘rich’). It is clear that formal employment is an important category in terms of wealth differences. For the poor the mean number for permanent jobs is lower (0.23) that the mean for the average group (0.32) and the richer group (0.85).

Table 25: Comparing means, wealth rank and income sources (n=124)

Wealth Rank	Permanent jobs	Temporary jobs	Casual work	Farming	Self-employed (no employees)	Self-employed (with employees	Pensions	Child grants	Remit (cash)	Remitt (kind)
Poor (n = 60)	0.23	0.33	0.18	0.73	0.33	0.00	0.70	1.28	0.30	0.08
Average (n = 38)	0.32	0.42	0.50	0.87	0.39	0.00	0.53	1.21	0.29	0.00
Rich (n = 26)	0.85	0.31	0.31	0.92	0.32	0.12	0.65	1.19	0.35	0.00
Total (n =124)	0.39	0.35	0.31	0.81	0.35	0.02	0.64	1.24	0.31	0.04
p-value	**0.01**	0.74	**0.06**	**0.16**	0.90	**0.03**	0.43	0.95	0.91	**0.07**

***statistically significant tests shown in bold.**

The test of means also yielded a significant result (p=0.01). These figures show significant differences between the wealth groups in terms of access to formal and secure jobs. It is evident that access to permanent jobs is highly differentiated with rich households having more permanent jobs relative to the average and poor households. While access to wage income is concentrated amongst fewer individuals it remains a critical resource for reproduction and accumulation in rural households. Households with one or more secure formal jobs tend to be better-off than households with access to either insecure, precarious jobs or no jobs at all. Rich households are in a better position to channel resources towards building the homestead and also acquiring some assets to equip the homestead with the requisite conveniences and assets. The test of means also revealed that there are significant differences amongst the three wealth groups in terms of self-employment activities which involve the hiring of labour (self-employment 2). From the above table it is evident that members of the poor and average households have a mean of 0 while the rich households have a mean of 0. 12. The results are also statistically significant at 0.03. Wealthy households have access to cash income which allows them to invest in transport services, providing tractor services, trading stores, spaza shops and taverns. Besides the use of family labour, these activities also involve the hiring of labour from the neighbourhood. Members of poor households provide labour to the wealthier households. From the above, it is

clear that formal jobs and remunerative self-employment involving the hiring of labour tend to be dominated by households in the rich wealth group.

8.7.2 Wealth groups and asset ownership in Ongeluksnek

In the wealth ranking discussions participants considered the ability of a household to build a proper homestead, especially a rectangular concrete or cement house as one of the indicators of wealth. From the wealth ranking exercise it was clear that rich households are also in a better position to equip their homesteads with different types of assets. Respondents associated assets like refrigerators, generators, vehicles and tractors as well as scotch carts with rich households. Vehicles and tractors were often used in transport businesses while refrigerators and generators were useful for trading businesses like spaza shops and taverns.

The survey questionnaire included an asset inventory which documented different types of assets owned by a household. These were classified as durable, communication, transport assets and vehicles owned as well agricultural assets. Table 26 below presents the test of means for the different types of assets that households own by wealth group. With the number of durable assets there is statistically significant (p = 0.000) differentiation across the wealth groups. The mean number of durable assets for poor households is 2.25 while for the average wealth group the mean is 2.28. Rich households have the highest mean number of durable assets (4.04).

Table 26: Comparing means of assets owned by different wealth groups (n=124)

Wealth Ranking	Number of durable assets	Number of communication assets	Number of transport assets	Number of vehicles	Number of agricultural assets
Poor (n=60)	2.25	1.20	0.07	0.02	3.25
Average (n=38)	2.28	1.42	0.28	0.03	4.19
Rich (n =26)	4.04	2.46	0.27	0.15	5.54
Total (n =124)	2.64	1.53	0.17	0.05	4.02
p-value	**0.000**	**.000**	**.105**	**.020**	**.003**

***statistically significant tests shown in bold**

There is a statistically significant (0.00) difference in means for the number of communication assets amongst the rich poor and average households. Poor households have a mean 1.20 while the mean number of communication assets for the average and rich households is 1.42 and 2.46

respectively. This means that households in the poor group tend to have fewer communication assets relative to households in the average and rich wealth groups. The rich households generally have more communication assets than the other wealth groups. The means also differ significantly (.020) across the three wealth groups in terms of the number of vehicles owned. The mean for poor households is 0.02 and for average households the mean is 0.03 while the rich households have a mean of 0.15. Agricultural assets also show that there are differences in the means of the three wealth groups. Poor households have a mean of 3.25 and for average households the mean is 4.19 while rich households have a mean of 5.54. The above findings confirm that rich households have the resources to acquire different types of assets relative to other wealth groups. Poor households are also more likely to have the lowest number of assets.

8.7.3 Land ownership and wealth groups in Ongeluksnek

Land ownership is an important indicator of social differentiation amongst rural households. In this study respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they own a large arable field. Table 27 displays the relationship between the wealth rank of a household and land ownership.

Table 27: Ownership of large arable fields and wealth rank (n=124)

			Wealth Rank			
			Poor	Average	Rich	Total
Homestead owns large field	yes	Count	20	12	16	48
		% within homestead owns field	41.7%	25.0%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within wealth rank	33.3%	31.6%	61.5%	38.7%
	no	Count	40	26	10	76
		% within homestead owns field	52.6%	34.2%	13.2%	100.0%
		% within wealth Rank	66.7%	68.4%	38.5%	61.3%
Total		Count	60	38	26	124
		% within wealth rank	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-square = 7.257, df = 2, p = 0.27

Statistics show that of the 124 households 48 (38.7 percent) reported that they own a large arable field while 76 (61.3 percent) indicated that they do not own a large arable field. In the table there

is data on field ownership across the three wealth groups (poor, average and rich). For those households who indicated that they own an arable field 20 (41.7 percent) belong to the poor wealth group, 12 (25.0 percent) are in the average wealth group and the remaining 16 (33.3 percent) belong to the rich wealth category. On the contrary, the figures on households that do not own a large arable field show that 40 (52.6 percent) are in the poor wealth group, 26 (34.2 percent) in the average wealth group and 10 (13.2 percent) in the rich wealth category. Besides land ownership data across the three wealth groups the table also displays data on land ownership within each wealth group. Within the poor wealth group 20 households (33.3 percent) own land while the remaining 40 households (66.7 percent) do not own land. Amongst the average households 12 (31.6 percent) own a large arable field and 26 (68.4 percent) of them do not own land. Within the rich wealth category 16 households (61.5 percent) own land whereas 10 households (38.5 percent) have no arable fields.

Across the wealth groups and within the land owning group of households the poor actually own more land. However, there are still more poor households without access to land. This is evident in that the poor households form the bulk of those without large arable fields. Within each wealth group the poor and average groups have more households with no land while the rich have fewer households without land. This indicates that a household in the rich category is more likely to own a large field relative to households in the average and poor categories. Land ownership as an indicator of socio-economic differentiation may be problematic in areas which experienced betterment interventions. Limitations on the number of plots (one-man-one plot principle) and the size of the allotment each household could own made land concentration virtually impossible. In the context of Moeketsi, betterment interventions prohibited the concentration of land through the one-man one-plot principle and the rationalisation of the size of land (1.5 hectares) owned by a single household. In Chapter five it emerged that before betterment interventions it was possible to own more than one plot of land. In other contexts, researchers have noted that betterment resulted in the ossification of class formation as land could not be concentrated into the hands of the wealthy households (Spiegel, 1990).

8.7.4 Cultivation of land and wealth rank in Ongeluksnek

However, access to land is only one condition of agricultural production. Equally important is the ability of a household to mobilise other means of production, for instance, farm equipment,

labour and other inputs (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001). The following table shows the relationship between the wealth status of households and the cultivation of large fields (see table 28). In the study area, some households had continued to cultivate their large fields and only abandoned them with the introduction of the AsgiSA maize scheme. In the table below it is evident that in the poor category 7 households (35%) were cultivating their fields while the other 13 households (65%) had abandoned field cultivation. In the average group only 2 households (16.7%) were utilising their large fields and 10 (83.3%) were not using their large fields. Statistics on the use of large fields by richer households indicate that 10 of the field owning households in this group (62.5%) were still cultivating their fields. Conversely, only 6 (37.5%) had abandoned field cultivation at the time the massive maize scheme was introduced.

Table 28: Wealth status of household and cultivation of fields (n=48)

			Wealth Rank			
			Poor	Average	Rich	Total
Homestead cultivates field	Yes	Count	7	2	10	19
		% within homestead cultivates field	36.80%	10.50%	52.60%	100.00%
		% within wealth rank	35.00%	16.70%	62.50%	39.60%
	No	Count	13	10	6	29
		% within homestead cultivates field	44.80%	34.50%	20.70%	100.00%
		% within wealth rank	65.00%	83.30%	37.50%	60.40%
Total		Count	20	12	16	48
		% within wealth rank	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Chi-square = 6.325, df = 2, p = .042

Wealth differences are evident when it comes to access to the means to work the land. The chapter on agricultural production (Chapter seven) in Moeketsi villages discussed the constraints to the cultivation of large fields. The above findings demonstrate that wealthier households are more likely to hold on to field cultivation relative to the average and poor households because of their access to farming resources. The ability of a household to mobilise resources (tractors services, a span of oxen, cash and agricultural inputs) is an important factor in terms of cultivation of larger fields rather than ownership of land alone. Some of the key statements used in the wealth ranking exercise bear this out. Thus, participants did not mention ownership of land as a measure of wealth status. Often statements like 'they can hire a tractor', 'they have oxen to

cultivate their own field', were used in relation to ploughing fields. Other studies have confirmed the primacy of a household's ability to mobilise resources (especially wage income or remittances) for field cultivation other than ownership of land alone.

8.7.5 Livestock ownership and wealth rank

Besides land ownership and the ability to mobilise other means of production to work the land, cattle ownership may also yield important insights into the nature of rural differentiation. The table below displays results of a means test on livestock ownership for the three wealth groups (poor, average and rich). The types of livestock included in this test are cattle, horses, sheep and goats. Results of this test reveal that there are significant differences in terms of cattle ownership amongst the three wealth groups (see table 29). The richer category has a mean of 8.00 while the mean for the average wealth group is 4.95. Poor households have the lowest mean of 0.77. There are also significant differences in horse ownership amongst the wealth groups. The means are as follows: poor group (0.23), average group (0.82) and the rich group (1.58). Sheep ownership is also differentiated as is evident in the means test. Poor households have a lower mean (0.32) while average households have a slightly higher mean (2.13). However, the rich category has a higher mean (7.00) than the other wealth groups. Interestingly, the means test reveals that in terms of goat ownership average households (3.47) have a higher mean than richer group (2.50) while poor households have the lowest figure (0.81).

