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**PRIVATE GAME FARMS AND THE TENURE SECURITY  
OF  
FARM WORKERS AND DWELLERS IN CRADOCK –  
IMPLICATIONS FOR TENURE REFORM IN  
SOUTH AFRICA**

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the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
Department of Sociology  
in the  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town

November 2012

## **PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

I declare this to be my own original work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this thesis taken from the work, or works of other people has been attributed. I acknowledge that copying someone else's work, or part of it, is wrong.

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**NALEDI NOMALANGA MKHIZE**

**November 2012**

## ABSTRACT

This study situates itself within the broader field of agrarian and land reform scholarship. It investigates the consequences that farm conversions to game farming have had for the tenure security of farm workers and -dwellers in Cradock, Eastern Cape. At the heart of the thesis is the extreme land question of the semi-arid areas.

At the empirical level, the thesis situates the Cradock farm conversion trend within the land conquest and labour histories of the semi-arid areas. It argues that land and labour histories of different regions will inform the manner in which farm workers and -dwellers are affected by, and respond to, farm conversions. The thesis contends that in context of an extreme land question in the semi-arid areas that renders farm workers and -dwellers structurally tenure insecure, game farms cannot be 'blamed' for associated displacements. Indeed, it suggests that the link between game farms and tenure insecurity should be seen as correlative rather than causal.

The research was conducted in Cradock between April 2009 and February 2010. Core data were gathered through interviews with farm workers and -dwellers whose families were affected by farm conversions or had worked on game farms in the area. The thesis demonstrates that farm workers and -dwellers in the semi-arid areas are prone to migrating on and off -farms and, indeed, that there has been a steady rural efflux from these areas since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These movements by farm workers and -dwellers, where they are by choice, are a strategy to mitigate against ever-present possibilities of losing one's home if relations with farmers go wrong. Farm workers and -dwellers in semi-arid districts in South Africa are faced with multiple dilemmas and structural constraints with regard to how to earn the best possible living and secure supplementary livelihoods, whilst accessing a permanent home for themselves. As such, farm workers and -dwellers do not attach their social identities and practices to specific farms. It is, however, argued that farm workers and -dwellers in the semi-arid areas do express an attachment to a 'farm way of life', and in this way lay claim to the rural universe.

At a broader conceptual level, this thesis situates itself within debates on the nature of contemporary land and agrarian questions. Questions raised by Bernstein (2003, 2007),

Moyo (2005, 2008) and Hendricks (1995) on the place of the dispossessed within the rural economy are best viewed not in opposition, but in relation to each other. In this regard, the tenure security issue is about housing need, land access and proximity to urban centres. Ultimately, literature on the land question has failed to grapple with the complexity of these multiple dilemmas faced by farm workers and -dwellers and failed to come to grips with the economic constraints of an agricultural sector that is more and more bound up in global chains of exchange. This thesis concludes that the language of ‘proletarianisation’ or ‘peasantisation’ has little conceptual utility when it comes to grappling with the urbanising, yet increasingly jobless, rural farming areas. Land reform, and specifically tenure security reform, needs to work, in the main, with two broad categories – ‘land users’ and ‘land seekers’ – and differentiate the extent, frequency, and purpose of the land use within these regardless of where these people are situated in relation to farms and towns.

#### **KEYWORDS**

tenure security Cradock; agrarian question; land tenure security semi-arid areas; land tenure reform South Africa; land tenure reform semi-arid areas; tenure security game farms, tenure security Eastern Cape.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

ABSA	Amalgamated Banks of South Africa
AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
CAE	Certificate of Adequate Enclosure
CFA	Central Farmers' Association
ECARP	Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project
ECGMA	East Cape Game Management Association
ESTA	The Extension of Security Tenure Act, Act No. 62 of 1997 (RSA, 1997)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LCC	Land Claims Court
LTA	The Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, Act No. 3 of 1996 (RSA, 1996)
NGO(s)	Non Governmental Organisation(s)
NWO-WOTRO	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research – Science for Global Development
PGF(s)	Private (Commercial) Game Farm(s)
PGR(s)	Private Game Reserve(s)
UDF	United Democratic Front
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANPAD	South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development
SANParks	South African National Parks
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

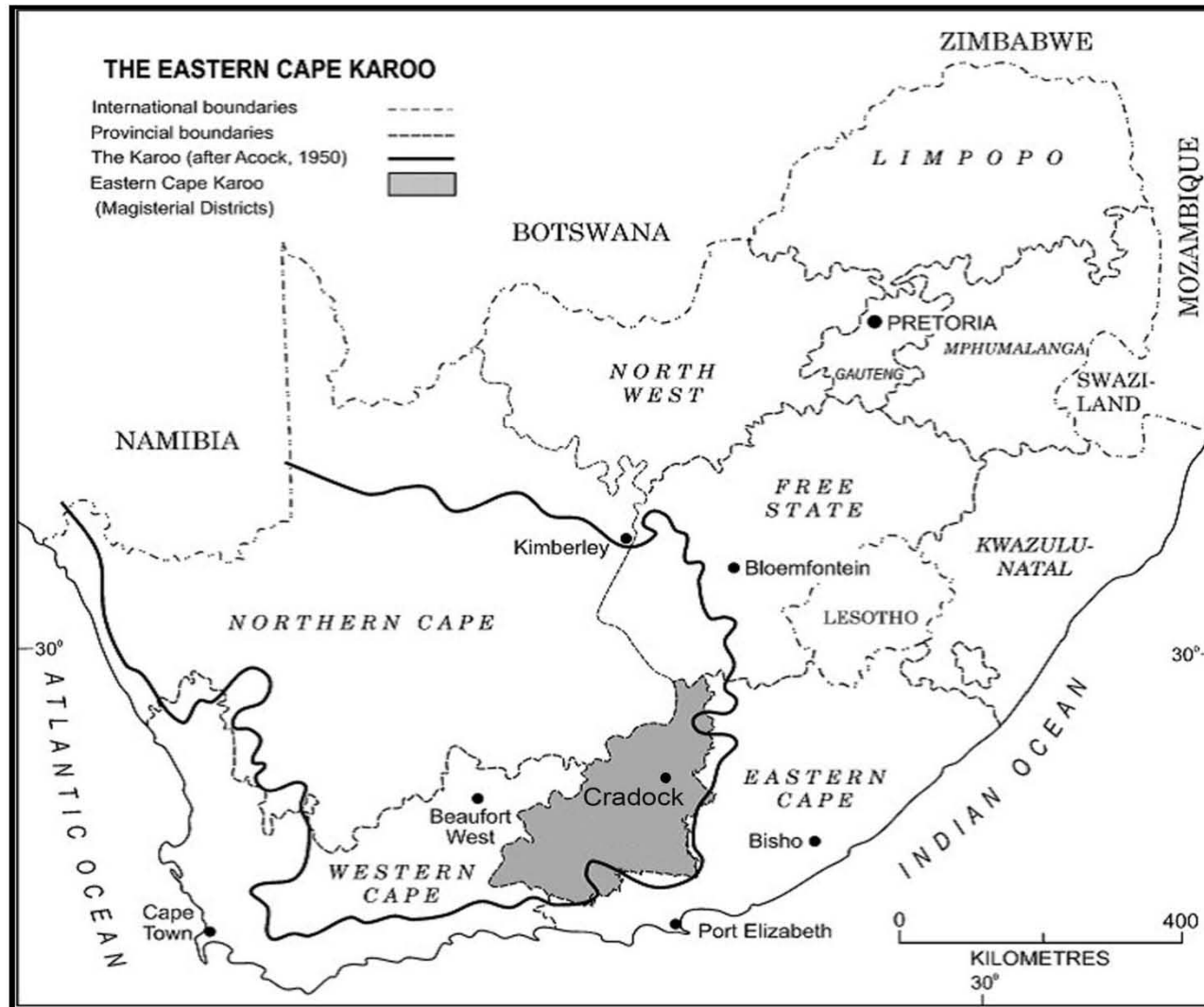
## **Introduction and Methodology**

### **BACKGROUND TO STUDY**

This thesis addresses the issue of farm conversions to wildlife production in light of concerns about farm workers and -dwellers' tenure insecurity and broader questions of land and agrarian reform in post-apartheid South Africa. Prior to and after the advent of democracy, the single greatest problem that has faced many farm workers and -dwellers in South Africa has been the ever-present threat of eviction from homes on the farms in the absence of alternative accommodation (Shabodien, 2008). For the majority of South African farm workers and -dwellers, tenure security has been tied to employment on farms; the only housing they could access has been on the farms making their establishment of family homes dependent on farmers (Du Toit & Ewert, 2002; Atkinson, 2007). For many farm workers, losing employment meant potentially losing one's home and livelihood on the land (Du Toit, 1993:2). At the height of apartheid, farm workers and -dwellers could find themselves "dumped on the side of roads with a few meagre possessions" and nowhere to go (NLC, n.d.:2). In 1985, the Surplus People's Project calculated that 1.1 million people had been removed from their homes in the then "white rural areas" over a twenty-year period as part of the apartheid State's Bantustan policy (Platzky & Walker, 1985:30). In 1992 there were still approximately 4.2 million farm workers and -dwellers residing on white-owned farms (Hendricks, 1995:49). Nkuzi documents that 1.7 million have been evicted from farms between 1984 and 2004 (Wegerif et al, 2005).

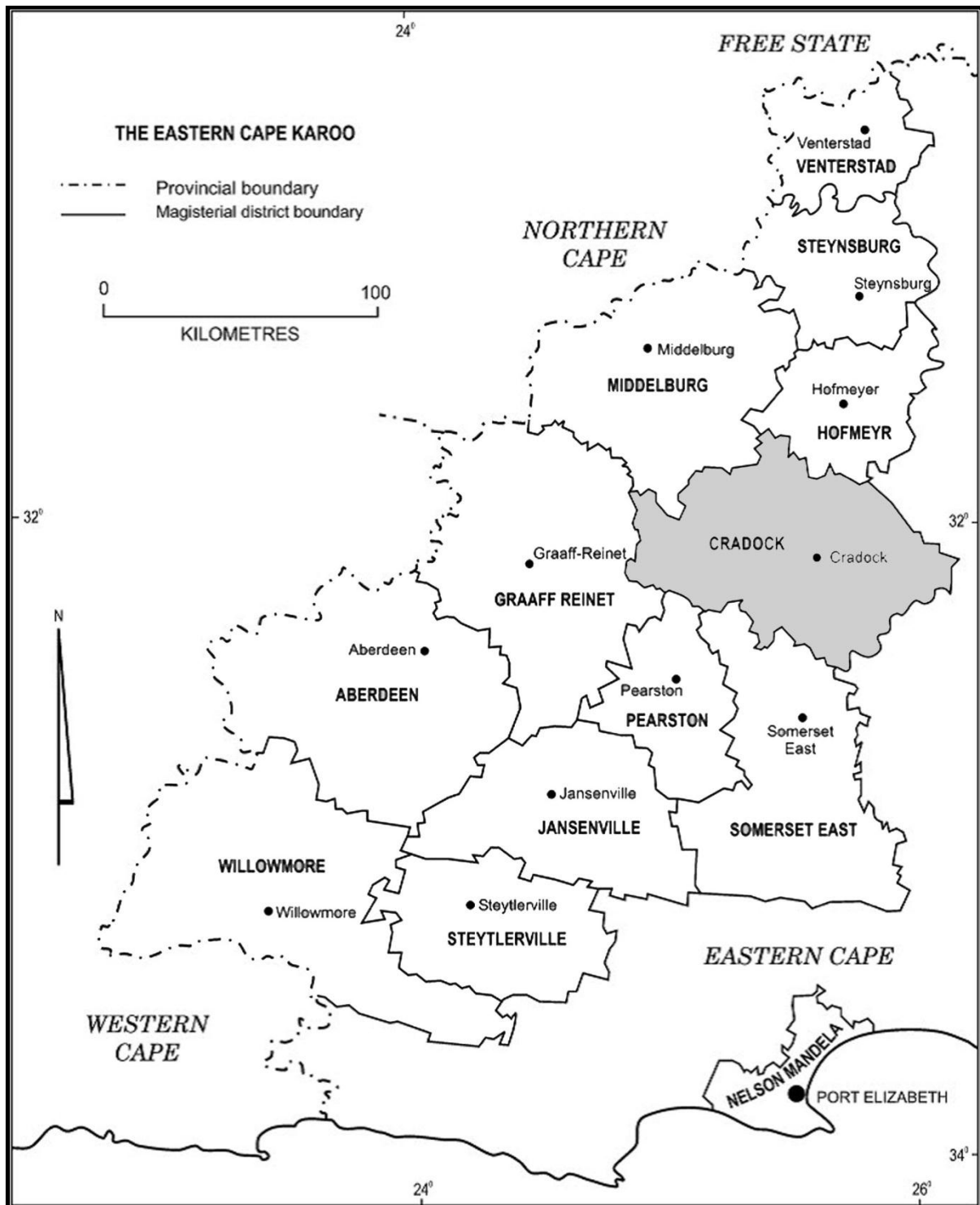
The thesis tackles the subject of farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure insecurity and its relationship with farm conversions in the agricultural district of Cradock which is located in the Eastern Cape portion of the semi-arid region commonly referred to as 'the Karoo' (Figures 1 and 2).

At the heart of it, the thesis is concerned with the extreme nature of the land question in the semi-arid areas and the implications it has farm workers' and -dwellers' positioning as an agrarian class within the wider political economy.