Table 29: Comparing means for livestock ownership for different wealth groups (n=124)

Wealth Rank		Total number of cattle owned	Total Number of horses owned	Total Number of Sheep Owned	Total number of goats owned
Poor (n = 60)	Mean	0.77	0.23	0.32	0.81
Average (n = 38)	Mean	4.95	0.82	2.13	3.47
Rich (n = 26)	Mean	8.00	1.58	7.00	2.50
Total	N	124	124	124	123
	Mean	3.56	0.69	2.27	1.99
	p-value	p = **0.00**	p = **0.00**	p = **0.001**	p = **0.254**

***statistically significant tests shown in bold.**

In recent times people from KwaZulu Natal province have been frequenting the area of Moeketsi to buy goats. They bring their own transport and offer good prices (at least R850 per goat). Local people do not usually keep goats but this new market has generated interest in goat rearing amongst the locals. Average households are more likely to afford goats than poor households while the rich tend to be more interested in cattle. The above statistics indicate that livestock ownership is differentiated amongst the wealth groups with richer households owning more livestock than other wealth groups. Average households also own slightly more livestock than the poor households. Nevertheless, inequality in livestock ownership appears to be more pronounced with regard to cattle. Below I explore the extent and distribution of cattle ownership amongst the three wealth categories.

Table 30: Comparing livestock ownership amongst the wealth groups (n=124)

			Wealth rank			Total
			Poor	Average	Rich	
cattle ownership	yes	Count	13	22	15	50
		% within cattle ownership	26.00%	44.00%	30.00%	100.00%
		% within wealth rank	21.70%	57.90%	57.70%	40.30%
	no	Count	47	16	11	74
		% within cattle ownership	63.50%	21.60%	14.90%	100.00%
		% within wealth rank	78.30%	42.10%	42.30%	59.70%
Total		Count	60	38	26	124
		% within wealth rank	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Chi-square = 16.814, df =2, p = .000

In the survey there are 50 households that own cattle. This constitutes 40.30 percent of the sample. Conversely, 74 households (59.70 percent) do not own cattle. The general trend is that there are more households which do not own cattle relative to households that own cattle. The above table (table 30) displays cattle ownership and non-ownership across the three wealth groups. The percentage distribution of cattle ownership across the wealth groups shows that 13

poor households (26 percent) own cattle. There are 22 average households (44 percent) that own cattle while 15 rich households (30 percent) in the survey also own cattle.

Amongst households in the average wealth group more households (57.90 percent) own cattle while about 42.10 percent do not have cattle. In the rich wealth group 57.70 of the rich households own cattle while the remaining 42.30 percent do not own cattle. From the statistics it is evident that within the poor wealth category there are generally more households that do not own cattle compared to the average and rich wealth groups. However, the mere enumeration of the number of cattle-owning households in each wealth group may not go far enough in revealing the full extent of differentiation in cattle ownership amongst the surveyed households. In the survey, the total number of cattle is 442 livestock units (see table 31). It is interesting to note that a huge proportion (61.5%) of the livestock units in the survey is concentrated in the hands of fewer rich households. About 29.0% of the 442 livestock units are owned by households in the average wealth group. Cattle owning households in the poor category only possess a paltry 9.0% of the 442 livestock units in the survey.

Table 31: Distribution of livestock units amongst wealth groups (n=124)

	Distribution of cattle per wealth group	
Wealth Rank	Livestock units	%
Poor	40	9.0
Average	130	29.4
Rich	272	61.5
Total number of cattle	442	100.0

It is evident that while poor and average households may be involved in cattle rearing it is the rich households that own the bulk of the cattle. The highly skewed nature of cattle distribution amongst the households shows that cattle ownership in the villages is highly differentiated.

8.8 Livelihood pathways and trajectories

In the following section I map out the different livelihood trajectories or pathways that rural households in Ongeluksnek reveal. The wealth ranking exercise provides data on local definitions of wealth. In the previous section data from the wealth ranking exercise was corroborated with statistically-derived asset groups and other numerical measures to ascertain the tendencies in rural differentiation. However, equally important are long-term patterns of change in the livelihoods of rural households. In short, I have shown through the combination of a wealth ranking exercise and statistical analysis that there are processes of social differentiation at work in my study site. Yet to fully comprehend processes of social differentiation amongst rural households it is critical to factor in the long-term perspective in the analysis of rural livelihoods. I will provide some selected case material from life history interviews and the survey data to perform a more in-depth analysis of livelihood trajectories. I will use cases that I am familiar with to analyse the livelihood trajectories. Out of the 124 households in the survey, I will confine myself to 90 households to do a more in-depth analysis of livelihood pathways and long term social dynamics in Ongeluksnek.

This study draws on Dorward (2009), Scoones *et al* (2010) and Dubb (2012) to develop a livelihoods typology showing the pathways of change amongst rural households in Ongeluksnek. Analysing livelihoods after land reform in Zimbabwe, Scoones (2010) builds on previous analyses by Dorward and Mushongah (see Scoones *et al*, 2010:226) to develop a livelihoods typology which captures "dynamic changes and wider aspirations of households" (Scoones, 2010:226). The livelihoods typology includes those who are 'hanging in' (survival, but poor – including crisis and survival strategies) and those who are 'stepping out' (diversifying away from agriculture, both locally and through migration). 'Stepping up' denotes those who are accumulating locally largely through agriculture. Mushongah (in Scoones, 2010:226) added another typology namely 'dropping out'. This essentially refers to those households which are destitute and tend to rely on different forms of social protection and are often in the process of exiting. In a study of social reproduction and differentiation amongst small-scale sugar cane growers in Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal, Dubb (2012) adds the 'creeping back' category. This denotes those small-scale growers who had dropped out or faced severe reductions but are attempting to incrementally restart or expand production.

This study will use these livelihood typologies to understand how livelihood pathways unfold amongst the rural households in Ongeluksnek. In my own study I make use of the 'stepping up', 'hanging in', 'dropping down', and 'creeping back' categories. The 'stepping out' category is problematic in that it denotes the tendency to step out of agriculture into non-agricultural activities as households diversify their livelihood activities. While there is a general tendency for households to diversify by combining both agricultural and non-agricultural activities this does not always translate into a definite shift from agrarian livelihood systems to non-agrarian livelihood systems. In my own field site, there is a widespread abandonment of larger fields yet there is also intensification of efforts in such agricultural activities as cultivation of homestead gardens. While the rearing of cattle and other grazing animals like sheep and goats remains resilient in a constrained environment still many households tend to keep poultry. Small livestock make a critical contribution to the reproduction of rural households and form an important part of their agrarian lifestyle. For the above reasons, I have not used the term 'stepping out'. Rural households tend to remain rooted in agricultural activities. In the case of field abandonment, some continue to cultivate gardens, others continue to rear livestock be it cattle or the smaller livestock like pigs and poultry. The idea to is to map put which type of agricultural activities are in decline, which ones still persist and which ones are successful.

8.8.1 Livelihood trajectories in Ongeluksnek villages

Table 31 is based on a more detailed analysis of 90 households. I selected 22 rich households, 33 average households and 35 poor households for a more in depth analysis of livelihood pathways and dynamics of change amongst these households. This table (table 32) combines the livelihood pathways of the selected households and their wealth group. The intention is to analyse the diverse livelihood trajectories that households from different wealth groups tend to follow in their reproduction and accumulation activities. Table 32 shows that of the 90 households in this table 16 households (18 percent) are 'stepping up', 34 households (38 percent) are 'hanging in', 35 households (39 percent) are in the 'dropping down' livelihood trajectory while 5 households (6 percent) are 'creeping back'. There are more households in hanging in category followed by the 'dropping down' category. The lowest proportion of households is in the 'creeping back' category. The majority of the 22 rich households are in the 'stepping up' category. The table on

livelihood trajectories reveals that 18.2 percent of the rich households are stepping up through income from formal jobs.

Table 32: Livelihood pathways and strategies in Ongeluksnek villages (n=90)

Livelihood trajectories		Rich		Average		Poor		Total		Description
Category	Strategy/event	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Stepping up (n= 16, or 18%)	Formal job(s)	4	18.2	2	6.1	0	0	6	6.7	This category includes households involved in local rural accumulation either through 'sequential' or 'simultaneous' straddling. Mostly the rich households fall into this group. Average households who have mobilised resources from temporary jobs, social grants, etc are also able to go beyond expanded consumption and diversify for accumulation.
	Trading store, spaza/tavern	5	22.7	0	0	0	0	5	5.6	
	Livestock accumulation	2	9.1	0	0	0	0	2	2.2	
	Tractor/transport business	1	4.5	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	
	Diversification for accumulation	1	4.5	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	
	Homestead gardening	1	4.5	0		0		1	1.1	
Hanging in (n= 34 or 38%)	Diversifiers	0	0	5	15.2	0	0	5	5.6	This largely entails 'diversification for survival'. Households often combine income from different livelihood sources mainly for social reproduction purposes. Access to social grants is also important for these households. However, social grant income is used more for consumptive than productive activities.
	combining social grants petty trade	0	0	3	9.1	2	5.7	5	5.6	
	combining social grants and farming	0	0	0	0	2	5.7	2	2.2	
	combining social grants only	0	0	2	6.1	12	34.3	14	15.6	
	Temp jobs, casual	0	0	8	24.2	0	0	8	8.9	
Dropping down (n = 35 or 39%)	Death/illness	0	0	4	12.1	5	14.3	9	10.0	Dropping down is experienced by households that have encountered livelihood shocks (death, illness, retrenchment, etc.). In agriculture stock theft, abandoning field cultivation while not engaging in homestead gardening are some of the key features of this group of households.
	Old age	1	4.5	1	3.0	4	11.4	6	6.7	
	Decline of field cultivation	5	22.7	7	21.2	1	2.9	13	14.4	
	Livestock theft	2	9.1	1	3.0	0	0	3	3.3	
	Single person households	0	0	0	0	4	11.4	4	4.4	
Creeping back (n = 5 or 6%)	Rebuilding homestead/ social grant(s)	0	0	0	0	4	11.4	4	1.1	The marginalised and impoverished households from urban areas now returning to revive the homestead, or locally based people with 'new' income (social grant) now forming a household and participating in associational life (stokvels).
	Forming a household	0	0	0	0	1	2.9	1	1.1	
	Total	**22**	**100**	**33**	**100**	**35**	**100**	**90**	**100**	

In spite of the low levels of employment wage income remains important source of income and rural households with access to this livelihood source tend to fall into the rich wealth group. Household members from rich households are usually employed as teachers, nurses, policemen and petty bureaucrats.