Source: Adapted from Nel and Hill (2008:3).

**Figure 1: Map showing Cradock within the South African semi-arid region**



Source: Adapted from Nel and Hill (2008:4).

**Figure 2: Map of the Eastern Cape semi-arid area agricultural districts formerly referred to as the ‘Eastern Cape midlands’ in colonial nomenclature.**

With the land question of the Eastern Cape semi-arid areas in mind, the thesis suggests that consequences of farm conversions for farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure security must be understood within the context of regional land and labour histories. Its main contention and divergence with existing positions that 'blame' farm conversions for an increase in evictions and efflux of workers/dwellers from farms, is that there is a correlative rather than causative relationship between farm conversions and farm worker -dweller displacements in the semi-arid areas. The thesis bases this contention on the extremeness of the land question in the semi-arid areas that renders farm workers and -dwellers structurally vulnerable to having their residential arrangements on farms terminated at any given moment.

At a broader conceptual level, the thesis suggests that the question of why tenure insecurity persists depends on whether one views farm workers and -dwellers as being primarily faced with either a problem of structural landlessness within the political economy or a narrower developmental problem of access to housing and adequate jobs. In the former, the problem of landlessness brings about fundamental questions on the nature of property relations and land ownership and distribution in South Africa. The latter re-orientates tenure reform projects towards progressive urbanisation within a development trajectory that preserves current property relations. The apparent distinction between these formulations of the tenure security and reform issue reflects a broader ideological tension within debates on South Africa's current and future development trajectory, and indeed whether and how the land issue informs this development agenda. This thesis takes the approach that the resolution of the land question should be the central "leitmotif" informing the South African development agenda. It argues that processes of land-use change, as characterised by the private wildlife sector's expansion, must be understood within the context of South Africa's agricultural economy and related land questions. Debates on game farms and tenure security reflect competing conceptions of what constitutes "developmentally relevant" forms of land use for the purposes of remedying the problems faced by agrarian labour under late capitalism. This thesis asserts that developmental relevance can be found not so much in the isolated notion of a specific land use, but rather in the overall political project of an agrarian framework that can coherently manage competing and conflicting interests in land.

This study has its origins in a broader research project investigating various aspects of the private wildlife sector titled "Farm Dwellers, the Forgotten People? Consequences of Conversions to Private Wildlife Production in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape", which is concerned with the fates and fortunes of the historically tenure insecure and near landless

farm-working and -dwelling class on South African farms. The project's specific research focus on the private wildlife sector emerged due to the proliferation of game farms as an increasingly preferred form of land use since the mid-1990s and early 2000s in South Africa, particularly in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The project is an international collaboration between the University of the Free State, Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and the University of Cape Town. It is funded largely by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO-WOTRO) with the South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) contributing a lesser stake. At the University of Cape Town, the project and this thesis in particular are supervised under the National Research Foundation Research Chairs Initiative in Land Reform and Democracy.

Broadly speaking, the stated aim of the collaborative research proposal (to NWO-WOTRO) guiding this project was to address "the role of the private sector in conservation and development" (game tourism). The project's framework for asking research questions was shaped in great part by a sceptical reading of research (funded by a group representing private game reserves) conducted by Langholz and Kerley (2006), which was contrasted with reports of negative consequences for farm workers by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP) and the Association For Rural Advancement (AFRA). According to these organisations, there was an alarming number of farm-dweller evictions caused by the sharp increase in agricultural farm conversions to game farms (Xaba, 2004; AFRA, 2004; Naidoo, 2005). The Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP) reported in the mid-2000s that, as a result of these conversions in the Grahamstown–Port Elizabeth area, three top game farms evicted 116 households, affecting 529 farm dwellers, and these were only the cases reported to ECARP when evictees sought help (Naidoo, 2005:5). These evictions were often illegal and carried out aggressively. The historic ties that people had to the land and the legal protections they were entitled to against eviction were seemingly of no consequence to the new land owners. Affidavits recording numerous cases of constructive eviction and land owners negotiating in bad faith were compiled (Naidoo, 2005). The Nkuzi evictions survey singled out the expanding wildlife sector (Wegerif et al, 2005:31):

One change in land use, arising from the changing economic conditions, that has often come up as a cause of job losses and evictions is the conversion of farms from agricultural production to game farming and tourism ventures. South Africa has approximately 6.6 million hectares, or 5.6% of the land, falling within public protected areas and parks. A further 7% of the country is estimated to be used for

private game reserves and between 18% and 24% is used for game ranching (Krug, 2001:8, 22; Katerere, 2002:29). Game and tourism operations generally require less labour than other forms of production and it is often work that farm workers with low levels of education are poorly equipped to perform.

## **THE PRIVATE GAME-FARMING CONTEXT**

By 2006 there were approximately 9 000 private commercial game farms (PGFs) and reserves (PGRs) in South Africa, covering 14% of land use in the country (Palmer, Peel & Kerley, 2006:363).<sup>1</sup> Of these, 5 000 are engaged full time in wildlife utilisation and 4 000 combine it as a secondary activity to their main agricultural enterprise. These PGFs and PGRs are created by converting agricultural farms spatially to make them suitable for stocking wildlife, and re-orienting the land use and business model to meet market demand for wildlife-based products and activities. In his observations of the sector's rise in recent years, Ainslie (2007:2) commented that:

Areas that had produced food and fibre for over 150 years were being withdrawn from production, consolidated into larger holdings and converted into game-farming operations. These were directed at the hunting of game and, increasingly, at the leisure tourism sector.

Formidable two-metre high game fences run along stretches of road where previously there were waist-high sheep fences, drawing attention to these wildlife enterprises and their distinctiveness in the South African landscape.

The seemingly unabated increase in game farms in the latter part of the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly those of foreign ownership, raised alarm amongst State officials. In 2005, the then Eastern Cape MEC for Agriculture, Gugile Nkwinti, defined the issue as one where white land owners were opting for game farming as a means of preserving white hegemony in the countryside, stating that “these commercial game farmers assume the African people will always be labourers under them, that no African will own land” (Groenewald, 2005). Delegates at a National Land Summit in 2005, including the then Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Thoko Didiza, endorsed a proposal to call a moratorium on game farms and leisure developments such as golf estates, which summit participants characterised as “elitist” (Govender, 2005). These views displaying

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<sup>1</sup> Although the term “game farm” is used broadly to indicate any operation involving the commercial utilisation of wildlife on private property, “private game reserves” tend to deal more with eco-tourism and game viewing, whereas “game farms” can be seen as those which deal mainly with hunting and breeding. Both kinds of operations are routinely involved in the live capture of game for selling. The term “ranch” is also used to refer to a game farm without a predominant eco-tourism focus.

dissatisfaction at the highest levels of State showed that, at the core, the questions concerning land-use change are political. Wolmer (2007:1) asserts that these debates about wildlife-based production are inherently political – that is, who has “power over land and the power to define what constitutes an appropriate land use”. However, these sentiments also construct the State as wholly powerless in the land and agrarian sector and, in this way, mask a more complex interplay of power between the State’s own policy interventions and the actions of private land owners. The thesis thus problematises State discourse around the game farming rather than taking it at face value.

The industry, however, defends itself quite robustly. Game farm and -reserve owners state that, contrary to negative perceptions held by their detractors, their enterprises had beneficial effects by increasing both employment rates and wages for the average farm worker (Groenewald, 2005). Furthermore, game farmers view themselves as contributing to the conservation of the indigenous fauna and flora, especially because “they attached a monetary value to this and were prepared to pay for it” (Eloff quoted in Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2002:v). Thus, game farmers see theirs as market-led conservation, which provides profitable incentives for the “restoration” of the region’s biodiversity (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2002).

Undeniably, the sector is characterised by highly entrepreneurial and risk-taking individuals, deeply involved in all aspects of their enterprises which require expensive international marketing and publicity to attract and retain clientele. In order to support their fledgling industry, game farmers in the Eastern Cape established the East Cape Game Management Association (ECGMA) in about 1980 when the industry was still in its infancy (Rudman, 2009:14).<sup>2</sup> It was in many respects uncharted territory for the average farmer who decided to venture into the sector in its early years. Rudman (2009:14) states

trial and error with regard to game animal introductions, management, marketing etc, was the modus operandi and game farmers felt they could only learn from fellow farmers’ failures and successes.

As will be discussed further on in the thesis, “contestations” emerging due to farm conversion have been at the centre of the debate. After the researcher had spent several months in the field in Cradock, it became evident that conflicts and contestations around the

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<sup>2</sup> There are several game, game farm and hunting associations representing and promoting the interests of the wildlife sector broadly in South Africa and internationally. Key participants are Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA) which lobbies the State on behalf of the sector; the Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa (PHASA) which regulates and represents professional hunters; and the National Confederation of Hunting Associations of South Africa (CHASA) which regulates amateur hunters.

consequences of farm conversion and land-use change are shaped to a large degree by prevailing local contexts and historic social relations determined by the relative power of land owners over the farm-labouring class. These observations challenged the assumptions informing the original proposal for this specific study and transformed the research methodology in the field, resulting in the modification of the key question. This is discussed in detail in the Research Objectives and Methodology section. Data collected in the field re-defined the approach to the tenure questions because the actual situation differed markedly from the picture painted in the literature and assumptions underpinning the broader research project. Meth (2001:230) confesses that researchers can be “surprised” to find unexpected results when existing powerful narratives have become established as the dominant discourses within the field of study which guide the researcher’s expectations.

The group project’s NWO-WOTRO proposal’s focus on tenure and livelihood questions relating to farm workers (Spierenburg, Ntsebeza, Brooks & Wels, 2007) was to a great measure influenced by the work of these major NGOs and their advocacy on behalf of these communities. The key question put forward in the initial proposal for this specific thesis was: *“In what ways have the conversions of traditional agricultural farms to private game farms and private game reserves affected the tenure security of farm workers in Cradock?”* Implicit in the question was the assumption that tenure security had been affected and fieldwork would find data that would detail consequent contestations. These contestations are commonly invoked in what Walker (2003:116) has called a “master narrative” in South African national discourse on land dispossession, a narrative which also gives rise to the overwhelming bias towards researching acts of “resistance” where land is concerned (Meth, 2001). Subsequently, the question was reframed (see Research Objectives and Methodology section). As Hurley (2007:166) argues, there are limitations to literature review generated questions

in contexts where research questions are primarily devised in relation to what has been done in other narrowly focused, disciplinary-based research (literature searches), a closed feedback loop emerges.

There are two main studies which are frequently cited, and thus dominate the debate. The first of these is Luck’s (2004) study on game farms located in the region between Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, which on the whole found negative tenure and livelihood consequences for farm workers and -dwellers. The second is Langholz and Kerley’s (2006) research, which looked at the same area and reported favourably on the overall impact of private game reserves.

Luck's (2004) work found that farm workers in the Makana Municipality's Bushman's River area saw the rise of game farms "in a negative light" (Luck, 2004:41). The game farms presented employment insecurity for farm dwellers and -labourers who lived with the constant fear of eviction from areas where farms had been sold for game-ranching purposes (Luck, 2004:90). Due to retrenchments and evictions which formed part of the farm conversion process, farm workers and -dwellers were left homeless. The loss of tenure security also affected cultural practices by limiting dwellers' access to sacred sites such as graves (Luck, 2004:103-104). The study documented deep discontent with game farms and showed how lengthy processes of dispute resolution (not always successful) were necessary to deal with the conflicts erupting over the rights of the owners to clear land of inhabitants, and of the occupants to reside on land they have known for generations. Furthermore, game farms re-organised spatial arrangements on farms in an unprecedented manner, thereby disrupting social and cultural bonds established by farm-dwelling communities on the land. The study does provide a brief discussion to account for the structural problems facing conventional agriculture and why it has become unviable. However, its singular focus on farm workers' resistance to eviction accounts for only one perspective on how game farms are viewed by farm workers and -dwellers. Farm workers who *do not* resist or do not have negative views on game farms remain unrepresented in research.

Sector lobbyists and land rights groups have produced research which has played a key part in shaping the debate. This research is clearly split down ideological lines, with the former being informed either by an urbanisation development approach while the latter draws on land and agrarian frameworks. The Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP), a farm workers and -dwellers' rights NGO operating in the same area, conducted its own research which saw the challenges facing farm workers being evicted on game farms as a consequence of historically-skewed racialised landholding patterns in South Africa (Naidoo, 2005). Naidoo (2005:2) contended that:

the power imbalance, arising out of historical forces, continues to influence the weak position that farm workers and dwellers find themselves in when farms make the conversion to game farms.

ECARP (Naidoo, 2005) also emphasised job losses, in particular reporting that employment on game farms required higher-level hospitality industry skills which ordinary farm workers did not possess; this disadvantaged traditional farm workers in terms of lodge employment (Naidoo, 2005). Overall, the NGOs' work gathering affidavits and advocating with and on behalf of affected families in talks, concluded that:

The owners and management are not respectful of the fact that people have lived on the farms which have converted to game farms for most of their lives... Game farms are synonymous with the constant threat of evictions and precarious tenure status for farm workers and dwellers (Naidoo, 2005:5).

In similar eviction cases in KwaZulu-Natal, acrimonious conflicts have emerged between private game reserves and farm-dwelling families according to land rights NGO, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA). Farm conversions were found to have caused dispossession and displacement of land tenant communities with longstanding residence on farms (Xaba, 2004; Manyathi, 2008). Land-based livelihoods (cattle herding and crop cultivation in the main) were lost and farm dwellers found their movements between farms curtailed as well as themselves being subjected to ever-increasing surveillance and intimidation on newly established reserves (AFRA 2004). These disruptions of farm workers' and -dwellers' way of life are articulated as a zero-sum conflict where game farms are the winners, farm workers and -dwellers are the losers. This literature amplifies the continued salience of land access as being critical in shaping rural land struggles.

However, the wildlife sector contests negative reports, instead drawing attention to the revenue and jobs created by the tourists and hunters visiting game farms (Van der Merwe and Saayman, 2002; Damm, 2005).<sup>3</sup> A survey conducted on members of an association representing ecotourism establishments in the Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth area showed that, in comparison to traditional farms, private game reserves employed more labour, provided better wages and engaged in some form of corporate social investment for surrounding communities (Langholz & Kerley, 2006). Because they operate like hotels, these establishments require large staff cohorts and, as such, the study found employment went up by a factor of 4.5 compared to what it had been on a conventional farm (Langholz & Kerley, 2006:1). It explicitly stated that it "found no significant evidence of farm workers being laid off in the establishment of [private game reserves]" (Langholz & Kerley, 2006:10). Similarly, spectacular increases in the per annum wage bill were cited, with PGRs paying R3.87 million compared to the stock-farm average of R121 145 (Langholz & Kerley, 2006:10). Eight of the ten reserves surveyed reported that they provided housing and even upgraded it by introducing amenities such water and electricity (Langholz & Kerley, 2006:11). However, the study has flaws. Methodologically, it relied on self-administered surveys and PGR owners self-reported the data without validation. Workers were not

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<sup>3</sup> According to pro-hunting research conducted by Damm (2005:4), in 2003/04 7 000 foreign hunters visited South Africa and hunted over 55 000 animals in visits averaging 11 days each. According to the study, the total revenue from these visits was \$64.3 million, with the Eastern Cape bringing in 40% of this income.

interviewed. Where salaries are concerned, it does not differentiate between various staff levels to indicate how the wage bill is distributed at various levels between service staff and management. PGR reports that they were “engaged in a wide variety of social development projects” were taken at face value without attempting any assessment on the nature of these projects or perspectives from the beneficiaries (Langholz & Kerley, 2006:1, 24-25).

However, there have been sector-friendly studies which have contradicted aspects of Langholz and Kerley (2006). Smith and Wilson’s (2002:11) research survey conducted in the semi-arid region including the Cradock area stated:

Recently changed labour legislation stipulates increased wages for workers on farms. This has made landowners regard game farming as an alternative to stock farming, as it is considered to be potentially less labour intensive than traditional stock farming.

A more recent academic study by Nyama (2008) painted a more complex picture. Nyama’s (2008) findings on one Grahamstown private game reserve confirmed aspects of Langholz and Kerley’s (2006) findings (the PGR is part of the same set that participated in the previously discussed survey in any case).<sup>4</sup> For example, the staff cohort post-conversion increased from 12 to 141 between 2002 and 2008, with all staff from the previous farm enterprise having been retained (Nyama, 2008:43). Children were permitted to live on the farms, but these were mostly not of school-going age because the reserve did not provide transport for the nearest school 10 km away (Nyama, 2008:48). Housing was considered better quality than on previous farms because it was made of brick and there was provision of free electricity and water (Nyama, 2008:58). Professionalised relations meant that women could access on-farm housing in their own right; women on this private game reserve were satisfied with the overall quality of work (Nyama, 2008).

However, it also called into question the notion that the game-farm amenities were necessarily superior in all aspects. There were complaints that two families had to share one house (Nyama, 2008:58). Most had obtained permanent houses off-farm where their school-going children lived (Nyama, 2008:58). The workers who lived on the farm reported that they had lost grazing rights and were not certain about compensation and recourse around this matter (Nyama, 2008:60). With regard to old-age tenure security, the game-farm owner

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<sup>4</sup> The study is, however, historical and steeped in discourses that construct game farms as “corporate citizens”. This corporatist discourse is demonstrated by a finding that “Mtshelazi contributes to economic empowerment by employing both the husband and the wife in a family” (Nyama, 2008:43). There is no recognition that family employment on farms follows conventional historical patterns. Thus, because women outnumber men (74 to 67, respectively), the study draws the facile conclusion that this demonstrates the owners’ commitment to empowering black women.

stated that he would never evict pensioned employees (Nyama, 2008:58). However, it still concluded that these benefits on the farm were entirely dependent on the goodwill of the owner (Nyama, 2008:89, 91). The study showed that women were exclusively employed in traditional roles in the domestic sphere as cooks, waitresses, cleaners and chefs at an average monthly wage of R1 000 (Nyama, 2008).

As will be put forward within the thesis, studies on the tenure security question have thus far framed the debate in ways which are historically and conceptually limited. Literature can constrain the framing of an issue in such a way as to preclude alternative questions. Briefly speaking, the literature has tended to construct the wildlife sector as though it were unique or unprecedented in its impact within the agricultural sector. This thesis dispenses with the notion of the sector's "novelty" and puts forward a more contextualised approach to the sector's impact on agricultural labour. Fieldwork conducted for this research has provided historical insight into a number of processes that have been unfolding in the lives of farm labourers in the context of an agricultural sector that has undergone difficult structural transformation.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study points to the uneven and varied expansion of the game sector within the Eastern Cape, and South Africa more broadly. It provides a fuller historical context within which to situate game farming as a form of land-use change in Cradock and the semi-arid areas. The study argues that the prevailing class and land-owning structures in the Cradock area create greater continuities between past and present farm labour regimes to the extent that it matters not what the specific land use on the farm is, but that farm workers and -dwellers continue to be marginal and tenure insecure because the land inequality and associated socio-economic problems remain entrenched. This thesis provides a distinctive in-depth study on the issue of game farming and its relation to broader questions of land and agrarian reform in South Africa.

This study locates Cradock specifically within the broader ecological and spatial setting of the semi-arid zone and the former Eastern Cape midlands which includes

most of the upper and middle sections in the drainage basins of the Sundays and Great Fish rivers, the southern boundary being taken as the Klein Winterberg and Suurberg ranges (Myburgh, 1978:25).

It locates Cradock within this regional setting primarily because these midlands towns emerged within a settler agrarian economy whose development was premised on the opportunities and constraints presented by the ecology of the semi-arid areas. Although its pastoral economy was the crucible of agrarian capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cape colonial economy, with industrialisation and the rise of large cities in South Africa, the Karoo

came to be perceived as being a dry wasteland of little value, in which farming practices were often the direct or indirect cause of environmental degradation (Nel & Hill, 2008:1).

In these areas, farm workers and -dwellers face precarious economic prospects.

Nel and Hill (2008:1) state that, in spite of the economic stagnation and declining agricultural output, the “Karoo’s population and the economies of its largest service centres are growing”. Towns such as Cradock are growing (on average by 240% since 1970) but their economies have stagnated (Nel & Hill, 2008). Bank and Minkley (2005:19) state that since 1990 retrenchments on commercial farms have “swelled informal settlements” and “place additional pressure on struggling economies”. Political and economic shifts since the late 1970s have resulted in a reduction in the farm labour numbers (Atkinson, 2007). In the 1990s, political anxiety throughout the country is reported to have motivated many farmers to pre-emptively evict farm workers in fear of potential land claims (Atkinson, 2007). According to statistics released by the National Department of Agriculture, during the period from 1971 to 1990, agricultural employment decreased from 1.638 million to 1.184 million, and further to 628 000 at the present (NDA 2008:4). This amounts to a 27% decline in the first period, and 46.9% in the second. Internationally, the agricultural sector has moved towards greater labour flexibility since the 1980s, with an increasing proportion of the labour force becoming casualised (Ewert & Hamman, 1999; Sparrow et al, 2008). Domestically, the casualised cohort of farm labour rose from 36% in 1991 to 49% by 2002 (Sparrow et al, 2008:53). In the Eastern Cape, farm-worker numbers dropped from 88 383 in 1993 to 64 656 (50% are casual/seasonal) in 2002 (SSA, 2002:2). In addition to the political anxieties that saw pre-emptive evictions, economic shifts in the agricultural sector have resulted in a trend towards greater consolidation of land in fewer hands (Hall, 2009:123). In South Africa the number of farming units declined from 57 980 in 1993 to 45 818 in 2002, a 21% decrease in units in a decade, then further down to 39 982 by 2007 (Wegerif et al, 2005:31; SSA, 2007:19). With fewer farms, fewer workers were required (Greenberg, 2003:42; Wegerif et al, 2005).

These demographic shifts in the agricultural sector have, as Bank and Minkley (2005:19) note, “significant implications for the nature of land reform and for the tensions between land reform, citizenship and commercial development”. Long-term economic decline poses serious challenges for towns like Cradock, whose viability and status as rural service centres “originally had developed to meet the needs of agriculture-based communities” (Nel & Hill, 2008:2). Atkinson (2009:2) describes the state of the economy in the Karoo region as “lacking in manufacturing” and “dependent on extensive farming, which has shed a great deal of labour during the last twenty years”.

Due to a lack of skills, education and a history of economic marginalisation, many farm workers struggle to adapt to this rapidly-changing, modernising economy and have been rendered unnecessary “surplus” labour in a similar vein to agricultural workers structurally repressed and economically marginalised on the basis of “caste” in India (Padhi, 2007; Atkinson, 2007). Tourism has been touted as one of the major areas of economic development which can inject much-needed income and employment into these ailing towns (Atkinson, 2009). This has seen the “Karoo” being packaged and sold as an idealised farm tourism destination, with the hunting sector being one of the major attractions. In this context, game farming is viewed as a boon, yet prospects for farm workers and -dwellers, long a part of traditional agriculture, remain under-explored. This thesis addresses this lacuna by investigating the multiple socio-economic dilemmas farm workers and -dwellers face under these conditions in relation to the problems of tenure security.

The thesis also brings to the fore the perspectives of the semi-arid area labour force. The histories of the “Karoo” labouring class have been subsumed within white settler folklore and literary traditions (most exemplified by Guy Butler’s autobiographies) which romanticise the semi-arid landscape and its colonial agricultural culture.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Eastern Cape Karoo farm workers’ and -dwellers’ lives have not attracted sufficient scholarly attention despite the vastness of the region. Kooy’s (1977) study of farm labour of several midland towns, which aimed to provide insight into living and working conditions, provided a sketchy quantitative overview of wages and housing provision. Atkinson’s policy-directed work (2007) and Rohde and Hoffman (2008) have broken ground in terms of documenting the social and economic dilemmas farm workers and -dwellers face in the semi-arid parts of the Northern Cape and in the Free State. This thesis foregrounds these voices from the

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<sup>5</sup> See Butler, G. 1977. *Karoo Morning* and Butler, G. 1989. *Tales from the Old Karoo*; Southey, J. 1990. *Footprints in the Karoo: a Story of Farming Life*; and Logie, B. 2008. *Dusty Road to Long Ago*.

Eastern Cape Karoo within their own particular milieu, arguing that the prevailing class and land-owning structures are untenable and calls for a major re-imagining of the exclusive inherited settler-colonial landscape into a more inclusive and equitable one.

### **CHOICE OF CASE STUDY AREA**

Cradock (Figures 1 and 2) is a town, as well as an agricultural district, located in the Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality which falls under the greater Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape.<sup>6</sup> It found global recognition in the 1980s as the locus for an intensifying anti-apartheid struggle. Its black township, Lingelihle, is the home of the late liberation activist and leader, Mathew Goniwe, who played a pivotal role in mobilising against State oppression through the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Cradock Youth Association (CRADOYA) and the Cradock Residents Civic Association (CRADORA) (TRC, 1996). Goniwe was assassinated along with three fellow activists, Sicelo Mhlauli, Fort Calata and Sparrow Mkhonto, in 1985 by apartheid regime security forces. Cradock's struggle against apartheid was significant and pivotal in the political landscape, but the locus was largely in the urbanising centres and townships of the rural areas. The farms, which are the crucible of white racial and class power in these parts, have been paid scant scholarly attention.

The town was officially established in 1814.<sup>7</sup> With the Great Fish River (Inxuba in isiXhosa) running through it, Cradock has been able to develop a diversified agricultural economy through irrigation farming, but the majority of farms are extensive sheep veld farms (Smith, 1964; Beinart, 2003). It is located in what was popularly referred to as the Eastern Cape midlands (within colonial frontier discourse), which form part of the semi-arid Karoo region. The Karoo is an arid, semi-desert area that constitutes 35% of South Africa's land surface, and extends into Namibia (Milton & Dean, 1999:xix). It is characterised predominantly by extensive livestock agriculture and small rural town centres.

Hunting for the pot and for sport has historically been part of the Karoo white social fabric (Southey, 1990).<sup>8</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was only a few established

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<sup>6</sup> Inxuba Yethemba Municipality is composed of both Cradock and Middelburg. This abolishes the old colonial-apartheid midlands municipal boundaries. However, the old boundary is still used by the Department of Agriculture and the South African Police Service in terms of demarcation for service provision.

<sup>7</sup> It was so named after the Cape Governor John Cradock who, in 1812, mounted a campaign to expel 20 000 people of the Ndlambe and Qhunukhwebe clans across the Fish River in an attempt to entrench British military dominance on the Cape's eastern frontier (Myburgh, 1978:28).