Investment in non-agricultural forms of petty commodity production namely trading stores/spaza shops and taverns is also one of the predominant economic activities amongst the accumulating households in the villages. The data shows that 22.7 percent of the rich households are involved in these trade activities. This involves buying goods mainly groceries and alcohol in bulk for resale in smaller quantities in the rural localities. This is usually viable especially considering that for most people travelling to the nearby town of Matatiele is expensive. Livestock production, especially cattle rearing is an important form of agricultural activity in the Ongeluksnek area. Livestock accumulation (cattle production) is an important livelihood activity for about 9.1 percent of the rich households who are stepping up. Ownership of a vehicle especially an open truck or a tractor is considered a sign of affluence in the study area. Open trucks and tractors are an important means of transport in the rural areas of Ongeluksnek. These vehicles are used for transporting firewood and building material. For about 4.5 percent of the rich households who are stepping up investment in transport business is a key livelihood strategy.

Homestead garden cultivation is one of the strategies used by about 4.5 per cent of those rich who are 'stepping up'. The rich households also feature in the 'dropping down' category. Declining capacities dues to old age is one of the reasons why households drop down. About 4.5 per cent of the rich households are 'dropping down' owing to old age. Field cultivation is one of the agricultural activities that has declined in the Ongeluksnek area. Some households had continued to plough their large fields before the AsgiSA maize scheme. However, there was a general decline in field cultivation amongst the rural households in the area. Some rich households experienced a downward trend as a result of the abandonment of field cultivation. In the table on livelihood trajectories 22.7 percent of the rich households are 'dropping down' because of the decline in cultivation of large fields. It is noteworthy that in the sub-sample for livelihood trajectories no rich households seemed to be hanging in or 'creeping back'.

Average households feature in the 'stepping up' livelihood trajectory. Those who are stepping up (6.1 percent) in the average wealth category have access to wage income. A member of the household with a new formal job may change the fortunes of a household resulting in its upward mobility. Other average households are in the 'hanging in' livelihood pathway. Some of the

strategies that these households follow include being multi active whereby multiple and diverse sources of income are combined mainly for reproduction and expanded consumption. These diversifiers constitute 15.2 percent. Income sources combined include social grant income (mostly child support and old age pensions), temporary jobs and casual work, petty trade and farming on household land. Other livelihood strategies pursued by average households in the 'hanging in' livelihood trajectory are combining social grants and petty trade (9.1 percent), combining social only (6.1 percent). About 24.2 percent of average households (in the 'hanging in' livelihood trajectory) use temporary and casual jobs as their livelihood strategy. Average households are also 'dropping down'. The events or turning points for the 'dropping down' households in the average wealth group include death and illness (12.1 percent), old age (3.0 percent), decline in field cultivation, 21.2 percent and livestock theft (3.0 percent). However, it is noteworthy that average households do not appear in the 'creeping back' livelihood pathway.

Poor households in the poor wealth category are 'hanging in' through the following strategies: combining social grants and petty trade (5.7 percent), combining social grants and farming (5.7 percent) and combining social grants only (34.3 percent). Other households in the poor wealth group are 'dropping down'. Some of the events or livelihood shocks associated with 'dropping down' amongst the poor households are death or illness (14.3 percent), declining capacities as a result of old age (11.4 percent) and decline or abandonment of field cultivation (2.9 percent). Amongst the poor household which are 'dropping down' there are also single person households (11.4 percent) whereby people are marginalised and impoverished. These individuals are often without adequate mutual support from relatives and the extended family or other neighbours in general. Another important livelihood trajectory for the households within the poor wealth group is 'creeping back'. In the 'creeping back' livelihood trajectory some households are rebuilding the homestead (11.4 percent) while others are forming a household (2.9 percent). Those who are rebuilding the homestead are often newly-returned from the urban area and are trying to revive the homestead. Forming a household usually denotes those individuals who are impoverished and rely on support from relatives. However, upon qualifying for a social grant they opt to form an independent household unit. It is significant to note that there are no households within the poor wealth group that are in the 'stepping up' livelihood trajectory.

8.8.2 Understanding livelihood trajectories through life histories.

In the preceding discussion I have explored the relationship between livelihood trajectories and wealth groups. This has entailed tabulating the distribution of households on the basis of their wealth rank and in terms of their livelihood trajectories. It is clear that certain livelihood strategies are often pursued by households belonging to particular wealth groups. Rich households are more likely to have access to resources for investing in trading stores and transport businesses. Through different livelihood strategies rich households step up and achieve upward mobility. Average households also pursue different livelihood strategies. These often have access to a range of different income sources (social grants, temporary jobs, petty trade and farming) and often invest these resources in petty trade albeit at a smaller scale. Their diversification is often for survival as opposed to diversification for accumulation as is the case with rich households. Most average households are 'hanging in'. Poor households often combine social grants and invest small amounts in resource poor farming. While households in other wealth groups may drop down the bulk of households dropping down are poor households. In the following section I explore these livelihood trajectories through life history material. A livelihood trajectory is a path through time and consequently individual life histories provide an important methodological tool in the retrospective investigation of livelihood changes over time (Murray, 2002).

8.7.2.1 Stepping up

As is shown in the table on livelihood trajectories in Ongeluksnek those who are 'stepping up' consist mostly of the rich households. These are households involved in highly remunerative activities namely the operation of spaza shops or trading stores, running a successful tavern. These buy goods at lower prices in wholesales in neighbouring towns and sell them at relatively higher prices in the rural markets. Others operate transport businesses in the rural areas. However, this does not usually include passenger vehicles. Instead open trucks and tractors are the most useful types of vehicles as opposed to passenger vehicles. Passenger vehicles tend to be oversubscribed. Tractors can be used for transporting firewood, building material like sand and concrete stones, bricks and providing ploughing services. There are incidences of livestock accumulation amongst the wealthy households. Those who are rich and stepping up also tend to have formal jobs. While steady formal jobs are few and far between they have a decisive impact

on the wealth status of a household in Ongeluksnek. Income from formal jobs underwrites many of the accumulation activities taking place in the countryside.

8.7.2.2 Mr Sima's livelihood account (rich and 'stepping up')

Mr Daniel Sima's grandfather originally came from KwaZulu-Natal and took up a teaching post in the Mahlatsi area under Chief Lebenya in Matatiele. His father who was a career miner went on to establish his own homestead in Litichareng, near Mariazell Mission, where Mr Sima was born in 1955. Mr Sima pursued his primary education at Mariazell Mission which he argues was (and still is) one of the finest educational institutions in the country. He attended secondary school at Moshoeshoe High School where he lived with his maternal uncle. Upon completing standard 8 (Form 3), Mr Sima enrolled for a 3 year Business Studies course at Mthatha Teknikon which he successfully completed in 1976. With proceeds from a photo business which he started with the help of his maternal uncle who bought him a camera Mr Sima acquired a driver's licence. After a brief period of unemployment, a neighbour alerted him to a job opportunity as a driver at the company he was working for. However, upon learning about his academic qualifications the company decided to offer him a job as a junior clerk instead of a driver. Daniel worked for the same company rising through the ranks to become part middle management. He was only retrenched in December 2004 when the company folded as a result of viability problems. Mr Sima has since invested his savings and retirement proceeds into a transport business establishing himself as one of the successful rural, village capitalists in the Moeketsi Reserve. In his own words:

> In 2004 we were told that our company was on the verge of closing since it was difficult to sell our tea because tea from other countries like Zimbabwe was being sold at very low prices than ours. Our kilogram of tea cost R12.50 while tea from Zimbabwe was being sold for R7.50 per kg. So we could not compete and despite all the negotiations and lobbying by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (COSATU) and our company, there was nothing done to save our company. Our tea piled up in warehouses in Durban. We eventually closed down and in December 2004 we were retrenched. Today the tea plantations are just bushes.

Because of my age I could not find another job. I had to stay at home. Sapekoe paid all our monies. From December 2004 up to now I have been staying here at home. When I got retrenched I bought 10 sheep but they all died. I got into the taxi business in 2005 and had a Toyota Venture which I used as a taxi. But it didn't take me time to realise that this business was not profitable at all. The taxis queue up to load and when business is low you can go for days, a week before your turn to load comes. There was also lots of violence in the taxi business. So after two years I sold my vehicle and bought a tractor. People laughed this off thinking that I had made a bad decision. But today most of them no longer have those taxis. They are broke and out of business. My tractor is still here as you can see. Every time it leaves the yard I earn money. Owning a tractor is good business. I can never run out of money as long as I have this tractor. Since I started working I have owned five private family vehicles but now I am a lot wiser. A private vehicle is a waste of money. I can waste fuel just visiting friends with a private car but I can't visit you with a tractor. It's strictly for business.

Recently I came across a good offer. I heard that in Masupha village there was an open truck being sold and not far from the house where they were selling the open truck someone was also selling their tractor. The open truck was being sold for R15 000 and the tractor was being sold for R14 000. So I realised that this was a good deal since I was to part with R29 000 for both the tractor and the open truck. And so I paid for both and now I have two tractors and an open truck. The only thing I need now is another trailer for the new tractor. Once I get the trailer I will be flying. I also need another driver for the new tractor. Currently I have two employees from Thaba Chicha, a driver and a loader. They use the tractor to transport firewood and sand. Each load of sand costs R450 and for a load of firewood I charge R500. There is good business since people are always in need of sand for building and firewood since we have no electricity here. It's profitable. I have observed that when I use 30 litres of diesel I don't expect to get anything below R1500. Even if I'm not around my workers cannot rip me off because then I would know they have either stolen the diesel or pocketed some money.

I am also making concrete blocks. This is something I have just started doing and already the demand is high. I'm overwhelmed and working hard to meet the demand. That's why

> I need another driver and a trailer for the additional tractor. Concrete blocks are profitable and I sell a size 6 brick for R8 while while the price for a size 8 brick is R7. I just mix one bag of cement with 3 wheelbarrows of sand and I get 33 concrete blocks if I'm using the size 6 brick mould and 26 concrete blocks when I'm using a size 8 brick mould. I also own a spaza shop and sell groceries. I always spend much of my time in the spaza and occasionally get help from one woman in the neighbourhood. The spaza shop brings in some money and depending on whether it's a good month and also that most of my customers settle their debts the profits can be as high as R3 000 per month. But most of my profits come from the tractors. I am hoping that in the near future I will be able to expand my spaza shop and make it more spacious. I would be happy to own very big and powerful tractors. There will be a time when my tractors will be old and need replacement (Interview with Mr Sima, 2012).

Mr Sima has diversified from the transport business and his portifolio of business activities now include brick making and a spaza shop. In total he hires four employees, two for his transport business, one for his brick making operation and another employee to help him run the spaza shop. The most profitable of his business activities is the transport business which has allowed him to acquire another tractor and an open truck. Mr Sima's family is one of the elite rural families who could afford to send their children to school and with good education he managed to build a relatively prosperous life for himself.