<sup>8</sup> The use of wildlife within the settler colonial milieu can be divided into four main periods: (i) the era of laissez-faire hunting and trading that resulted in the decimation of the herds from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the

propertied Karoo elites who incorporated some wildlife into their formal farming activities, such as keeping game in paddocks as the Rubidges of Graaff-Reinet did, as well as zebra and horse experimental cross-breeding by Cradock's Montague Gadd (Brown, 2002:82). However, for the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Cradock, it was State-driven conservation through the Mountain Zebra National Park (proclaimed in 1937) that dominated land-use change for wildlife purposes.<sup>9</sup> The park continues to acquire and incorporate farms into the protected area currently covering 28 418 hectares (284 km<sup>2</sup>). In the 1970s, hunting became a more professionalised commercial industry (Southey, 1990:201). Southey (1990:201) recalls that:

The culling scene changed radically in the late 1970s when a large firm opened up in the Orange Free State. It had found an overseas export market for venison and it offered professional culling facilities for the farmer and good prices for his venison. The original culling teams worked from small helicopters but farmers now seem to prefer the night shooters who go out into the veld after dark and shoot from the back of bakkies.

Initially farmers included hunting as part of a mix of agricultural activities on the farms, a common practice in the Karoo (Smith & Wilson, 2002). By the mid 1980s and 1990s, some pioneering game ranchers wholly converted their sheep and angora farms into game enterprises and began offering veld hunting experiences for high-end international clients. Over the four decades of its existence, the industry has diversified into various wildlife-based enterprises such as game viewing, hunting, meat processing, taxidermy, live animal capture and trophy exporting (Bezuidenhout, 2009:33). Du Bothma (1996:3) defines wildlife production as follows:

Game production may be extensive or intensive. *Extensive game production* is known as game ranching and is the managed, extensive production of free-living game on *large* fenced or unfenced private or communal grounds, usually for hunting but also for game products, tourism, the sale of live game and other non-consumable uses. *Intensive game production* is known as game farming and is the managed, intensive production of game in *small* fenced camps or ranches on private or communal grounds, usually for the production of market products such as meat, skins, etc [original emphasis].

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latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; (ii) the era of the 'penitent' hunters and the rise of an elite defined conservationist ethos in the 1880s; (iii) the domination of scientific agriculture in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which intensified the destruction of game classified as "vermin"; and (iv) the revival of conservationism amongst white landed classes from the 1970s into the contemporary era (Brown, 2002; Carruthers, 2008). In the aftermath of the near decimation of wildlife, Cape colonial elites from the 1880s constructed hunting for sport as the pursuit of civilised, conservationist gentlemen, while subsistence hunting by lower class whites, and particularly Africans, was gradually criminalised and cast as backward and wasteful (Brown, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> SANParks: *Mountain Zebra National Park* [[http://www.sanparks.org/parks/mountain\\_zebra/](http://www.sanparks.org/parks/mountain_zebra/)].

For the purposes of this thesis, the term “game farm” is used in the common generic sense to denote a broad range of wildlife-based landholdings. The size and commercial scope of game farms vary significantly, with some aiming to be profit-turning businesses while others are run as personal leisure spaces or conservation projects by owners, which may or may not involve some income-earning element.

To the extent that hunting on farms has evolved within white society’s leisure practices and colonial constructs of “civilised” masculine pursuits, it can be argued that this private wildlife land use has a cultural resonance with contemporary white South Africans who can engage in these activities through privileged access to land as owners or consumer elites. Although there are 23 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which permit trophy hunting, there is, however, a distinctly southern African dimension to the proliferation of the wildlife sector; indeed, this region has the largest trophy-hunting industry on the continent (Lindsey, Roulet & Romañach, 2007). Commercial interest in game was virtually non-existent for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of the dominance of State-subsidised scientific agriculture (Carruthers, 2008). Game numbers, already severely decimated by colonial hunting and trade, were further diminished by the view that game was “vermin” that was a threat to crops and incompatible with domesticated livestock (sheep, cattle, and goats) due to the potential transference of communicable diseases (Carruthers, 2008:160). However, the scientific basis for these views began to shift in the 1960s and 1970s and more farmers allowed game to co-exist to a certain extent with livestock, particularly as demand for venison rose in international markets (Carruthers, 2008). In the 1970s Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa began to institute regulatory reforms which loosened State control over “game”, devolving partial rights of control or proprietorship to private land owners (Barnes & Jones, 2009; Child, 2009). South Africa went the full step, promulgating the Game Theft Act 105 of 1991 which effectively recognised that game could be stolen from its designated owner. These reforms provided greater incentive for private investment in wildlife, and the result was that between 1960 and 2007 the number of game on private property in South Africa rose from 545 000 to 27 million (Carruthers, 2008:161). In Zimbabwe, Wolmer (2007:163) observes that since 1985 there has been accelerated growth in game farming resulting in “20.7% of white commercial farms under some sort of wildlife utilisation”.

Since 1985, private game farms in Cradock have by far outstripped the amount of land owned by South African National Parks at Mountain Zebra National Park. Currently there are seven major internationally-renowned private commercial outfitters in Cradock

exclusively offering a trophy-hunting experience to high-end clients. These seven cover a combined area of approximately 132 000 hectares [1 320 km<sup>2</sup>].<sup>10</sup> The three largest are on average 30 000 hectares each, while the small to medium range from 2 000 to 16 000 hectares. There are also several non-commercial hunting farms, kept by their owners mainly for lifestyle purposes. More common are mixed farms which combine game with other agricultural activities. It is not known exactly how many farms in the Cradock area are involved in mixed game and livestock farming, however, discussions with officials from the local Department of Agriculture and farmers indicate that a large percentage of farms are involved with this practice.<sup>11</sup> Cradock thus provides a study site which is agriculturally distinct from those that have been the subject of research on farm workers' and -dwellers' responses to game-farm conversion.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study was conducted primarily through a qualitative methodology. A qualitative approach has been chosen because the study aims to understand the experiences of those affected by farm conversions primarily from their own testimonies. Whereas a quantitative study would primarily reveal numeric aggregates and trends, a qualitative study will bring participants' voices and stories to the fore in the analysis. By doing so it will

unpick how people construct the world around them, what they are doing or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offer rich insight (Flick 2007:ix).

When these perspectives are combined with information from secondary sources and academic literature, the research can develop “models, typologies, [and] theories as ways of describing and explaining social (or psychological) issues” (Flick 2007:x).

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<sup>10</sup> Information on property size was taken from websites and from interviews and discussions during fieldwork. This figure relates specifically to the properties of the top hunting outfitters in Cradock, not every game farm in the area. The Department of Agriculture provided incomplete and outdated information in this regard. In order to preserve anonymity, farms are never named in the thesis nor referred to by any characteristics which could cause them to be identified, given the small size of the Cradock community. This is an ethical undertaking by the researcher to protect the identities of participants.

<sup>11</sup> For example, some properties on the market in the Cradock area may be listed as “game” farms but they are usually “mixed” farms. Others are listed as conventional “irrigation and livestock” farms but will also include details on numbers and types of game available which increases the value of the property.

The case study method was used to determine the boundaries and focus of the study. Thus, only phenomena related to wildlife commerce within three farms in the geographical area of Cradock are the focus of the research (Stake 2005:444). In this way, phenomena relating to conversions can be analysed within the boundaries of Cradock and of each of the farms as distinct units. Stake (2005:443) comments that, “as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in an individual case...” Cradock was selected as the bounded area to locate the study because wildlife-based commerce in the area was promoted vigorously by one family in particular from the 1980s and has grown considerably over the past 30 years.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the town’s own specific history of wildlife-based commerce provides a bounded framework to collect data.

A key epistemological question for the researcher using the case study method is to ask: “What specially can be learned about the single case?” (Stake, 2005:443). Stake states that the research can be designed as an instrumental case study in order to

provide an insight into an issue or redraw a generalisation... it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else (Stake, 2005:445).

The case study method allows the researcher to interrogate the relationship between the general, and the specific. Due to access constraints discussed below, the case of Bontebok Private Nature Reserve documented in this thesis is used in a heuristic fashion, as a model against which other observations and data gathered can be compared.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The aim of this research was to investigate the consequences of farm conversions into game farms for farm workers’ and -dwellers’ tenure security, with a specific focus on the Cradock agricultural district, which was the chosen research site. The key research question asks:

*Do the conversions of traditional agricultural farms to private game farms and private game reserves affect the tenure security of farm workers and -dwellers in Cradock and, if so, in what ways, and with what implications for South Africa’s tenure reform policies?*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Interview, Cradock Hunting Lodge Owner, M. Spierenburg and L. Ntsebeza, 27 May 2007. Cradock.

<sup>13</sup> Initially the question stated in the submitted proposal used the term “tenure rights” and not “tenure security”, however, subsequently it was modified as the issue of “security” is broader and more complex than that of juridical “rights”.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

- a) To locate the lives of this generation of contemporary farm workers and -dwellers within the Eastern Cape's longer history of changing land-use patterns and their impact on the rural labour force and farm dwellers;
- b) To analyse what consequences, if any, private game farms have had for the tenure security of farm workers and -dwellers on converted farms in Cradock;
- c) To analyse farm workers' and -dwellers' views and responses to these private game farms;
- d) To assess the implications of private game farms for land-tenure reform in South Africa broadly.

## METHODOLOGY

### i) Field Work

Field work was undertaken over ten months during which the researcher lived in Lingelihle township in Cradock. Initially the aim was to locate farm workers and -dwellers from three farms, focusing only on those which were converted either partially or completely to wildlife ventures in or after 1996. The particular period was chosen as a defining period because key legislation in the form of the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, Act No. 3 of 1996 (LTA) (RSA, 1996) and the Extension of Security Tenure Act, Act No. 62 of 1997 (ESTA) (RSA, 1997) was an attempt to provide farm workers and -dwellers with protection from arbitrary and unlawful eviction using a constitutional rights-based framework. This rights focus was influenced in part by studies such as Luck's (2004) which focused on game-farm-related evictions which occurred in the early to mid 2000s.

However, during the course of the field work, it was discovered that the Cradock wildlife sector has evolved over three decades. It thus became apparent that an approach premised on post-apartheid tenure security laws would bind analysis largely to post-1994 dynamics; this could not adequately fit the historical specificities of the Cradock wildlife sector.

This reality thus led to changes in the sampling strategy. The original proposal submitted to the Higher Degrees' Committee had envisaged a purposive sampling strategy where respondents would be selected from farms with different conversion outcomes for respective

workers and dwellers, that is, (i) one farm where all workers and dwellers were evicted, (ii) one farm where some remained and some left, and (iii) one where all remained on the farm. However, this had to change because (a) there were no official “evictees” found as a result of conversion to game farms and (b) there was limited access to farms. The fact that no farm conversion-related “evictions” were found informed the analysis on the nature of the game-farm sector in the semi-arid areas, shaping the broader thesis on the nature of the land and agrarian questions in the area.

## ii) **Sampling and Gaining Access**

Since the purposive sampling strategy of the initial proposal was transformed in light of realities in the field, locating and gaining access to a game-farm research site became the main strategy. Locating the farm research site first was strategic for a number of reasons. First, this allowed for farm workers related to game farming to be directly located; this was difficult to do by simply going into the townships where tracking down farm workers affected by game farming was difficult. Secondly, geographic dispersal and low population densities on *veld* farms means there are not many workers to track down. The difficulty of locating farm workers and -dwellers that are dispersed through large areas, over a long period of time, is identified by Murray (2002) as a feature of farm-worker livelihoods research. Murray (2002:503) summarises it thus:

The problems were thus twofold, expressed in general terms: “How could I find ex-farm workers who had ‘belonged’ to particular farms?” And “How could I find the farmers in question, the former bosses of the ex-farm workers, some of whom had already left their farms, and were thus ex-farmers?” The solution in practice was to follow up, in a doggedly persistent but inevitably haphazard way, the extensive individual networks that linked particular ex-farm workers to one another, physically scattered as they often were, and to particular (ex-)farmers.

This problem is even more acute where the original on-farm populations were relatively low and shrinking over time; this is one of the key findings of the thesis and is elaborated upon in Chapter Four.

Once a game farm had been accessed, the snowball method became the default method of finding and selecting respondents through referral. Locating respondents who had moved away from the converted farms was a bigger challenge because people had lost contact; conversions had happened two decades ago. When some potential respondents were located, it was found that although they may have lived on the farm, they had left long before the process of conversion had taken place. Again, this related to the findings discussed in the

thesis on the long-term processes of depopulation of the farms in the semi-arid areas. With the efflux of time, and the shifting economy, many people had simply lost contact with each other, whilst others had died. Other farm workers were located through social networks the researcher gained access to in the township and with the assistance of the Cradock Advice Office. Government officials were contacted through their respective departments.

Gaining access to game farmers and farm workers and -dwellers was indeed a complex and delicate process and shaped the kind of data that could be gathered. In the original NWO-WOTRO proposal it was stated that:

Assumptions are that we will have access to converted farms and will be able to freely conduct research among both farm-owners and farm-dwellers; that our close co-operation with NGOs will not seriously undermine our work with farm owners (Spierenburg et al, 2007:20).