8.7.2.3 'Hanging in'

The majority of households in the 'hanging in' category are diversifying for survival as opposed to diversification for accumulation. At times households manage to achieve expanded consumption but this is nevertheless far off from being able to accumulate. These households are 'pluri-active' and there is evidence of different combinations of income from temporary jobs, social grants with petty trade and farming either in the form of homestead garden cultivation and livestock rearing. Average households tend to predominate in the 'hanging in' livelihood trajectory. Activities such as petty trade have potential for growth but mostly they do not involve the use of hired labour and hardly go beyond expanded consumption to allow for capital accumulation. While some of the petty trade activities may be profitable this may be characterised as 'precarious prosperity' owing to the lack of a steady flow of substantial income

as is the case with richer households with permanent jobs. The possibility of those who diversify for survival to graduate into diversification for accumulation is limited. Conversely, there is always a possibility that 'hanging in' households may fail to withstand livelihood shocks leading to their descent into the 'dropping down' trajectory.

8.7.3.3 Lerato's livelihoods, 'average wealth' and 'hanging in'

Lerato and her family are one of the average households with multiple or diversified income sources and fall into the 'hanging in' category. The matriarch of this household, Lerato's mother earns an old age grant. Lerato and her older sister have temporary jobs in the WFW programme. Before working in temporary jobs locally both Lerato and her sister have been to bigger cities in search for employment. Lerato's job search led her to Durban where she worked as a domestic worker from 2007 until 2010. Before 2007 she worked in the WFW government programme. Her sister, from Johannesburg, had just returned home after being retrenched from her factory job. The two sisters saved up money from their earnings and acquired a gas refrigerator for R5000. With a refrigerator they could now stock meat and sell beer in the home-based spaza shop. Both of them have children but are not married. Their children are on child support grants. The family also keeps small livestock. Below are some excerpts from Lerato's life history.

> In 2007 I started working in Durban. I worked as a house maid in Durban from 2007 and stopped in 2010. But before leaving for Durban, I worked as a temporary worker cutting the wattle trees for the government's working for water (WFW) project. Before I left I put my sister in my place at the WFW project. She had been working in Johannesburg, at a meat factory from 1999 until 2006 when she got retrenched. She has been with the WFW project since then and now their pay is a bit reasonable than before. The woman I was working for in Durban worked a double shift at her workplace. She worked a day and night shift but because her company was experiencing financial problems they cut down her hours and she could only work a single shift. She told me that she could no longer afford to pay me. I used to get R1000 per month when I was working as a house maid in Durban. When I came back home after losing my job I stayed without a job for a while. I was then hired at the WFW project. At home, here, we sell meat and beer. We used to heavily rely on my mother's old age grant and the child grants. We started selling beer in 2008 when I was working in Durban and sending some money. During my time in

Durban I would send R700 per month keep the R300 for myself. I was also receiving child support grant for my children but I saved up most of the money from the child grant payments so I could buy clothes for them. When I was in Durban I would send money home and this helped my sister to save up and buy a refrigerator. So she was working for the working for water project and she took some of her money and together with what I sent her she bought the fridge. We got the fridge in 2009 for R5 000. Buying the fridge improved our business. It was a turning point for us. There was now a huge difference when we bought the fridge. We could stock more beer, and in addition to the beer, we now started selling meat. Before we had a fridge our business was not doing that well. My sister orders 10 cases of beer each time from Matatiele. In a month she orders beer at least three times. One case of beer (12 beers) costs R 109 and when we sell it we get R 156. Each case of beer gives us 47 rands in profit and we get at least R470 from the 10 cases of beer we sell each time. In a month my sister orders meat for R1000 or R1200. We sell pre-packed chicken trays and Russian sausages. We get about R2300 to 2500 from meat sell depending on the amount of meat sold in the month. We sell a 2 kg of meat for R55. A tray of chicken for R25 and with Russian sausages we sell each for R2.50 (Interview with Lerato, 2012).

This household is involved in petty trade (shebeening and selling meat), has two temporary jobs, one old age grant and 3 child support grant. Since engaging in petty trade this household appears to be earning extra income and can now meet their household needs without much strain. While the business is doing well there is not much in terms of accumulation. At most what they have attained so far is expanded consumption. The petty trade enterprise relies on family labour and there is no hired labour.

8.7.3.4 'Dropping down'

Households encounter livelihood shocks or events that represent a turning point in the livelihood pathway. Some households manage to overcome some of these livelihood shocks while, for others, this may this may represent a decline in livelihood prospects. Households which experience livelihood shocks and experience a decline in the level of livelihood are seen as 'dropping down'. In this study, livelihood shocks represent events like stock theft, death of a spouse, abandonment of field cultivation.

8.7.3.5 Mathatho's livelihoods, 'poor' and 'dropping down'

Mathatho is a 65 year old widow whose husband died as far back as 1981. They had four children and only her two sons are surviving. Her two surviving sons, Kiwi and Sabatha are struggling to find stable jobs and cannot support her. Kiwi is doing part-time jobs in Mt. Fletcher while her other son Sabatha is married, has two children and a homestead of his own. Sabatha survives on temporary jobs and only earns enough to look after his wife and two children. Mathatho and her husband never had a field and they survived by weeding other people's fields in exchange for maize. Her husband's parents had a field yet as the youngest male her husband could not inherit that field. According to Mathatho when her husband passed on in 1981 she only got R1 000 from his employers. Of her two children who passed on, one was her eldest daughter who worked in Matatiele as a domestic worker. When she passed on in 2012 life became even harder because she used to send money every month. She left behind two children, Buti and her sister Thatho. Thatho fell pregnant and became a mother at a young age while Buti is still at school. Mathatho looks after her two grandchildren and her great grandchild (Thatho's daughter) from her old age grant.

> Since 1969 when we had our own homestead we never had a field. We just lived a life of suffering. We would help people in the community to weed their fields to get maize. We would also weed for money just so that we could eat. My husband's family had a field but he was the youngest in the family and he never got allocated a field by his parents. They were four in their family, two boys and two girls but the field was taken by the eldest son. My husband worked briefly in Johannesburg and came back in 1979. He passed on in 1981. My husband had no money. We couldn't buy cattle. When he was working he would send me R40 or R80 but not all the time. It was a hard life and we just had enough to get by, to raise our children. I only got R1000 from his workplace a couple of months after he passed on. That was the only large amount I got from his employers and it was the last one. I get an old age grant and that's how I survive. Even my grandchild who is at school, it's my old-age grant money that pays the fees. My eldest daughter passed on and my life has been hard since then. She was a housemaid in Matatiele. I have seen a lot of difficulties since she passed on. From my pension I use R600 for groceries and other household expenses. The boy who is at school at Mabenyeni gets R500 every month for his upkeep. When my daughter was still alive she would buy

everything from clothes to books and I only used to buy mealie meal. But now I do it alone. I have to buy everything. I pay R150 per month to Victoria society for my funeral insurance. It's only myself and my eldest son Kiwi who are part of a burial society and I pay for him too. But I have to borrow money every time to keep up with the payments. I rely on credit to pay for the burial society money for the two of us. Every R100 I borrow has an interest of R30 per month. I can't be part of a grocery society or stokvel because I can't afford. So I just live on my own. We used to cultivate the homestead garden when my daughter was still alive but now I can't afford. As the children grow there are more household expenses and I don't have the R500 to hire a tractor to plough my homestead garden. My granddaughter Halala helps me with household chores. She also helps our neighbours who own a spaza shop on her free time. She is a good child. They don't pay her. We are related. The owner of that homestead is a relative of my husband's family. The Sellos are related to my husband so Halala helps them at the shop. They are good hearted. All my suffering they are always there (*inhlupeko yam' yonke soko bekhona*). Recently a member of my family passed on and they took his body to the mortuary and back and they also bought all the groceries for the funeral (Interview with Mathatho, 2012)

Besides her old age grant, Mathatho's family is dependent on her husband's extended family for moral and material support. Mathatho lives in close proximity to one of her late husband's prosperous relative, Mr Sello. Mr Sello has a lucrative job in government while his wife is a teacher. They own one of the most lucrative spaza shops and taverns in the area. Mr Sello and his wife spend much of their time at work and have left their homestead in the custody of the wife's sister (Moello). Moello looks after the homestead and also runs the spaza shop and tavern during their long absences. However, she has her own shebeening business and also sells kitchenware on the side. Her business activities keep her on the road and she often calls on her brother-in-law's poorer kin, Mathatho's family, to help out when she is away. Mathatho's granddaughter, Thatho is always available to work in the spaza shop and tavern. She also performs domestic duties like cleaning, cooking and looking after Moello's young child. Mathatho's household feels obliged to help out because the Sello's and Meollo tend to assist them in time of need. Moello helps them out with basic food while the Sello's are always there in times of family crises like illness or funerals.

8.7.3.6 'Creeping back'

The 'creeping back' livelihood trajectory applies to those whose attempts to establish a homestead did not materialise or were aborted. It may also depict households that simply pursued an urban life and either allowed their homestead to collapse along the way or simply maintained nominal presence and made little or no investment in their rural homestead. It is not unfamiliar to see dilapidated structures where the owners of the homestead are based in the urban areas and hardly visit or maintain their homestead. However, as a result of livelihood shocks like death and retrenchment people often struggle to survive or meet their daily reproduction needs. It is in such instances that they explore the alternative of re-establishing their lives in the rural villages. The process of re-establishing, reviving or resuscitating the rural homestead after a long hiatus in the urban areas is here defined as creeping back.

8.7.3.7 Faro's livelihoods, 'poor' and 'creeping back'

Faro's story resonates with many oral accounts I encountered during my qualitative research. Household formation is a long and drawn out process and when a couple gets married they stay for an initial period at the husband's natal homestead or what is locally frequently referred to as the greater homestead (*khayakhulu*). This initial period may vary but some newly-married people end up staying with the husband's parents at the greater homestead for much of their lives. During this period parents have command over the labour of their son and his family especially their daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law is not only initiated in the ways of her new family but provides labour for farming and performs domestic duties. Where the husband is working his parents also have control over the remittance payments. This is illustrated by Faro's case. When she got married being part of the greater homestead brought about conflict with her mother-in-law over household resources especially the remittance payments from her husband. They eventually had to abandon their lives in the greater homestead and relocated to a township in the Free State. Although they found some respite the eventual illness and subsequent death of her husband saw the family fall into a downward trajectory. Faro has recently moved back to Thaba Chicha to re-establish the homestead. The homestead had collapsed during their long absence and her mother-in-law passed on. Below is her livelihood history:

> In 1984 a friend of mine called me from Mthatha saying she missed me and wanted me to visit her. So when I got home in Mutsini, this man who used to visit us at Mariazell came

with my friend just to visit me at my parents' home. So I cooked for them and later walked them out when they left. I was abducted at that moment by that man and he left me to stay with his mother in Thaba Chicha for a year. My husband was working in Johannesburg and only came back after a year when I had gotten used to staying at the homestead. From 1984 I stayed with my mother-in-law until we moved to the Free State in 1990. We went to Free State and got a stand since we were no longer on good terms with my mother-in-law. So we left with my husband. It's his uncle who got us a stand in Free State. My mother in-law used to drink a lot. My husband would send money for our upkeep through my mother-in-law and instead of buying food and taking care of household needs she would spend all the money on beer. It got to a point where I no longer had clothes and would wear a blanket. I also had no shoes. My husband came home from Johannesburg and tried to speak to her mother about this problem but she wouldn't listen. My husband then sent money through me instead of sending it through her mother. This created lots of friction and there was conflict between us. That's how we ended up leaving for the Free State in 1990...My husband passed on in 2003 and so I came back to Thaba Chicha in 2011... I only left the Free State because I was critically ill and my husband has passed on in 2003. I was ill and decided to come back home and settle at my in-laws' homestead. There was no house or structure whatsoever when I came back in 2011 so I had to start building from scratch... One thing that has power is the child grant. Some things we try but they don't have power. I get R1300 per month from the child support grant. Four of my children get the child support grant. The last born has no child support grant since I am still going to apply for one (Interview with Faro, 2012).