Game-farm studies conducted by Luck (2004) and Nyama (2008) in South Africa, and Baldus and Cauldwell (2004) in Tanzania, reported similar difficulties in gaining access. In Nyama's (2008) case, only one out of ten game farms agreed to participate in the research project in the Grahamstown area where the study was located. This difficulty shaped the case study approach that the research was to follow (Nyama, 2008). Baldus and Cauldwell (2004) stated upfront in their research that little was known about the Tanzanian hunting industry and that:

the lack of understanding is largely a result of the reluctance on the part of industry to reveal the facts and also due to a lack of critical data. Some parts of this document are therefore not based upon empirical facts, but are necessary because few reliable facts are available. This document further presents some opinions, some of which may offend some players in the industry. Hunting by its very nature attracts criticism, as it is a sport that stirs emotions, not to mention that it is highly lucrative. Any opinions, both for and against the industry are thus naturally provoking.

This is not necessarily a universal experience for all researchers, and does not reflect the disposition of all game farmers, however, it is a reality that was encountered in the course of this study. This made it all the more challenging to find and access farm workers and -dwellers who could participate as they often depended on the farmer's permission to receive guests on the farms. Labour relations in the agricultural sector remain a sensitive matter for farmers. This is particularly more acute in a post-apartheid context where debates about land reform, human rights and labour legislation cause acrimony when government and organised agricultural engage. Discourses of distrust of researchers and government were a strong feature whenever farmers and landowners engaged. While management

practices do vary from farm to farm, exploitation and domination continue to characterise this sector, which makes them wary of researchers and their intentions.

With this in mind, it was critical for the researcher to go about approaching potential wildlife sector participants in a way that would not alienate them. However, this did not dispel mistrust in most cases; this became quite evident when an email was circulated in May 2009 (only two months into the fieldwork) by a prominent member of the Eastern Cape private wildlife sector, warning game farmers about our project and advising them not to engage with researchers who would not publish favourably on the industry. Not only were the researcher and fellow research colleague confronted with the email by game farmers in Cradock and outside, but it also became a topic of informal discussion in the town; cautious reassurances had to be given that project interests were scholarly and not partisan. It is difficult to ascertain the repercussions of the email, however, requests for interviews with four of the seven key game-farm owners bore no fruit and access to others was difficult without a referral.

In order to gain access to a game farm, personal contacts with farmers in towns outside of Cradock were used. These were people who could be described as being of a liberal disposition, having supported anti-apartheid activity in their home towns. The result of this is that access was granted to a game farm where the land owner was generally progressive in his politics and was emphatic that the staff on his farm would have to determine for themselves whether or not they wanted to participate in the research.

The land owner was assured that the research was guided by the University of Cape Town's ethical guidelines. It was on this farm that the bulk of interviews with farm workers was conducted.

The power of farm owners to restrict access to workers on their farms can lead researchers to display uncritical sympathy towards farm owners' narratives and perspectives. This is evinced in a recent study by Roberts (2009:51) on farm wages in the Albany District, where the researcher remarks that:

Consideration was given to the possibility of interviewing farm workers to gain insight into their perspectives on wages and working conditions. However this was advised against as it would have negatively impacted the accessibility of gaining willing farmers to be interviewed and thus significantly reduce the sample size. When contacting potential interviewees only a few were open to the idea, while most clearly stated that they would refuse being a part of the research if labourers were also interviewed [sic].

The results of excluding farm workers for the sake of a greater farm sample were that Roberts' (2009) study uncritically reports white farmers' paternalistic and self-exculpatory opinions as reflecting the truth about farm workers' lives and motivations vis-à-vis their employment conditions. In this study, farm workers and -dwellers were the centre of the research, thus access to farm workers was privileged over accessing more game farmers.

### **iii) Case Study**

The main research site, Bontebok Private Nature Reserve, was chosen because permission for interviews was granted by the owners and the workers living on it. The findings from this one case do not serve a quantitative purpose, but were used rather to reframe questions around the debate on tenure reform and wildlife establishments. The case study provided a departure from existing literature on game farms. This study is the only in-depth interrogation of the debate on game farms and tenure reform drawing on the experience of the Karoo semi-arid areas. While Bontebok Private Nature Reserve was the main field site for research, it must be remembered that access to owners was difficult and, in the end, only one of the former owners of the reserve, a ranch manager working for him, and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism officials could be interviewed specifically with regard to the private nature reserve's history. Local gossip and informal conversation proved a valuable source of information in validating data on the rise of Bontebok Private Nature Reserve and the nature of the arrangements which brought it about. Notwithstanding its specificities, Bontebok Private Nature Reserve acted as a useful tool because it is one of the largest and most prominent game farms in the area; it typified much of what was observed in Cradock with regard to farm conversion.

### **iv) Data Collection**

Data were collected using three primary methods.

The first method was that archival documents were accessed at the National Archives Repository in Pretoria, the Cape Town Archives Repository and the Cory Library in Grahamstown. These provided historical data on the Cradock's farm-labour urbanisation.

The two other methods were used in tandem – these were informal conversation and interviewing, which were conducted in three languages – Xhosa, Afrikaans and English – by the researcher, who has sufficient working knowledge of Afrikaans but is not entirely fluent. Informal conversation was usually used at the introductory phase when relationships were

being built with the participants. It was a key element of gaining trust. It was absolutely crucial to establish a relationship where the research, its objectives and its significance could be explained. It was also necessary simply because some things were not said in the interviews that would emerge in a casual conversation afterwards. These informal conversations often filled in the gaps from the interviews or corroborated what was said during an interview. It was also during informal conversation that memories of pain and hurt emerged with some respondents. Notes were taken when appropriate. The researcher was hosted by the Cradock Advice Office where numerous farm workers seeking assistance were met. These engagements gave broader insight into the trends in the district.

More than 40 interviews with 20 primary respondents were conducted using a field recorder and notebook (sometimes just a notebook). These were a core of fifteen farm workers and -dwellers (or formerly so) who have been affected by farm conversions or who otherwise work on a game farm in Cradock, and five local land owners and professionals either wholly or partially involved with services in the area (Table 1).

**Table 1: Primary interview respondents**

Category	Number (n=20)	Age range (years)	Race
South African female farm workers affected by farm conversion	5	45 to 70	Coloured
South African male farm workers affected by farm conversion	8	40 to 55	Black, Coloured
Zimbabwean Game Farm Workers	2	22	Black
Game Farm Owners	3	60 to 70	White
Farm Manager	1	>60	White
Accountant (Male)	1	>50	White

A secondary set of short interviews, conversations and informal interactions which took place with other individuals in Cradock, Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet also informed the analysis and the researcher's broader understanding of the Karoo context. These were government officials from the Departments of Labour, Environmental Affairs, Land Affairs (now Land Reform and Rural Development) and Water Affairs, and farmers from towns near Cradock, specifically Middelburg and Somerset East.

Formal interviews were either group or individual. Group interviews could not be necessarily considered focus groups as they were not planned and conducted as such. Often these group interviews were spontaneous and convenient for the respondents during their work schedules. For example, the researcher would spend a day on the main site (Bontebok Private Nature Reserve) and talk to the workers when they felt it appropriate to take a few moments from their work. Discussions were held over tea times, at times when the researcher was invited into the farm workers' homes, or otherwise while they were going about doing light chores or walkabouts on the game farm.

With the challenges of access in mind, the researcher would conduct whatever form of interview was appropriate for that moment. Thus, for key farm workers and -dwellers on the farm that became the main research site, there were several group discussions which unfolded simply because the workers happened to be gathered together at that specific time. The limitation of the group discussions was that it was the men who spoke the most. Separate interviews with each individual were also conducted. The individual interviews also afforded the women an opportunity to provide their personal perspectives.

As part of the NWO-WOTRO project's ethical commitments, three feedback workshops to stakeholders were held in Cradock and in Port Elizabeth in 2011. These workshops included farm workers and -dwellers, Karoo land activists, game-farm sector stakeholders, academics, residents, Department of Agriculture, the Eastern Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and other interested parties. Feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the research where appropriate and used as a further step to test the validity of findings.

Punch (1998:183) posits that interviews provide self-reported experiences by respondents and, while rich in narrative, pose some questions around validity. These have to do with "the interviewer bias and effects, the accuracy of respondents' memories, people's response tendencies, dishonesty, self-deception and social desirability" (Punch, 1998:182). During the course of the field work, respondents were asked to corroborate what others had said, where appropriate, in order to cross-check, and thus triangulate, the information gathered.

Initial interviews were often emotional as some respondents used the space to share all the difficulties that they had faced as farm workers, and only in subsequent interactions was information gained into other aspects of their lives. Indeed,

farm workers are not abstract socio-economic entities... not simply 'employees', their status as (more or less) waged workers is not the ultimate determinant of their existence (Du Toit, 1994:382).

Interviewees were asked to share their life histories with specific focus on their working lives on the farms. The interviews focused on the farm as a site for both living and working. The finer textures of people's lives provide a rich field of analysis for researchers. Thus, as Keegan (1987:xvi) suggests:

Microstudies can open whole terrains of human experience, which previously lay hidden from history. Of course, this is not to suggest that the megaview is invalid, only that without constant interaction with detailed and parochial empirical research (which often entails enormously complex problems of evidence) it is sadly impoverished. The smaller the scale of investigation the more likely it is that the intricacies and complexities of social interaction will stand revealed, stripped of schematic abstractions. True comparative insight and meaningful generalization is only valid on the basis of detailed and often difficult empirical investigation.

The consequences of game farms were interpreted within the context of farm workers' and -dwellers' longer life histories. Wengraf (2000:143) argues that:

... there is still a tendency for sociology and some social science to deal in relatively unhistorical pictures of the present .... In order to understand the present perspective and situation of an individual interviewee, we need to know as much as possible about his or her personal and interpersonal history and to locate that personal and interpersonal history within the history of contexts.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

In the thesis, respondents' interviews are analysed in two respects – what Wengraf (2000:145) terms “the lived life” and the “the told story”. “The lived life” refers to

uncontroversial hard biographical data ... chronological sequence of the 'objective historical' facts about the person's life ... independently of whether or how they are referred to in the interview (Wengraf 2000:145).

Thus, where the respondent was born, where they lived, where they worked and when are considered; even where they are perhaps not remembered in great detail, basic facts that give context to the respondents' lives provided the researcher with a narrative framework to understand the respondents' views.

“The told story” deals with the manner in which the respondent chooses to self-represent, what the dominant themes in the telling of their life story are, what is of significance to them, and how they describe themselves and their lives. In this, one can identify the manner in which respondents understand or situate themselves in the present moment. It was,

however, notably difficult to garner this kind of information from some respondents (very young women on the farm, for example) who were shy to express their views even when interviewed alone. Atkinson's (2007:102) study on farm workers in the semi-arid areas also noted similar situations, stating that:

in particular, the women were very reluctant to participate in discussions. They seldom made eye contact with the researchers, and were initially reluctant to establish any relationship with them.

By distinguishing between "the lived life" and "the told story", the analysis can deal with issues of validity by not taking what is reported as straightforward unproblematic fact, but as a construction of respondents' understanding of themselves.

Archival documents used were government records which were located at the National Archives Repositories in Cape Town and Pretoria. These documents reflected the manner in which the former Cradock local municipality dealt with and responded to various farm labour issues, and they were used both as a reflection of the perspective of the local white establishment and as a valid record in terms of establishing those pre-occupations and functions of State bureaucracies and apparatuses of control in Cradock.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The core of the data is drawn from families living on one private game farm in Cradock. Studies on farms and farm workers have emphasised the need to recognise the particularity of "the local", and the variation in experience at the micro-level from farm to farm (Waldman & Ntsedi, 1997:97; Hill-Lanz & O'Grady, 1997:114). Atkinson (2007:11) cautions that:

it is almost impossible to overemphasise the enormous differences between individual farms and between areas of the country, in a multitude of aspects of farm life ... This affects, for example, wages, housing, management practices and migration patterns.

This research provides a critical study which contributes significantly to existing debates but cannot claim to capture all the variation in the sector. Furthermore, being a qualitative study, it offers no new statistics on game-farm-related evictions. This, while being a limitation in the quantitative sense, in no way affects the need for a critical discussion and in-depth qualitative examination that can challenge existing paradigms on the matter.

## THE RESEARCHER IN THE RESEARCH

Literature by Black and other “raced” women researchers has foregrounded the complexities posed by their intersectional positioning as “raced” and gendered subjects in the research process as well as in the design of the research methodology itself (Johnson-Bailey, 1999; Egharevba, 2001; Merriam et al, 2001; Bowleg 2008). The implications of the positioning of the “Black woman” as “the researcher” are not necessarily self-evident as Johnson-Bailey (1999: 668) argues:

The interviewing phase of qualitative research is dynamic and ever changing. No two situations or circumstances are ever alike... Although there are power issues that a researcher must remain cognizant of, such as balance of dialogue, research agendas, and societal hierarchies (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Cottrell, 1992), basically each interview is a special unit of work unto itself. This does not change when women interview women, when Blacks interview Blacks, or when Black women interview Black women. There are White researchers and male researchers who can interview Black women across the lines of race and gender with proficiency in spite of any differences that would separate or distinguish them from their interviewees.

The researcher was continuously cognizant of how they were positioned in relation to the various participants as a relatively young Black woman researcher. On one hand, the existing ideologies and social practices of racial division in Cradock posed impediments of access for the researcher into white farmers’ spaces; on the other, being Black meant being construed as something of an “insider” in the township which facilitated access to a number of farm workers residing in the township.