Without any resource base the household combines child support grant income as the primary resource for reviving the homestead. At the time of the interview Faro had just erected a rectangular mud structure which served multiple purposes (bedroom, kitchen and lounge). Once she manages to fence the homestead she hopes to resume cultivating the homestead garden. Faro is utilising her primary resource, the child support grants, to 'creep back' and re-establish the homestead. The rural areas continue provide respite and succour for those who have failed to overcome livelihood shocks in the urban areas.

The empirical evidence presented above shows that there is a relationship between the wealth rank of the rural households and the livelihood trajectories namely, 'stepping up', 'hanging in', 'dropping down' and 'creeping back'. This suggests that livelihoods are implicated in processes of differentiation. I will discuss this further in Chapter nine.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has combined different strands of empirical evidence namely wealth ranking data (locally-defined wealth criteria) and quantitative survey data (livelihoods portifolio and statistical derived categories). The chapter also made use of life history interview material and livelihood trajectories both of which generate more retrospective insights and a gleaning into long-term process of change. These methods have been deployed to form a more comprehensive and well-rounded picture of the rural social structure and transformative process of change in the study setting.

The empirical evidence on the livelihood sources in the Ongeluksnek shows that both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood sources are important in the reproduction and accumulation activities of rural households. The data shows that while there is a decline in agricultural activity this does not encompass all forms of farming. Rural households in Ongeluksnek still describe agriculture as an important part of their livelihoods. In recent years, most households had been withdrawing from the cultivation of large fields. The introduction of the AsgiSA maize scheme resulted in complete withdrawal from field cultivation. However, livestock production in the Ongeluksnek area remains resilient while the cultivation of homestead gardens has become the mainstay of agrarian forms of livelihood in the area. Findings in this research are consistent with empirical evidence from other studies which show that rural households in the Eastern Cape are shifting their resources from larger fields and concentrating on small homestead gardens rangelands (Andrew & Fox 2004; Fay 2011). Research also reveals that land-based endowments remain a critical livelihood component in rural areas and this includes grazing of animals on communal rangelands (Hebinck & van Averbeke 2007:339).

I have explored the long-term aspect of rural livelihoods. The analysis of agrarian change stands to benefit from a livelihoods perspective that attempts to understand long-term aspirations of

rural households and dynamics of change. Another central issue in this chapter is the question of how to characterise rural households in the current conjuncture. There are broader transformative processes like de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation which have been incessant and these processes have unfolded within a capital-centric global economy. Interestingly, the so-called 'peasants' have continued to exist and still exhibit many features of an agrarian mode of existence.

It is difficult to account for the continued existence of the 'peasants' considering that industrialisation has not resulted in adequate employment opportunities for many people in different parts of the world as is postulated in the proletarianisation thesis. Conventional mainstream formulations such as 'small-scale farmer' also do not explain the structural position of rural producers in contemporary capitalism. They merely pose these activities as oppositional categories to large-scale farming. The diversified nature of rural livelihoods and the strong and continual linkages between agrarian and non-agrarian modes of livelihood mean that these formulations are not adequate. Bernstein's (2010) formulation of 'classes of labour' seems to offer a more precise explanation of the 'conditions of existence and reproduction' (Neocosmos, 1993) of rural households in the contemporary capitalist world. This chapter also brings together empirical evidence from the wealth ranking exercise, statistical survey and life history interviews to ascertain the key features of socio-economic inequalities in Ongeluksnek. The data show that there are inequalities amongst the rural households and these tend to feature in such livelihood domains as land (ownership and use), livestock ownership (especially cattle) and wage employment. In the next chapter I will discuss the nature and extent of social differentiation in Ongeluksnek, the tendencies in class formation and implications for 'accumulation from below'.

Chapter 9 Conclusion: Social Differentiation and Class Formation in Moeketsi, Matatiele

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the extent to which livelihoods diversification in the study area is implicated in processes of social differentiation and class formation. I argue that livelihoods strategies and trajectories (dropping down, creeping back, hanging in and stepping up), to a large extent, correspond with the groupings of households into different wealth ranking categories (poor, rich and average). I also discuss the 'fragmentation' of livelihoods in the study villages and argue that this may be explained in terms of the Bernstein's formulation of 'fragmentation of classes of labour' in the contemporary capitalist world. I explore the implications of this fragmentation for class formation and accumulation from above. To problematize these issues within the context of my research, I will remind the reader of the research questions at the centre of this study. This research seeks to:

1. Explore and understand the nature of social differentiation in rural villages of Mutsini, Litichareng and Thaba Chicha.
2. Assess the role of non-agricultural or off-farm income in the reproduction and accumulation strategies of rural households and the impact of off-farm income on rural differentiation
3. Specifically, to examine the responses, survival, livelihood and accumulation strategies that households deploy in the context of declining agriculture and dysfunctional 'agricultural development' interventions.

This study situates rural livelihoods analysis in the rural villages of Matatiele, South Africa within the political economy framework. The political economy framework focuses on the ways in which powerful classes accumulate by appropriating surplus from the less powerful (Da Corta, 2010:18). In this perspective, the concept of class is not seen merely as a description of livelihood chances or a characteristic. Instead, it is a conceptual tool for identifying a poor person's social position in processes of production and of capitalist accumulation. This is useful in understanding the production and reproduction of poverty (Da Corta, 2010:35). In this sense,

the political economy framework emphasises social relations (relational poverty). In the analysis of livelihoods and poverty the emphasis is on how "poverty is produced by social inequalities, by the social relations and divisions of class, gender, ethnicity, nation, and so on, that, make up the actually existing worlds of capitalism, large and small" (Bernstein, 2007:14). In contradistinction, the residual approach tends to view poverty and inequality as produced and reproduced from "the 'exclusion of certain' types of people from the benefits of capitalist or 'market' development: small farmers, women, 'minority' groups, the informally self-employed, those with insufficient human and social capital, and son on" (Bernstein, 2007:14).

Before examining some of the key issues in this chapter, I summarily highlight the ground covered in the previous chapters. The chapter on the agrarian question has analysed some of the key ideas concerning both the classic and contemporary agrarian question and how they may enrich our understanding of agrarian change and livelihoods. This is followed by the chapter on land tenure and settlement in Ongeluksnek villages constituted a historical analysis of the changes in land use patterns in the villages of Litichareng, Thaba Chicha and Mutsini. This chapter also examined land administration and allocation in the rural villages of Moeketsi. The chapter on agricultural development in Transkei and Moeketsi examined the shifts and striking continuities in agricultural development interventions in the Eastern Cape. This chapter has demonstrated that agricultural interventions in the rural areas continue to favour an agrarian structure based on large-scale high-input agriculture as opposed to small-scale farming driven by rural households. The chapter on agricultural production has shown that while there has been a decline in agricultural production this cannot be interpreted in absolute terms considering that some agricultural activities have remained resilient (livestock production especially cattle rearing) while other remain fairly robust (homestead gardens). Rural households have only abandoned field cultivation which was, in two of the villages (Thaba Chicha and Litichareng) accelerated by the introduction of a government sponsored massive maize scheme. The chapter on livelihoods and differentiation presents empirical evidence on the differentiated nature of livelihoods and the extent to which livelihoods are shaped by processes of social differentiation. Indeed, it emerges that rural livelihoods are differentiated and implicated in processes of social differentiation. I now turn to the key issues in my conclusion.

9.2 Livelihoods diversification and social differentiation

This study uses a political economy framework to explore the tendencies in rural livelihoods diversification in Matatiele, South Africa. The thesis explores livelihoods diversification specifically the extent to which livelihoods activities are enmeshed in processes of rural social differentiation. In this section I locate my own study within the wider literature on livelihoods and social differentiation. In my discussion I will show that livelihoods research, when applied in a manner that allows for class analysis, is an important tool for understanding the rural social structure and process of agrarian change. This is particularly true in the contemporary capitalist world where rural livelihoods have become fragmented. While traditional Marxist approaches are analytically powerful in understanding the underlying processes within capitalist economies it is equally true that they have grappled to understand the hybridity and fluidity that has come to characterise rural livelihoods.

In their analysis of markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, Bernstein and Oya (2014) argue that livelihood diversification needs to be understood in the context of broader processes of commodification and by implication rural social differentiation. Bernstein and Oya (2014:18) argue that "by considering livelihood diversification through the lens of rural social differentiation, we can get a more accurate picture than we would by simply applauding differentiation as the agency of small-scale farmers and analysing the role of markets in terms of how they support or constrain diversification". Similarly, Bernstein and Woodhouse (2001) argue that "while diversification is often emphasized as a livelihood/reproduction strategy – especially in rural areas characterized by risky environments and/or market conditions...it is subject to class differentiation generated by commoditization" (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001:316). Accordingly, "diversification by those whose 'portfolios' combine agrarian commodity production with investment in and incomes from shop, transport, crop and livestock trading, equipment hire and other service provision, has a very different (if connected) dynamic to the imperative of diversification as a survival strategy in the face of poverty and insecurity" (Bernstein and Woodhouse, 2001:317).

In the South African context some studies have acknowledged the differentiated nature of rural livelihoods and their implication in processes of social differentiation. Different types of

typologies have been formulated to classify individuals or households in terms of their different livelihood activities. These studies thus privilege the reality of social inequality amongst rural households. In many respects, this represents an acknowledgment that the rural population is not homogenous. While acknowledging social inequality studies on livelihood diversification and differentiation are located in different theoretical frameworks. I locate my analysis of livelihood diversification and differentiation within the political economy framework. Following Scoones *et al* (2010) and O'Laughlin (2002), I argue that the livelihoods method has potential to yield insights on the nature and trajectory of agrarian change in contemporary settings if used in a manner that is sensitive to history, context and social (class). I have opted for the Scoones *et al*'s (2010) livelihoods typologies because of its affinities to the political economy framework and its privileging of differentiation. I also find its focus on the long-term dimension useful for understanding processes of change in the countryside and beyond. By focusing on the wider aspirations of rural households this formulation offers ways of looking at livelihoods in their dynamic form instead of studying them in a static way. Before presenting my own analysis of rural livelihoods through the lens of social differentiation, to paraphrase Bernstein and Oya (2014), I briefly review some of the studies on livelihoods and differentiation in South Africa.

Neves and du Toit (2013) use life history interview material from different parts of the countryside to explore the nature of rural livelihoods in contemporary South Africa. In their analysis they identify critical livelihood domains which rural households exploit to sustain their livelihoods, namely land-based endowments and linkages to urban resources, various informal sector economic activities, receipt of state cash transfers, and the practices of social mutuality and reciprocity. More importantly, Neves and du Toit (2013) point to the differentiated nature of rural livelihoods especially the extent to which households are able to access these livelihood domains. According to these authors, "as the extent and quality of access to these four domains vary widely between households, so too do the patterns of vulnerability and social differentiation that subsequently emerge" (Neves and du Toit, 2013:109). Further, "social differentiation is both a constitutive condition and a consequence that can, recursively, generate the conditions of its own perpetuation" (*ibid*).

In a study of livelihoods diversification in Madibogo, North West, Francis (2010) highlights the importance of focusing on power dynamics in the analysis of rural livelihoods especially examining how poverty at the local level is linked to wider processes. Francis identifies the government's neoliberal strategy as one of the key factors underlying the persistence of poverty. For Francis (2010) "the large majority of people in Madibogo have been left behind by a national political transition that has reconfigured power towards small, African elite, and in rural areas, has constructed new alliances between this elite and commercial farming capital, particularly exporters" (Francis, 2010:104). Francis constructs a livelihood typology based on differences in livelihood strategies, differential access to resources and income. The empirical evidence revealed that Madibogo was deeply stratified between a tiny minority with access to state and capital and a large majority who lacked these advantages (Francis, 2010:103). The wealthier category (5 households) is a small minority of large-scale farmers and business people who experienced substantial income growth during the 1970s and have incomes that are above R50 000 per annum. There are three other categories of poor households. Group 2 in Francis's typology consists of households with regular income. This may be in the form of more than pension or comparably sizeable remittances ort trading incomes (16 households). Group 3 consists of those households receiving small receiving one pension or small but regular remittances (13 households). Group 4 which is the poorest category consists of those households with irregular income (see Francis, 2010:97).

Perret (2001) formulates a 'regional typology of households in rural areas of Transkei'. This livelihood typology is based on whether or not a household is involved in farming. Some households are non-farming types while others are farming types. Within the non-farming type of households there are three sub-categories namely, very poor single female headed households, pensioners with some subsistence farming activities, off farm workers with external activities and sources of income. The farming household types include livestock keeping pensioners, off-farm workers owning livestock, with off farm activities and sources of income, and full time farmers.

The studies discussed above are important insofar as they form part of the body of the evidence which points to the differentiated nature of rural livelihoods. However, more needs to be done by

way of problematizing rural livelihoods in terms of (social) class. Below I discuss my own study and how I attempt to problematize social class in my analysis of rural livelihoods in Moeketsi.

9.3 Livelihood trajectories and wealth ranking

I have highlighted the complexity and fragmentation that have come to characterise livelihoods in contemporary rural settings. Marxist forms of analysis have tended to analyse the rural social structure in terms of the class-analytic perspectives (Innes and O'Meara, 1976; Neocosmos, 1987 Cousins, 2010). These perspectives have been very useful in mapping the underlying tendencies within capitalist economies. However, considering the incessant diversification and fragmentation of livelihoods in contemporary capitalism, the class-analytic perspectives do not adequately capture the complexity of these multiple livelihood sources. Although he was discussing the 'household developmental cycle' Murray's (1987) comments on the limitations of the class-analytic perspective are relevant. Murray (1987) argues that one of the stultifying tendencies within the tradition of class analysis is the derivation from synchronic survey evidence alone of discrete classes as static entities. It is critical to highlight the temporal processes of class formation. The diverse household forms statistically represented in survey results must be understood in terms of the differential impact of these (temporal) processes upon the lives and of men and women (Murray, 1987:247). In this sense, it is possible to see members of households as 'historical individuals' whose experience makes sense at both macro- and micro-levels (Murray, 1987:247). Critiquing Innes and O'Meara's (1976) class categories of rural households in the Transkei, Murray (1987) notes that the class-analytic perspective fails to take into account the diverse strategies for survival of individual households at different phases of their development, characterised by different combinations of activities of their members (Murray, 1987:238).

It also apposite to note that the livelihoods perspectives have been widely criticised for their lack of attention to class analysis. In this regard, some scholars have argued that it is imperative to bring back class in livelihoods analysis (O'Laughlin, 2002; Scoones, 2009; Bernstein, 2010). It is against this background that I find the Scoones' livelihoods typology to be useful in the analysis of rural differentiation. Scoones *et al* (2010) note that the livelihood trajectories in their study are often associated with identifiable rural classes. In my own study, there is some correspondence

between the wealth ranking categories and the livelihoods trajectories derived from the in-depth analysis of life history interviews. The livelihood trajectories reflect the long-term aspect of livelihood patterns and the wider aspirations of rural households. The in-depth analysis of livelihood strategies and trajectories pursued by households as well as individuals within these households allows us to transcend the problem of static class categories. Combining these with the wealth ranking categories thus allows for a more flexible analysis of processes of differentiation in the rural villages. My data on livelihood trajectories has shown that there is a relationship between the different wealth groups identified in the wealth ranking exercise and the livelihood strategies pursued by rural households. It is apparent that certain livelihood strategies are common amongst households belonging to the same wealth category. It has already been noted in the introduction of this chapter that rural households have increasingly become multi-occupational, drawing on a wide range of livelihood sources and simultaneously straddling the rural and urban divide. The question is how to make sense of this diversity and complexity.

Within the materialist political economy, rural households and other forms of small-scale commodity production are designated as petty commodity producers. These combine class places of labour and capital whether as individuals or households and are subject to differentiation. In this study, it is evident that those who are 'stepping up through' such strategies as investing in a trading store or operating a transport business, are engaged in accumulation activities or expanded reproduction. In so far as they are able to remain on an upward trajectory of accumulation by exploiting labour (family and hired), extracting surplus value and reinvesting a portion of that surplus into their business activities, they constitute the village elite or bourgeois. While operating in a constrained environment their structural position within capitalism is that of a segment of 'classes of capital' involved in the exploitation of labour and extracting surplus value. However, as evidenced by the rich who are 'dropping down', this position is fluid and contradictory and it is not impossible for rich households to descend to the lower segments.

In this study, it is also clear that the 'hanging in' category predominantly consists of average households and a portion of poor households who are maintaining social reproduction by combining different income sources. However, at the apex of the 'hanging in' livelihood trajectory are the diversifiers who have access to a relatively more diversified range of income

sources. These households usually manage to attain expanded consumption and may invest in petty trade but this falls short of accumulation. These households may go beyond individual or expanded consumption if they manage to re-invest the small earnings from their livelihood activities on a sustained basis. By continuously reinvesting these small surpluses they may achieve upward mobility and join the ranks of accumulators. Nevertheless, often, theirs is 'precarious prosperity' since these households may easily drop down as much as they may graduate into the ranks of accumulators.

The 'dropping down' households are predominantly but not exclusively from the poor wealth category. There are other rich and average households who are dropping down. However, the 'dropping down' livelihood trajectory consists of those experiencing a reproduction squeeze as a result of livelihood shocks or adverse events like death and illness or livestock theft. They descend on a downward trajectory and their level of livelihood deteriorates. Households may creep back and re-establish their place when they gain access to new resources. In the research context when some individuals qualify for an old age grant they often choose to form a household and become less dependent on their previous benefactors. Others return from the city after experiencing hardships and often use social grants as the primary resource for rebuilding or reviving their homesteads.

9.4 Fragmentation of livelihoods, class dynamics and accumulation from below

In this section I discuss the tendencies in class formation in a context where rural livelihoods are increasingly diversified and complex. It is now widely acknowledged that rural livelihoods have increasingly become fragmented and complex such that it is difficult to identify polar classes as postulated by the classical Marxists (O'Laughlin, 2002; Bernstein). O'Laughlin (2002) vividly portrays the complex and fragmented nature of livelihoods. In recent decades rural livelihoods have increasingly become contingent and contradictory (O'Laughlin, 2002:512):

> We no longer see capital hungering for cheap and unskilled labour, but rather mine redundancies and rural unemployment. We see no clear divide between household subsistence production and migrant wage-labour. Rather we see people in rural households combining food production with diverse ways of generating income – brewing, making charcoal, repairing shoes, queuing for food aid, doing casual wage-

> labour, receiving remittances and pension payments, selling livestock. We see no emerging class differences between a landless rural proletariat and commercial farmers (black or white), but rather people earning their livelihood in diverse ways.

In their analysis of livelihoods and agrarian change in the Eastern Cape province, Bank and Minkley (2005) also highlight the increased fragmentation of rural livelihoods in the countryside. Bank and Minkley (2005) argue that in the twentieth century 'rural struggle was dominated by the quest of white capital for cheap labour to fuel furnaces of industry and to drive capitalist production in the countryside'. In contrast, "the main dynamic in the post-apartheid era at the beginning of the twenty-first century is that rural labour, one so eagerly desired, has become a burden to the state and an irrelevance to capital" (Bank and Minkley, 2005:32). These scholars invoke the concept of 'involution' to denote the incessant deterioration or 'fragmentation' of livelihoods in a context characterised by deindustrialisation and policy failures on the part of the state to stimulate the agrarian economy in the province.

Neves and du Toit (2008:33) assert that involution unfolds when 'the system of livelihood making' is unable to 'expand its resource base or reorder property relations' owing to internal pressures like population increase and poverty. As a result, "the system of livelihood making spirals into greater, overdriven complexity and self-exploitation". Thus, "livelihoods systems atrophy, and lock people into systems of shared poverty" (see Neves and du Toit, 2008:33). However, these scholars argue that the problem with the concept of involution is the degree to which it overstates the degree of disconnectedness of subaltern classes from the larger economy (Neves and du Toit: *ibid*).