However, as Johnson-Bailey (1999) points out, researchers cannot be simplistic about which “ties” bind and which “shackles” separate during the research process because participants’ conceptions of the researcher and the process itself can be determined by any number of factors. For example, farmers with a more progressive political outlook were critical enablers of the research and acted as “social brokers” for the researcher in several instances. To a large degree, the most significant determinant of positioning was the very act of doing scholarly research and *being* a researcher. While being a Black woman presented some advantages and disadvantages in the field, the position of being a researcher was the predominant mode through which the researcher related. As discussed previously, challenges of access were encountered at the very outset due to negative perceptions amongst some white farmers about the nature of the research. For government officials, responses and interactions were determined by the extent of their own interest and ease with the probing nature of the research process.

The institutional positioning of “researcher” carries class status. This complexifies one’s intersectional positioning as a social “other” by virtue of being a “Black woman” as there is power which accrues to the professional activity of scrutinising the lives of others in pursuit of a scholarly question. Thus, during the course of the research the researcher was aware of the fact that the farm workers and -dwellers interviewed are also constructed as marginal from the point of view of research institutions. One interviewee was quite sceptical of the research and unresponsive because he felt that the research was delving into painful aspects of his life and yet showed no immediate and direct benefit to his struggling family. Hurley (2007) asserts that researchers are mostly middle class and need to be cautious of their assumptions of power and entitlement of access into the lives of lower income groups. In this way, it was important for respondents’ boundaries to be respected. This is particularly important as most of the core interviews with farm workers and -dwellers took place on-site during work hours on the farm; so the researcher had to show due sensitivity to the farm workers’ concerns about ensuring relations with their employer were not jeopardised.

## **ETHICS**

This research posed several ethical dilemmas for the researcher. Sensitivity to ethical issues constantly shaped the interviews and interactions with respondents. The first requirement was to ensure anonymity because the project would return findings to all interested stakeholders, including those in Cradock. Respondents’ identities had to be protected. To do so, pseudonyms have been used for key respondents and the key research sites have been given the fictional names Bontebok Private Nature Reserve, Grootvlei Farm and Bossieskloof Game Ranch. Where possible, features of identification have been omitted. During fieldwork the researcher had to ensure that her presence on the game farm did not jeopardise the daily lives of farm workers. Relations between the neighbouring land owners, who shared a road, were extremely strained. The farm workers and -dwellers were also caught up in these fraught relations and had endured frequent infringements of their rights of road use and visitation as well as being verbally abused by the neighbouring farmer. The farm workers’ dignity, privacy and well being remained the central concern for the researcher throughout.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **PART ONE: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

#### **Chapter One:**

##### **Introduction and Methodology**

This chapter introduces the study and its overarching research concerns. It provides detailed background on the motivations behind the study as well as a discussion on methodology and research questions, describing how these were informed by literature and subsequently transformed by findings in the field.

#### **Chapter Two:**

##### **Key Debates and Conceptual Considerations**

This chapter situates the debate on farm workers' tenure insecurity and on game farms within broader debates and conceptual terrain of land and agrarian concerns. The main purpose of this chapter is to develop an agrarian framework through which to understand tenure insecurity and the wildlife sector. Fundamentally, this chapter proposes that the emergence of wildlife production and related issues around farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure insecurity are inextricable from the functions of late modern capitalism and its inability to absorb labour. The chapter draws together concepts from the agrarian, geographic and semiotic perspectives to argue that attributing game-farm-related evictions to the specific form of land use misconstrues causation and elides broader structural convulsions in the agrarian economy.

#### **Chapter Three:**

##### **The Semi-Arid Area Farm-Working Class in the Colonial Agrarian Context**

This chapter discusses the origins of the farm-working population in the semi-arid areas. It suggests that the historic conquest of indigenous Africans in the semi-arid areas created a predominantly servile rural proletariat and near-total land dispossession. The combination of these two historical factors has resulted in the semi-arid areas having an extreme land question, but relatively non-existent land struggles. With regard to the "land struggles", the chapter proposes that the most salient feature informing the degree and extent of resistance to eviction in the post-apartheid era has been a history of African labour tenancy and extensive land-based livelihoods in specific regions. The chapter concludes that the relative

absence of labour tenancy and the predominance of a proletariat class in the semi-arid areas is a key feature in accounting for the lack of contestation on farm conversions to wildlife. It is argued that these factors combined create conditions in which there may be a lack of *expressed* demand for land, even though the land question is extreme and remains to be addressed.

## **PART TWO: CASE STUDY**

### **Chapter Four:**

#### **New Land Use, Old Land Regimes: Introducing Bontebok Private Nature Reserve**

This chapter introduces the main study site, Bontebok Private Nature Reserve in Cradock, as a heuristic tool of analysis within the thesis. It builds on arguments made in Chapter Three by asserting that the Bontebok conversion experience posed neither novel nor dramatic scenarios for farm workers and -dwellers where their tenure security is concerned because Cradock's traditional land and labour regime remains intact. Specifically it critiques the notion that game-farm expansion is evidence of contemporary dispossession, arguing that this conceptualisation does not adequately account for the structurally-embedded nature of the displacement that is associated with game-farm conversion.

### **Chapter Five:**

#### **Betwixt Farm and Town: Managing Tenure Security in Conditions of Inequality**

This chapter deepens the critique of the “dispossession” explanation of contemporary farm conversion made in Chapter Four by demonstrating the significance of ongoing on/off the farm movements by farm workers and -dwellers as they constantly search for better tenure and job security. It notes that this movement is one of the key defining features of their lives and is a central strategy of households faced with dilemmas regarding finding adequate permanent housing and decent employment on the farms. Given this kind of movement, farm workers and -dwellers in these areas tend not to express a specific attachment to farms, even those of their own birth. However, they do lay claim to the “rural universe” by speaking of themselves as “people of the farms” in a more generic sense, associating themselves with the simplicity of farm life rather than with a permanent fixedness to the land itself. This chapter thus critiques the notion that farm workers and -dwellers prefer to urbanise as a lifestyle choice; for many it is the conditions under which they find themselves

that force them to make certain kinds of migration choices over others. It concludes that this migration and the inevitable move into town are ingrained features of the semi-arid areas.

## **Chapter Six:**

### **Micro-Level Power Relations on the Game Farm**

This chapter makes two interrelated arguments. The first is that there is a great deal of continuity between hunting farms and traditional agricultural farms in the semi-arid areas. The second is that, while there is a great deal of continuity, game-farm conversions have an effect on space that creates potentially more intensified forms of control and exclusion at the micro-level. In relation to continuities, power relations on the farms continue to be shaped by land, class and racial inequality. Notions of the game sector as a “progressive” force are belied by the generally poor working conditions on Cradock hunting farms. It contends that it is the individual owner who determines the quality of life for employees. This demonstrates the continued significance of land ownership and access in determining class and social relations in the semi-arid areas. With regard to the second argument, it is clear that greater land consolidation and greater fencing off of the farming areas creates pockets of more stringent controls over movements and access in the countryside, thus promoting more exclusivist land relations in comparison to the traditional agricultural landscape. While individual landowners may have differing management approaches, the very nature of boundary control on game farms can give conservative landowners even greater power than before over farm workers.

## **Chapter Seven:**

### **‘A Boer’s House is not a Home’: Urbanisation and Its Implications for Tenure Reform**

This chapter proposes that the single greatest aspiration by farm workers in Cradock, where tenure security is concerned, is to have a house that they can call their own and pass on to their children. Game farms were not cited as a threat to their tenure insecurity per se, rather, it was seen as a consequence of inherently unequal power relations on land. The fate of farm workers and -dwellers was tied to their relationships with employers. The chapter argues that State housing policy has failed to meet the present and urgent need for farm workers and -dwellers to have access to off-farm housing. Ironically, however, State policy imperatives to address the pressing housing demands for farm workers overshadow the slower and more cumbersome land and agrarian reform policy formulation which has the

potential to transform some farm workers into farm owners of varying degrees. Newly proposed tenure security legislation is beginning to articulate a broader view of land-tenure reform for farm workers and -dwellers, but has yet to be given effect. This thesis contends that the imperative to transform the semi-arid areas into becoming more equal and socio-economically sustainable regions depends on the transformation of the fortunes of the farm-labouring class by putting land and agrarian reform at the centre of policy formulation and political discourse. Notions that the wildlife sector is a potential panacea to the problems of poverty and unemployment are folly, for the sector replicates the very structures that entrench existing exclusion and inequality. While widening of land access and ownership remains key, broader agrarian reform requires a more tentative approach given the complex ecology and socio-economic precariousness of the semi-arid areas. It is suggested that land/-agrarian demand and urbanisation concerns are seen not as oppositional, but as inevitably convergent processes shaping the future countryside.

### **Concluding Chapter:**

In the Concluding Chapter, the main arguments and key contributions regarding tenure security, farm conversions and the agrarian question in the semi-arid areas are summarised. An overview of each chapter is provided with concluding remarks made on the arguments presented in each. The limits of the study are put forward and propositions for further research are suggested.

## **CONCLUSION**

Chapter One introduced the study and its central focus on the land question of the semi-arid areas as a basis for situating the research on farm workers and -dwellers' tenure insecurity. It gave a background to the study in terms of the overall research project and the specific ways in which the researcher was guided by literature to formulate specific research questions. It detailed the methodology and described some of the problems of access encountered in the field which limited the scope of the study and the kind of data gathered.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **Key Debates and Conceptual Considerations**

This chapter situates tenure reform within broader conceptual debates and sets out an analytical framework within which to interrogate the relationship between game-farm conversions and tenure insecurity. It develops this framework in a cross-disciplinary fashion, bringing together concepts from varied streams of literature on the geo-spatial, class and social relations which shape life on the farms.

The first part of the argument provides a critical discussion on the definitions of key terms such as “tenure security”, “farm dweller” and “tenure reform”, specifically in relation to farm workers’ and -dwellers’ history on the farms. In doing so, these definitions are made applicable to the Cradock and semi-arid area context under discussion.

The second part of the argument presents three dominant approaches to theorising tenure reform in South Africa and suggests that an agrarian approach, rooted in the recognition of historic land dispossession, provides the most applicable analytical framework for understanding persistent tenure insecurity in contemporary South Africa.

The land and agrarian questions are introduced and discussed in the third part of the argument, in particular as they relate to the positioning of farm workers and -dwellers in contemporary capitalism.

Finally, the chapter draws on the agrarian framework to problematise major premises and assumptions in the debate on game farms and tenure security, specifically in relation to conversion as a *cause* of tenure insecurity.

#### **DEFINING TENURE**

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO, 2009) defines “land tenure” as:

... 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. 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. In simple terms, land-tenure systems determine who can use what resources for how long, and under what conditions.

It is the “terms and conditions on which land is held, used and transacted” (Adams, Sibanda & Turner 1999:2). In addition to governing the resource exploitation, tenure systems involve social aspects such as residence, burial practices and access to graves, the allocation of sites for cultural rituals and stock keeping (Adams et al, 1999; Atkinson 2007). Cross and Friedman (1997:17) suggest that land tenure is not merely permission to occupy land and use its resources, but a social relation, a “social and political process rather than a system of law and rules.” Neocosmos (1993:67) states that land tenure “reflects important class relations between the State and the people”. The notion of who can use what land, how and with what consequences, is deeply ideologically vested and entrenched in systems of power.

For farm workers and -dwellers tenure security on farms has historically been determined by their personal relationships with farmers (Atkinson, 2007). Residence on the farm and the ability to conduct social practices and livelihoods such as land cultivation on white farms have historically been

privileges rather than rights, that each farmer (was) virtually free to define the terms under which he employs his labour, and that these terms can be changed at the farmer’s convenience (Roberts, 1959:63).

Tenure terms on the farm are structured and managed on the terms of the farmer as the land owner (Christoudolou, 1990:18; Du Toit, 2004). Platzky and Walker’s (1985) seminal study documented the devastating consequences of farm workers’ and -dwellers’ insecurity of tenure and dispossession by eviction through the Apartheid State’s forced removal policies. More recently, literature has highlighted the ongoing vulnerability of farm workers and -dwellers to eviction in the democratic dispensation resulting from job losses caused by the economic liberalisation of the South African economy (Wegerif et al, 2005:41, Atkinson, 2007; Nolan, 2008). Intersecting with this insecurity of tenure on farms has been the socio-economic vulnerability of South African farm workers and -dwellers, particularly under white minority rule, which has been well documented in literature (Wilson, Kooy & Hendrie, 1977; Marcus, 1989; Davies, 1990; Jeeves & Crush, 1997; Wegerif et al, 2005; Atkinson, 2007).

Tenure security as “privilege” emerges because of a matrix of social relations on farms that have historically been premised on the authority of white farmers, and given expression through a paternalist ethos characterised by the dependency of farm workers to their

employers (Roberts, 1959; Nasson, 1984; Davies, 1990; Du Toit, 1993; Atkinson, 2007; Nolan, 2008). Du Toit (1993:4) defines this paternalism as a “set of practices that tie workers very closely to particular farms and particular employees”. Literature stresses the unequal yet reciprocal nature of the paternalist relationship on farms, characterised by a shared dependency between master and servant and creating what Atkinson (2007:15) characterises as a culture of “limited mutual social loyalties and an ‘economy of affection’”. These relations are premised, however, on a contradiction where farmers and workers inhabit a universe of close physical proximity but are divided by clear ideologies of social distance between the white family and worker families (Atkinson, 2007:91).