In my own study, research findings demonstrate that rural livelihoods are not only increasingly diversified but they have also become more fragmented. While it is possible to discern tendencies in differentiation within diversified livelihoods, clear class distinctions as postulated in classical Marxism are not readily evident. In the research context, there is evidence of differentiation amongst the rural households. This is evident in the context of different livelihood strategies and trajectories for the different wealth groups. The poor households are often dropping down, the average are mostly hanging in while the rich tend to predominate in the stepping up category. When the diversified livelihoods are seen through the prism of class

differentiation it is thus evident that households are not just diversifying livelihoods. Close analysis shows that livelihoods diversification is implicated in processes of social differentiation.

The evidence that rural livelihoods are not only diversified by are also enmeshed in processes of differentiation confirms Neocosmos' (1993) observation that however partial, meek, or mild socio-economic differentiation is; it nevertheless exists amongst rural households in the countryside. Thus accumulation from below exists alongside accumulation from above, albeit in a very constrained socio-economic context of underdevelopment. Thus, the emergence of polar classes as a result of differentiation is heavily constrained in conditions of widespread poverty and deprivation as is the case in rural Moeketsi.

Instances of accumulation from above are also constrained especially if that means the involvement of the local elite. Instead, external agrarian capital in the form of state capitalist enterprises in conjunction with private agribusiness have been involved in accumulation from above through agricultural development schemes. However, this has largely bypassed the local village elite. Agricultural development schemes in the area have involved the extraction of surplus by agribusiness corporations and contractors from the big cities. The design of the massive maize schemes is such that small local accumulators, for instance tractors owners, are not afforded the opportunity to provide their services. There is also a tension between the imperative to meet the social reproduction needs of the participating rural households and the reproduction of agrarian capital. As a result, these schemes have not been able to alleviate poverty or allow for accumulation at the local level. Both accumulation from below and accumulation from above (for the local households) have not been realised through these schemes.

Cousins' (2013) study in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal, examines the possibilities for accumulation from below amongst small-scale farmers. Cousins (2013:135) argues that "accumulation from below on a significant scale in the Southern African context requires the redistribution of commercial farms to small-scale producers, but this is not sufficient...". It is also important to have access to other resources "including capital to invest in farming, with off-farm income an important potential source of capital" (Cousins, 2013:135). In the case of Msinga, structural

constraints typical of an 'apartheid-era labour reserve' continue to impede accumulation from below and from above. These include "...high population densities, a general shortage of arable land, poor infrastructure, few local employment opportunities, continuing dependence on migrant wages and remittances and, more recently, social grants, and deep and widespread income poverty..." (Cousins, 2013:135).

Mafeje's (2003) arguments are consistent with Cousins' (2013) findings in Msinga. Mafeje (2003:24) was sceptical about the feasibility of accumulation from below under the present material conditions in Southern Africa, and in many respects, the rest of the continent. For Mafeje the fundamental question with respect to accumulation from below is: what are its prospects and under what conditions does it occur? (Mafeje, 2003). Mafeje (2003) concludes that "while always possible, accumulation from below has its own limits under certain conditions. For instance, it could be unrealisable under conditions of super-exploitation of the peasantry, political oppression or extra-economic coercion, as in Southern Africa, and increasingly, in the rest of Africa" (Mafeje, 2003:24).

To conclude, a number of factors combine to constrain both 'accumulation from below' and 'accumulation from above' in Moeketsi. In the contemporary capitalist world the disadvantaged position of smallholders in relation to global and national agro-food chains has seen the 'reproduction squeeze' of small-scale farmers in areas like Moeketsi. The broader policy environment favours an agrarian structure based on large-scale agricultural production as opposed to small-scale production driven by rural households. State capitalist enterprises at the forefront of agricultural development schemes in the countryside also have a significant role to play. In Moeketsi, agricultural investment, driven by the state enterprise (AsgiSA), by-passed both the poor and wealthy local households. Instead, 'classes of capital' (agribusiness, consultants and contractors) from outside of this locality benefited from the AsgiSA maize scheme. In this particular case the extraction of surplus proceeded in spite of the locals. Other local dynamics include the lack of adequate land especially for grazing as large landholders occupy much of the land in the area. This not only limits livestock accumulation but has resulted in the villages grappling to balance the needs of the two main agricultural activities, namely cropping in large fields and cattle production. Cropping in the area had been receding and this

process accelerated as a result of more contemporary factors like the rising costs of farming. All these developments occur against the background of limited employment opportunities in the formal sector of the economy. Traditional employers like the mining industry have also experienced restructuring while the emergent regional industries of the homeland era also folded in the post-apartheid period. These are some of the key processes driving the fragmentation of rural livelihoods in the area of Moeketsi.

9.5 Lessons for Policy

The previous section has discussed the theoretical aspects of my conclusion. In the previous section I have underlined the importance of class analysis in livelihoods research. I have shown how my own study grapples with issues of rural social inequality and social differentiation. The previous section also highlights the increased fragmentation of livelihoods in the contemporary capitalist world and how this presents a challenge to livelihoods analysis and analyses of agrarian change in general. Below I now identify and discuss some of the key policy lessons that have emerged out of this study.

9.5.1 Markets are not neutral and there is a need for appropriate and targeted state intervention

In political economy, markets are imbued with power relations and are by no means neutral. As Harriss-White and Heyer (2010:7) argue "markets can work for the poor but they can also work against the poor or be irrelevant to them". Thus "as allocative mechanisms markets respond to effective demand and where endowments are unequal they differentiate" (*ibid*). The large-scale investments in the form of the MFPP and AsgiSA maize scheme are often portrayed as 'win-win' solutions which on the one hand allow agribusinesses to gain returns from their investments while at the same time maximising the welfare of the poor beneficiaries. However, often the social reproduction needs of ordinary participants who are locked into these arrangements are usually superseded by the imperative of expanded reproduction of capital. As we have noted in the case of AsgiSA maize scheme in Moeketsi area some households were still involved in cropping in their individual large fields, albeit in a constrained environment characterising by declining yields. Yet when the scheme became operational, the proceeds going to the community

were very miniscule, often well below the few bags of maize that these erstwhile agriculturalists were getting at the time they dropped out of cultivation. In the case of the AsgiSA maize scheme in this locality, the proceeds from the scheme which were meant for redistribution were just not enough to be spread amongst all members of the scheme. Eventually they were kept for investment in other 'community' related issues which may include agricultural production. Instead of portraying these schemes as 'win-win' solutions, appropriate interventions which restructure power relations are imperative. These may be at the local level where contractual agreements are signed between the villagers and state capitalist enterprises and other powerful role players, to broader interventions in the value chains to prop up smallholders.

9.5.2 It is important to appreciate the heterogeneity of rural populations

Policy interventions are more effective if they disaggregate the intended beneficiaries and respond to the differentiated nature of the rural population. One of the perennial problems in policy interventions broadly and in the South African context in particular has been the failure to disaggregate and quantify the so called 'target beneficiaries'. In South Africa, there has been a tendency to see the rural households as homogenous and ignoring the heterogeneity and diversity in the 'communal areas'. In spite of structural underdevelopment emanating from the historical processes of dispossession, processes of social differentiation are still evident in the countryside. This means that rural households are not equally disadvantaged or positioned. There are differences in terms of access to means of production for instance, land, labour draught power, capital mainly in the form of wage income etc. Development interventions have often adopted a blanket approach and treated rural households as a uniform and undifferentiated category. In the case of Moeketsi villages, there are significant differences in the material circumstances of the households. In this setting some households were involved in agriculture at levels that are only sufficient to meet household consumption needs. The less well-off households are also in need of grain to feed their small livestock like poultry and pigs. For this category social reproduction needs are the primary but not the sole reason for their involvement in agriculture.

Conversely, some erstwhile agriculturalists and tractor owners, tended to be more prosperous and possessed the potential to produce marketed surplus from their allotments. The tractor owners are

a reflection of increased commoditisation of agriculture in the locality as some accumulators begin to provide mechanisation services other than the cultivation of their own individual plots. The erstwhile agriculturalists and tractor owners possess the potential to grow into dynamic rural accumulators if agricultural development schemes like AsgiSA massive maize scheme provide the necessary support. Some wealthy rural households with access to tractors should have been part of the AsgiSA scheme as opposed to channelling resources to established contractors from big cities. The tendency in these agricultural development schemes has been to channel resources to 'classes of capital' (state bureaucrats, development consultants, contractors or mechanisation service providers) outside of the localities which are meant to grow and develop from such interventions.

9.5.3 It is important to build on existing capacities and skills

Policy interventions also tend to ignore what already exists. Development interventions frequently introduce new productive activities and fail to capitalise on local potential and capacities. In agricultural development interventions this is often linked to the prevailing policy bias in favour of large-scale, high-input forms of production instead of what is often seen as 'subsistence' forms of agriculture. In the case of Moeketsi and other parts of the Eastern Cape, rural households continue to engage in the cultivation of homestead gardens which involves the growing of a diverse range of vegetable crops other than maize. Livestock production has remained resilient across the years in spite of significant challenges like shortage of grazing land and livestock theft. The tendency has been to introduce large-scale maize production schemes in the quest to utilise what are often characterised as fallow and unproductive arable fields. It is suggested here that more substantial results are more likely to be seen if homestead gardens and livestock production are a target of massive state interventions as has been the case with cropping in larger fields. These are the activities which rural households have continued to practice as they adapt to economic and ecological challenges. The food security component of food production interventions called *Siyazondla* (we nourish ourselves) has often been less visible and overshadowed by the massive schemes targeting cropping in consolidated arable fields. Livestock production has assumed the status of a 'mainstay' agricultural activity in many localities and is often dominated by powerful men in the community. In the case of this research,

the destruction of crops by animals, and the disinterest which some villagers demonstrated was often a symptom of the disaffection of local patriarchs who felt that their livestock-rearing activities were being crowded out by the extensive cultivation of fields.

9.5.4 Substantive participation and inclusivity are important in development interventions

'Local participation' is often clichéd, and at times community gatherings (*imbizos*), which are often used to garner support for the introduction of development programmes, overlook the power dynamics in these gatherings. In the case of the massive maize schemes and indeed other development initiatives in the Eastern Cape, traditional authorities are often the conduit for introducing such schemes in their localities. However, oral accounts with ordinary people often indicate that when initiatives are accepted by the local traditional authorities it becomes difficult for ordinary villagers to voice their concerns considering the often uneasy relationship between traditional authorities and their subjects. My experience of the traditional gatherings is that ordinary 'community' members do not often voice their opinions. Senior men in the villages, the sub-headmen and people who are in close proximity to chiefly power through kinship and other forms of relations tend to be more vocal at community gatherings. In the case of the massive maize schemes not all villagers agreed with the consolidation of their individual plots of land into one block of land for 'massive' cultivation. This is besides the very fact of having to abandon field cultivation to allow a private company to utilise their land. However, traditional gatherings *(imbizos*) often gloss over these dynamics and are often used to give a semblance of substantive participation and agreeability.