A major tension arising within literature is the extent to which paternalism towards farm workers can be viewed as system of total social and psychological control or an institution of mutual reciprocity. Nasson (1984:1, 2) has described farms as having a “closed culture” where the lives of farm workers are defined by “an intense and confining localism”, and their relationship to farmers is one of “crippling dependency”. This conception draws from Goffman’s concept of “total institutions” and Coser’s “greedy institutions”, where the defining features of such environments are not only absolute authoritarianism and control over individuals’ lives, but also the erasure of alternative identities and symbols through which to experience self (Nasson, 1984:2, 3). In this scheme, paternalism on farms is viewed as a totalising ideology of domination which legitimises structural inequality through complete regulation of the master/servant-like relations on farms (Nasson, 1984:5). The almost absolute authority that farmers hold over workers is, however, more prevalent in some regions than others, such as in the extreme exploitation of Ju/’hoansi (specifically identified as San in the literature) on Afrikaner farms in Namibia, who are trapped in highly coercive labour relations that render them as an underclass, indeed, bottom caste workers (Sylvain, 2001). Sylvain (2001) argued that *baasskap*, the unassailable authority of white male farmers over black workers, is the central principle governing relations of domination on farms.

Du Toit (1993) and Atkinson (2007), however, foreground farm workers’ agency in the paternalist relationship. Du Toit’s (1993:4) seminal work on paternalism on farms shows how workers and farmers make “claims and counter claims” on each other within a “paternalist discourse [which] provides the framework for discussion and negotiation”. In this discourse, each member of the farm community makes claims on the others on the basis that the farm is “an all-embracing community – a family” (Du Toit, 1993:4). Obligations

between farmers and their employees derive not from formalised workplace relations but from a more personalised script of being a part of the farm “family” – *deel van die plaas* – even in the context of a highly unequal relationship between farmer and worker that is in many cases premised on violence and suppression (Du Toit, 1993). However, the imbalance of power between farmer and workers means that the farmer has final authority and they cannot be “held accountable” for their obligations; the farmer’s act of reciprocity thus becomes a “gift” determined by his “generosity and goodness” (Du Toit, 1993:12). In many instances, paternalist practice is fragile and contradictory, and exposes the closeness of the farm as pseudo-kinship (Du Toit, 1993). Thus, the inequality that structures farm workers’ lives on farms belies any notion that claims made do in fact have a basis in the principle of “family” or the conception of *deel van die plaas*; the fulfilment of claims made on the employers is fundamentally premised on the whims and power vested in the employer.

The notion of “laying claim” is used in this thesis to define the way in which farm workers express a rightful belonging or rightful entitlement to the farm universe. Indeed, Du Toit and Ewert (2002) show that “old-style” paternalist relations are not easily dismantled, even in the post-apartheid agricultural landscape, even as the processes of restructuring and de-regulation ostensibly modernise the commercial farming sector – both worker and farmer still view working relations through these. Orton, Barrientos and McClenaghan (2001) and Nolan (2008) describe the absorption and convergence of formal and “modernised” legal mechanisms with the traditional personalised working relations on the farm as *neo-paternalism*. The resilience of paternalism, far from being retrogressive, may perhaps be read as an attachment to a universe farm workers consider themselves to fundamentally belong to, in spite of their insecurity of tenure and other forms of inequality. The farm, tough as it may be, is also a site of belonging, identity and kinship (Connor, 2005).

However, belonging and “claiming” do not play out on equal terms for all farm workers and -dwellers, because farms are fundamentally gendered sites of living and working. Tenure security of the farm-worker household has historically been vested in the primary male worker (Roberts, 1959; Kooy, 1977; Atkinson 2007). Commonly the labour role of women (and children) on the farms more closely resembled servitude because they were compelled by their relation to their husbands and farm owners to take up labour activities while having no tenure privileges in their own right (Woolman & Bishop, 2007). The patriarchal subjection of women on farms to the men who are their employers and to those who are their partners and fellow workers means that the twin devils of physical and sexual

violence are a reality for women on farms (Waldman & Ntsedi, 1997:104). Women experience domination both as a workplace and household phenomenon (Hill-Lanz & O'Grady, 1997:111). As Hill-Lanz and O'Grady (1997:114) state:

In addition to these restrictions imposed by the employment system, social and religious norms bear down on women. A woman's place is seen to be in her husband's home, caring for him and their children.

Thus, women's residential status on farms largely depends on the employment of the male who is considered the household head (usually the senior married and working male) (Cross & Friedman, 1997:23; Orton et al, 2001). It is not surprising then that Waldman and Ntsedi (1997:97) found that women's overall condition was generally worse on farms than that of men. However, there are examples of women fighting for their residential rights when facing eviction (Naidoo, 2005). Women can contest and resist this circumscription. However, there is a paradox. Literature shows that, with the restructuring of agriculture in the 1980s, the labour force in certain labour-intensive sectors has become increasingly feminised and casualised, resulting in the overall preference for more women as workers; however work conditions have become more exploitative (Marcus, 1989; Kritzing & Vorster, 1996).

These debates on paternalism, agency, and gender on farms, although providing insight into power relations, have also tended to locate the bounded world of "the farm" at the centre of farm-worker sociology. In this literature, the employer-employee relationship is at the heart of the analysis. This tends to obscure or place secondary analytical importance on other dimensions of farm workers' and -dwellers' lives. While "tenure as privilege" means farm workers have to mediate on-farm relations to maintain security of tenure, there are other mechanisms that farm workers draw upon to mitigate the vagaries of their employment environment. Migration trends are a key analytical lens with which to understand farm workers' and -dwellers' strategic choices around tenure security.

Roberts (1959:84) found that, in the Albany district (200 km from Cradock) in 1959, the general farm-worker population tended to circulate within the limited economic geography of their agricultural districts rather than confine themselves to specific farms. Farm workers would tend to "seek employment within a very small area throughout their working lives" and thus the labour population appeared static and unchanging at the district level, however, a closer inspection revealed constant movement (1959:84). Two factors likely explained this: first, the structural limitations created by influx control mechanisms under white rule

constrained farm workers by area and type of employment; and secondly, the kinship networks of farm workers between farms, which facilitated intra-district employment (1959:84-86).

Lack of housing security on farms was identified as a key factor pushing farm workers to town (Roberts, 1959). Kooy's (1977:112) seminal but thin study of the Karoo indicated that 73% of farm workers circulated employment within farms in their district, whilst 27% left for town. This farm-to-town trend was noted by Monica Hunter (1936); however, whereas Kooy (1977) implies a unidirectional move to town, Hunter, like Roberts, emphasises district circulation. Hunter noted (1936:506) of the Albany, Bedford and Adelaide districts in *Reaction to Conquest* that:

There is also coming and going between farms and towns. In every district there is a dorp or town, with a Native Location attached, to which farm servants go for shopping and to visit friends.

However, rural urbanisation was an irreversible reality, with some permanently settling in town when they found employment (Hunter 1936:506).

Hunter (1936) identified three patterns of "voluntary" movement by farm workers and -dwellers, that is, (i) back-and-forth movements of kin between farm and town, (ii) permanent settlement in town and (iii) a pattern also identified, that is farm-to-farm circulation by workers within one district. These three patterns of movement evolve over time and become conscious decisions by farm workers and -dwellers to manage family survival and stability in the face of uncertainty and poor conditions on farms.

Farm workers and -dwellers have been historically caught between several difficult options – the farms, the former reserves and town – each with their own limitations. This pattern of to-ing and fro-ing between different living spaces over one's lifetime is a familiar story for farm workers and -dwellers. In the end, as Hunter (1936) and Antrobus (1984) observed, the reserves were too impoverished for people to return to, thus the struggle to maintain a viable existence has inevitably been played out between the farm and the town. Smith (1976) identifies the availability of alternative livelihoods for farm workers in town as the cause of steady migration off the farms in the Graaff-Reinet area. Scully (1989:291) identified circulation between farms and town as a form of "bargaining power" since abandonment can frustrate farmers into improving conditions to prevent high labour turnover. Findings in this thesis confirm that, not only are these longstanding practices in the Cradock area, they

are also central to farm workers and -dwellers and the pursuit of long-term tenure security and household survival.

Manona's (1988) in-depth study of farm-to-town migration in the Grahamstown area found that landlessness was the central problem dictating farm workers' choices to urbanise permanently in the district's service town. Manona (1988) locates the greatest efflux from farms as being in the post Second World War period when a combination of laws, economic factors and shifting relationships on farms encouraged greater outward migration into urban employment. Farm workers are likely to stick close to the urban centres within the farming district because it would be economically risky to move to far-off major cities (Connor, 2005:80; Atkinson, 2007:111). By living in town centres, farm workers and -dwellers can attempt to stabilise their tenure insecurity while seeking employment on farms as well as in town.

A further contributing factor towards migration is the geographic dispersal of farms which makes accessing town-based social services difficult (Atkinson, 2007). Ease of access to welfare support services has been, and still is, limited on farms (South African Human Rights Commission – SAHRC, 2004). Weak government reach to the farms regularly leads to the basic socio-economic rights of farm workers and -dwellers not being realised, specifically in relation to social grants, health services and schooling (SAHRC, 2004). In the post-apartheid era, State social support services to farms has declined considerably while the capacity of rural NGOs to fill the gap remains weak (SAHRC, 2004, Atkinson, 2007). Farm workers' and -dwellers' pursuit of a minimum standard quality of life depends on their ability to move away from the farms when necessary.

What emerges thus is a picture of a relatively mobile farm-worker/-dwelling population, even though such populations remain relatively bounded within the economic geography of rural districts. Tenure insecurity results not only in evictions and displacements which are prominent in studies of farm workers and -dwellers, but also in voluntary movement in pursuit of better alternatives. Chapters Four and Five argue this point more fully. Bringing into view both voluntary and involuntary movement patterns highlights the varied responses to, and outcomes of, tenure insecurity – that is, insecurity is not singularly evinced by 'the eviction' and moments of disruption. This assertion goes to the heart of the challenge that this thesis brings to the existing debate on the tenure consequences of farm conversions – that is, the contention that game-farm conversions cannot be simplistically attributed as a driver of evictions and tenure insecurity where such insecurity is embedded deeply in

structural inequality, and indeed, game farms themselves emerge from a historical moment of structural crisis in the agricultural political economy.

## **DEFINING FARM WORKERS AND -DWELLERS**

The section defines the term ‘farm dweller’ as it relates to this thesis because the term tends to encompass a variety of people found on farms. It can be taken as a given that the term a ‘worker’ is someone who works on the farm and does so in their individual capacity. However, farm dwellers may or may not be workers on the farm; they may reside there on the basis that they are related to a permanent worker. They may provide seasonal or casual labour, and some are both. It must be kept in mind that not all workers are dwellers, and not all dwellers are workers. The Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA 2005:4), a land rights NGO in KwaZulu-Natal, defines farm dwellers as:

... a category of rural women, girls, boys and men, who view the farm as their home, are born on, live on, work on farms [with or] without salary; who consider themselves to have a right to reside on a farm in spite of not having approved documentation to support this; their claims are supported by their history as residents and community of that farm and by the fact that their ancestral graves are located there.

This definition implies a “dweller” that expresses strong moral entitlements or makes “claims” over a specific farm as a place of residence where some form of material or other evidence is marshalled in support of that claim. Arguably, not all farm-dwellers will express these forms of claims with regard to the farm where they live. The notion of “claims” is also used in Miller’s (2005, 2006) work on “claim making” by Zambian and Mozambican workers of South African Shoprite supermarket chain stores. Claims are defined by Miller (2005:125) as the way in which “workers view their workplace entitlements”. Claims are discursive constructions of how the workers imagine themselves within institutional arrangements, and Miller (2005) posits that geographic imagination, sense of space and place, forms a part of how these claims are formulated. Claims made by workers are supported not necessarily by material evidence, but “relationally”, through perceptions, dominant discourses, and a “reference-point” that is chosen in a meaningful, plausible way” (Miller 2005:123). In light of Du Toit’s (1993) work on paternalist relations as a framework for claim-making between farm workers and farmers, it can be argued that claims, however valid within a discourse, are circumscribed by power relations and material realities. There is an inherent disjuncture in paternalism (*deel van die plaas*) on the one hand, and the dominance of farmers on the other. Power and inequality on farms determine not only

whether and how farm workers' claims are made, but also whether they have any purchase given the dominance of the farmer. It could also be argued, in the light of inherent power disjuncture of the paternalist framework, AFRA's definition of a "farm-dweller" elides the very real ways in which inequality can undermine farm workers' and -dwellers' constructions of their claims to reside on farms. The definition of farm-dwellers in this thesis thus takes the view that claims of residential entitlement can also be tenuous and articulated ambivalently. Tenure security reform cannot be premised on the one-dimensional notion that farm workers and -dwellers always express strong moral claims or attachments to farms.

## **APPROACHES TO TENURE REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA**

"Tenure reform" is a process of

planned change in the terms and conditions (e.g. the adjustment of the terms of contracts between land owners and tenants, or the conversion of informal tenancy into formal property rights) [in order to] secure people's land rights (Adams et al, 1999:2).

Tenure reform processes are political and are driven by a variety of social and economic factors which provoke questions around the land status quo and the manner in which it addresses contemporary needs (Wily, 2000:1). Boone (2007:558) notes that:

in agrarian society, to reform the rules of land tenure is to redefine relationships between and within communities, and between communities and the State.

Tenure reform is thus a process of transforming socio-legal institutions and, concurrently, those social relations through which access to land and resources is determined.