9.6 Conclusion

This study has examined the extent to which the diversification of rural livelihoods is interconnected with processes of social differentiation. It has been noted that rural livelihoods have become increasingly fragmented and precarious. In the contemporary capitalist world, even the often secure forms of employment have also become precarious as 'classes of labour' experience a 'social reproduction' squeeze. These processes are more pronounced in the global 'South'. The analysis of rural differentiation in contexts characterised by increased diversification and fragmentation of livelihoods is challenging. Polarised class differences are

not always possible to identify. This study has argued that it is possible to apply political economy concepts of class, power and politics to enhance the heuristic value of livelihoods methods. This is in the light of the often-cited shortcoming of livelihoods research, namely its failure to adequately account for social differentiation and processes of class formation in the countryside. In the context of Southern Africa, the diversification of livelihoods is inextricably wed to the historic process of capitalist expansion, particularly, proletarianisation. Households often pursue diversified livelihoods in an attempt to survive the vagaries of capitalism and where possible engage in limited accumulation, usually with access to wage earnings being a critical factor separating the winners from the losers. This study argues that livelihoods research offers possibilities to explore the nature and extent of rural differentiation if it is not divorced from the traditional Marxist concepts of class, proletarianisation and capital accumulation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Cited Interviews

Interview with Ramotsamai, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2010.

Interview with Mabindisa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2010.

Interview with Mabindisa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2010.

Interview with Chairman of Ongeluksnek Farmers' Association, Ongeluksnek, 2010.

Interview with Nomuzi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Nomuzi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with George, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Thabang, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Montoa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Khupane, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mamotseoa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Matello, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Qoza, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Nzeleni, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with S'dumo Trust Consultant, Matatiele, 2012

Interview with Miriam, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mahlatsi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Senior Extension Officer, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Makapa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mali, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Moeketsi sub-Chief, Moeketsi Reserve, 2012.

Interview with MaNkosi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Seelo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Nomnyamezeli, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Valatshiya, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Emelia, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Koko, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Zibi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Morena, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Maboomo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Kotsoana, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Noli, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with MaTolo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Pontso, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Petros, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with McLeod, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Faro, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mathatho, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Lerato, 2012, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Sima, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Makoditswe, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mdladlamba, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mathebane, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Sello, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Thabo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mutaung, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Nomsa, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Nomuzi, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Pontjo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Zwelakhe, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mpiti, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview Phumo, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Mokoena, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Thibeli, Moeketsi Reserve, Matatiele, 2012.

Interview with Father Bernard, Matatiele, 2014.

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaire

DE-AGRARIANISATION, LIVELIHOODS DIVERSIFICATION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN RURAL EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA.

Questionnaire number					Research Assistant			

Name of respondent	
Area	
Section	
Name and surname by which homestead is known	
Cell phone number of respondent	

Particulars of visit to the homestead

Particulars of visits	**Date**	**Time started**	**Time ended**
First visit			
Second visit			
Third visit			

Hello, my name is ……. I am. I am conducting a study of…. Your homestead has been selected for participation in this survey. We ask permission to interview the main farmer from this homestead. The selected farmer's participation is voluntary i.e. he or she has the right to refuse. The information obtained from all participating farmers will be compiled in a report and the findings will be presented to people in the surveyed areas. No names will be referred to in the report. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you have any questions before we start? **IF NO, CONTINUE WITH THE INTERVIEW**.

Codes Table 1: Homestead members					
	How is this person related to you? **[Col 4] [DO NOT READ OUT]**		What is the marital status of this person? **[Col 5] [DO NOT READ OUT]**		How often is this person present at this homestead? **[Col 6] [DO NOT READ OUT]**
1	Self	11	Never been married	1	Present most or all nights
2	Husband or wife or partner	12	Married	2	Present during working days but away most weekends
3	My child	13	Co-habiting	3	Present during weekends but away during working days
4	Adopted/foster child	14	Other form of marriage/ partnership (describe)-husband/wife/partner still alive	4	Present about once a month
5	Child-in-law	15	Divorced	5	Present for one or two periods in the year
6	Grandchild	16	Separated/Abandoned	6	Present during school holidays
7	Parent	17	Widowed	7	Other (describe)
8	Parent-in-law				
9	Grandparent				
10	Sibling				
11	Co-wife				
12	Co-wife's child				
13	Partner's sibling				
14	Own niece/nephew				
15	Partner's niece/nephew				
16	Other relative (eg uncle, cousin)				
17	Other relative of respondent's partner				
18	Domestic worker				
19	Tenant				
20	Other (describe)				

TABLE 1: HOMESTEAD (UMUZI) MEMBERS

Please tell me about all the people who are members of the homestead, even if they are not here at the moment. Do not include people who have established other homesteads and have not come home in the last few years. **[USE CODES TABLE 1: Homestead members]**

Household head: …….

	Col 1	**Col 2**		**Col 3**	**Col 4**	**Col 5**	**Col 6**	**Col 7**
		2.Sex						
	1.Full name	Male	Female	3.Year of birth and age of this person	4.How is this person related to you? **[USE CODES]**	5.What is the marital status of this person? **[USE CODES]**	6.How often is this person present at this homestead? **[USE CODES]**	Total % present most or all nights
1		1	2	/				
2		1	2	/				
3		1	2	/				
4		1	2	/				
5		1	2	/				
6		1	2	/				
7		1	2	/				
8		1	2	/				
9		1	2	/				
10		1	2	/				
11		1	2	/				
12		1	2	/				
13		1	2	/				
14		1	2	/				
15		1	2	/				
16		1	2	/				
17		1	2	/				
18		1	2	/				
19		1	2	/				
20		1	2	/				

Codes Table 2: Income sources of homestead members

N.B. Description of income source: add details on nature of income source such as type of job, economic sector, where it is located, etc

1	Employee in permanent job
2	Employee in temporary, contract job
3	Do casual employee work
4	Farming activities on homestead's land
5	Payment from government agricultural scheme (asgisa)
6	Self-employed in non-agricultural own/family income-earning activity without employees
7	Self-employed in non-agricultural own/family income-earning activity with employees
8	Work on income-generating project
9	Not employed and looking for work
10	Not employed and not looking for work
11	Old age grant from government
12	Pension from private employer
13	Disability grant
14	Child support grant
15	Remittances in cash
16	Remittances in kind (eg food, clothes etc)
17	Other-specify

TABLE 2: SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

[USE CODES TABLE 2: Income sources of homestead members]

	Col 1	Income source 1			Income source 2			Income source 3		
	Full name	**Code**	**Description**	**Cash per month**	**Code**	**Description**	**Cash per month**	**Code**	**Description**	**Cash per month**
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										

TABLE 2: SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS - continued

[USE CODES TABLE 2: Income sources of homestead members]

INCOME SOURCES					
code	**Type of income source**	**employer**	**place where income is secured**	**number of years income has been significant**	**Cash per month**

RANKING OF SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

Please rank the four most important income sources of the homestead, in order of importance, and explain why each is so important.

Rank order	Name of homestead member	Income source	Cash earned / month	Reason for importance
1				
2				
3				
4				

TABLE 3: DURABLE GOODS AND PRODUCTIVE ASSETS OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

DOMESTIC	Does the homestead have?			TOTAL
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Number owned	DOMESTIC
1 Electric stove	1	2		
2 Microwave	1	2		
3 Sewing or knitting machine	1	2		
4 Washing machine	1	2		
5 Lounge suite	1	2		
6 Gas stove	1	2		
7 Paraffin stove	1	2		
8 Fridge/freezer	1	2		
9 Solar panel	1	2		
10 Electric generator	1	2		
ELECTRONIC /COMMUNICATION				COMMUNICATION
11 Radio	1	2		
12 CD player	1	2		
13 Television /DVD player	1	2		
14 Computer	1	2		
TRANSPORT				TRANSPORT
15 Motor cycle	1	2		
16 Bicycle	1	2		
17 Motor vehicle in running order	1	2		
AGRICULTURE				AGRICULTURE
18 Tractor	1	2		
19 Water tank	1	2		
20 Water pump	1	2		
21 Plough	1	2		
22 Wheelbarrow	1	2		
20 Knapsack sprayer	1	2		
20 Donkey cart/ox cart	1	2		
21 Garden spade	1	2		
22 Garden fork	1	2		
23 Hoe	1	2		
24 Other (specify)	1	2		

LAND USED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

What types of land does this homestead have? **(Include land that is not adjacent to the homestead)**

	Col 1	Col 2		Col 3			Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7
	1.Type of land	2. Does the homestead have this type of land?		3. Has the land been used by the homestead in the last 12 months?			4. In what year was this land first acquired by the homestead?	5. How was the land first acquired?	6. No. of plots owned?	7. No. of plots borrowed
		Yes	No	Yes	No					
1	**Residential**									
2	**Garden plot/s within homestead**	1	2	1	2					
3	**Fields**	1	2	1	2					
4	**Irrigation scheme plot**	1	2	1	2					
5	**Project garden plot**	1	2	1	2					
6	**Additional land reform land**	1	2	1	2					
7	**Other (specify)**	1	2	1	2					

If land is owned but not used, please explain why:

……

CROPS GROWN BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

What types of crops were grown on the land used by this homestead last year? (Include land that is not adjacent to the homestead)

	Type of land	Crop type1	Amount harvested	Crop type2	Amount harvested	Crop type3	Amount harvested	Crop type4	Amount harvested
1	**Residential**								
2	**Garden plot/s within homestead**								
3	**Fields**								
4	**Irrigation scheme plots**								
5	**Project garden plots**								
6	**Additional land reform land**								
7	**Other (specify)**								

CROPS GROWN BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR - continued

	Type of land	Crop type5	Amount harvested	Crop type6	Amount harvested	Crop type7	Amount harvested	Crop type8	Amount harvested
1	**Residential**								
2	**Garden plot/s within homestead**								
3	**Fields**								
4	**Irrigation scheme plots**								
5	**Project garden plots**								
6	**Additional land reform land**								
7	**Other (specify)**								

CROPS SOLD BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

	Crop type	Amount sold	Measure	Cash received	Purchaser
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

LIVESTOCK OWNED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD

What livestock are owned by members of this homestead? **(Include animals kept elsewhere and looked after by others)**

	Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7
	Type of livestock	**Number owned now**	**Purchases in last year**	**Sales in last year**	**Births in last year**	**Deaths in last year**	**Slaughter in last year**
1	**Cattle**						
2	**Horses**						
3	**Goats**						
4	**Sheep**						
5	**Donkeys**						
6	**Pigs**						
7	**Chickens**						
8	**Other (specify)**						

LIVESTOCK SOLD BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

	Livestock type	Number sold	Cash received	Purchaser
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				