Literature on tenure reform in Africa has predominantly focused on the problems of "communal" land (Adams et al, 1999; Wily, 2000; Toulmin & Quan, 2000; Mafeje, 2003; Boone, 2007).<sup>14</sup> This focus speaks to the resilience of pervasiveness of peasant production and contested traditional land-tenure regimes across Africa. Exceptions which focus on residential tenure of farm workers on formerly white-only commercial land are, in the main, on Namibia and Zimbabwe, which have similar farm-labour histories as South Africa (Rutherford, 2001; Sylvain, 2001; Moyo, Rutherford & Amanor-Wilks, 2000; Chambati & Magaramombe, 2008). The presence of this entrenched commercial farm-working

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<sup>14</sup> Toulmin and Quan's (2000) edited volume *Evolving Land Rights, Policy and Tenure in Africa*, although covering the scope of the entire continent, deals almost entirely with customary tenure which virtually excludes the peculiar experiences of people dwelling on commercial farm lands.

population, specifically in south-eastern Africa, fits into Samir Amin's (1972:106) conception of the region as "Africa of the labour reserves".

Section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, contained in the Bill of Rights, "places a responsibility on the State to carry out land-related reforms, and grants specific rights to victims of past discrimination" (Lahiff, 2007:1579). The constitutional framework provides for the protection of the right to private property in section 25(1) whilst stipulating that historical land dispossessed, and land access inequity as well as tenure insecurity must be addressed in section 25(5) to 25(7). From these constitutional provisions, the African National Congress government derived its much-criticised land-reform policy programme. Tenure reform measures are intended to address two different areas. The first area is that in former homelands, communally held landholding systems, unregistered and untitled lands, must be brought under appropriate administration so that people's claim to it can be clearer. To this end, the Communal Land Rights Act was passed in 2004 (SAHRC, 2004). At least 33% of South Africans live in these communal areas (SAHRC, 2004). The second area of land-tenure reform, with which this thesis is concerned, relates to farm workers and -dwellers who are residents on farms in previously white-only areas.

While it is generally agreed that South Africa's overall land-reform project has thus far failed, particularly in terms of meeting redistribution targets and securing the tenure of farm workers and -dwellers, scholars do not agree on why. Ntsebeza (2007:112) locates the failure in the National Party's victory in entrenching of the property clause in the Bill of Rights, thereby constraining the State's ability to intervene effectively in land markets. Thus, it has been argued that "colonial land theft" has now been protected by a constitutional dispensation (Hendricks and Ntsebeza in Hall, 2004:214).

However, the power of the property clause in maintaining current landholding patterns has been challenged by Hall (Hall, 2007; Ntsebeza, 2007), who claims that it is not the property clause that prevents acquisition of land, but the State's reticence to use the expropriation powers provided by the Constitution. Lahiff (2007:1580, 1581) concurs with Hall, arguing that:

By the time of the White Paper on South African Land Policy of 1997 ... a market-based approach, and particularly the concept of "willing buyer, willing seller", had become the cornerstone of policy. Such an approach was not dictated by the South African constitution, which makes explicit provision for expropriation for purposes of land reform and for compensation at below market prices, but was rather a policy choice... Government has tended to attribute this slow progress to resistance from landowners and the high prices being demanded for land, but independent studies

point to a wider range of factors, including complex application procedures, budgetary limitations and bureaucratic inefficiency.

Walker (2003:126) argued specifically in relation to gender policy in land reform that it was poorly conceptualised, while the State lacked the budgetary and institutional capacity to manage and monitor it.

In a rejoinder to Hall, however, Ntsebeza (2007) contends that, even if legal mechanisms of expropriation were evoked, legal wrangling over how to determine reasonable compensation for farmers would likely stymie the process in any case. Research has found conflicting trends amongst farmers. On one hand, research by Mbatha, Antrobus and van Rooyen (2008) found that willing sellers offered their properties in line with general market prices, in other words, without inflating the price when selling to the State. On the other hand, conservative white farmers have stated that they would refuse to sell to the State on ideological grounds, even with adequate compensation (Fraser, 2008). Fraser (2008:25) documents that some conservative white farmers experience “political disarticulation from the State” whilst having “strong emotional bonds to the land”, thus

the decision not to sell stemmed from their material *and* symbolic interests in the land. Receiving monetary payments was never likely to lead sufficient numbers to sell.

Their identities were tied to their place as farmers on the land and to Afrikaner nationalism, while their conceptions of black agricultural practices and their legitimacy as potential co-agricultural producers were deeply imbued with racism (Fraser, 2008).

While the de facto position of the State has been to allow the market to reign, it is evident that there is no clear consensus on the kind of development trajectory tenure reform is meant to embody; there is what Mngxitama (2001:11) calls a “theoretical cul de sac of policy makers”. The complexity of tenure reform for farm workers on private commercial farms is evident in the multiple conflicting views in the literature, premised on differing normative conceptions of what the fate of farm workers and -dwellers should be within the broader political economy of land (Cousins, 2007; Walker, 2007; Bernstein, 2007; Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007). What do affected farm workers and -dwellers think, believe, want and need? Is tenure reform about securing an immediate housing need, or is it concerned with resolving problems of historical injustice or strengthening the socio-economic rights accorded by the South African Constitution? Boone (2007) states that the debate is divided broadly between two competing political perspectives on whether tenure reform should be driven either

through the promotion of market-led mechanisms, or through State-led non-market restructuring policies (Boone, 2007).

There are three main theoretical approaches to farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure reform which can be extrapolated from literature, that is, (i) a rights-based approach, (ii) a modernisation approach, and (iii) an agrarian approach. Each approach provides a conceptualisation of the causes of tenure insecurity and proposes remedies accordingly. The nature of tenure insecurity is contested between these paradigms, and, where this thesis is particularly concerned, with regard to which provides the most just and lasting method for remedying workers and -dwellers' insecurity on farms.

### **i) The rights-based approach**

The rights-based approach views tenure security as a constitutional entitlement where expressed laws provide “the basis for claims to land and resources” (Cousins, 1997). The White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997) recognised insecure residential tenure when it stated that:

a major cause of instability in rural areas are the millions of people who live in insecure arrangements on land belonging to other people

and affirmed that this was an historically rooted structural problem resulting from “literally hundreds of land-related racially discriminatory laws introduced and enforced under colonialism and apartheid”. Accordingly, in section 25(6) of the South African Constitution it stipulated that persons or communities

whose tenure of land is legally insecure as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to tenure which is legally secure or to comparable redress.

In order to give effect to section 25(6) of the Constitution, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, Act No. 3 of 1996 (LTA) (RSA, 1996) and the Extension of Security Tenure Act, Act No. 62 of 1997 (ESTA) (RSA, 1997) were passed to protect farm workers and -dwellers from arbitrary evictions from the farms they live on. ESTA “occupier” status provides legal recognition for persons affected by past and present structural insecurity. Samaai (2006:9) proposes that the courts can use social rights encoded within law to develop transformative jurisprudence that considers

the impact of the past on the current reality of the occupier and formulate a just and equitable outcome, which facilitates transformation.

Laws such as ESTA (RSA, 1997) and LTA (RSA, 1996) provide wide enough ambit to make judgments on cases by considering “all relevant circumstances”; this prescription has been variously interpreted by the courts in this country, some taking a more conservative approach that gives precedence to common law property rights, others taking poverty, inequality and other circumstances of vulnerability into account (Samaai, 2006).

“Tenure insecurity” in this approach is thus viewed as the weakness or absence of institutionally enforceable rights for farm workers and -dwellers defined as occupiers. ESTA (RSA, 1997) is concerned primarily with regulating unequal tenure relations on farms. Its main objectives are:

... to regulate the conditions of residence on certain land; to regulate the conditions on and circumstances under which the right of persons to reside on land may be terminated; and to regulate the conditions and circumstances under which persons, whose right of residence has been terminated, may be evicted from land; and to provide for matters connected therewith.<sup>15</sup>

The key focus of the Act is on securing long-term tenure for those defined as “occupiers” by preventing unfair or arbitrary eviction and minimising the impact of legal eviction on them. In doing so, ESTA (RSA, 1997) deals with five key areas:

- a) It grants farm workers and -dwellers who fulfil certain criteria rights to reside (occupy) on land that they do not own. It defines two types of rights-bearing land occupiers – long-term occupiers who resided on the farm before 4 February 1997 and/or have resided there for ten years and have reached the age of 60, and occupiers who have resided on land on or after 4 February 1997.
- b) Section 3 of ESTA defines how consent for occupation, and thus the terms of the tenure contract, is considered to have been granted.
- c) It stipulates services, amenities and other entitlements to which occupiers have a right.
- d) It regulates relations between owners and occupiers by providing a set of rights and responsibilities of each.
- (e) It stipulates the conditions under which the occupation contract can be ended and what sets out procedures under which evictions can be considered legal.

This legislation has come under fire from various perspectives. Critics of ESTA argue that it is either doing too much for farm workers and too little for farmers; too little for farmers and

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<sup>15</sup> Extension of Security Tenure Act, Act No. 62 of 1997 (RSA, 1997).

too much for farm workers; or simply strong where it matters little, and weak where it matters most. Hall (2003:22) concludes that:

ESTA is, nominally, a “balanced” piece of legislation in that it imposes obligations on both farm dwellers and -owners, as well as creating rights. What is surprising is that such an apparently even-handed law is to be applied to such a strikingly unequal set of social and economic relations– without the power to transform them. It also combines weak substantive rights with strong procedural requirements and relies on institutions that are at worst hostile to ESTA and at best inadequately resourced and co-ordinated to enforce these procedural rights.

The enforcement of rights requires State capacity and thus far there has been very little ESTA support coming from the State (Wegerif et al, 2005). Wegerif et al (2005:48) found that farm owners did not comply with legally stipulated processes. Farm workers and -dwellers also do not have sufficient education, information and access to financial resources to fight unfair evictions in court through ESTA (SAHRC, 2004). Courts have tended to protect the rights of property owners even where evictions have been arbitrated through the Land Claims Court (LCC). The decisions have rarely been in favour of the evictee as courts have placed common law property rights above human rights considerations (Wegerif et al, 2005:76; Hattingh, 2008).

Ironically, ESTA has also served some farmers’ interests in cases where farmers continued to evict farm dwellers by following legal procedures (Atkinson, 2007:87). Thus, it has been argued that ESTA does not actually create “real or substantive rights to land” for affected dwellers and workers (Wegerif et al, 2005:75; Hattingh, 2008). Hattingh (2008) takes this proposition further by applying a gendered analysis to the LCC, positing that some of its major judgments construct the “farm worker” as a “man”, thereby stripping women dwellers of independent rights of residence; in doing so, the LCC’s approach has been sexist and unconstitutional. Cousins (1997) notes that the challenge for tenure reform is to ensure that “‘rights in law’ become ‘rights in reality’” however, given the limits of ESTA in practice, it appears that rights-based tenure security is difficult to realise given inequality rooted in prevailing property relations.

## **ii) The modernisation approach**

In the modernisation scheme: “Third World societies will eventually come to resemble the industrialised West” (Gelderblom & Kok, 1994:10). The modernisation paradigm takes the view that the onward march of urbanisation is not only inevitable, but also preferable for farm workers and -dwellers facing tenure insecurity. Anne Bernstein (2005) argues that

South African land-reform policies, including tenure reform, should be informed by a modernising impulse. In Bernstein's (2005) conception, the very debate on land reform is stuck in "rural paradigms" that can never adequately deliver; instead she calls for the "urbanising" of the land debate. The redistribution of land as a form of securing more equal tenure is not necessarily seen as the answer to farm workers' tenure security dilemmas, since the onward march of modernity will necessarily demand a relatively small commercial agricultural class to produce the surplus that feeds the urban areas (Bernstein, 2005).

A similar perspective is taken more specifically on the farm-worker issue. Atkinson (2007:8-10) suggests that the problem facing farm workers and -dwellers is one of lack of services, a "development gap", job losses and lack of professionalisation and unequal social relations on farms.<sup>16</sup> Atkinson (2007:90) goes so far as to argue that:

the real debate should not be about farm workers' residential rights on farms. This is a mere distraction from the much more-pressing issues of what kind of labour farmers need to be economically effective; of providing the training and support to ensure such a labour supply; of providing housing and social services where most convenient for employers and employees alike.

Thus, real transformation in farm workers' and -dwellers' lives will come not through "de jure protection" of unenforceable rights, but rather through economic incentives for farmers to co-operate with the State for the provision of services for farm workers and -dwellers who have been retrenched and evicted (Atkinson, 2007:89).

The focus of this paradigm is thus on the development of off-farm housing for farm workers and -dwellers; that is, outside of their working environment on the farm. The rupture between the place of employment (farm) and the place of residence (family and kin) is what becomes necessary for the full process of modernisation, more specifically urbanisation, to take place (Gelderblom & Kok, 1994a:5). Atkinson (2007) asserts that this approach to tenure reform measures perpetuates outdated, paternalistic feudal-style land relations which not only keep farm workers and -dwellers on farmers' lands, but also shift State responsibility for social service provision on to farmers.

Atkinson (2007:95) argues that policies aimed primarily at protecting farm workers' and -dwellers' residence on a farm are "anachronistic" and implicitly follow the paternalist mode of farm life:

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<sup>16</sup> Atkinson summed this scheme up at a land workshop – *From Merino to Rhino* – at a Stakeholder feedback meeting held in Cradock on 15 January 2011: (i) quality of work; (ii) quantity of work; (iii) geographic proximity and (iv) social relations.

Why else would a law be passed that attempted to entrench farm workers' residence rights on the farms? If the real issue was simply a matter of ensuring housing and services to farm workers, it could be done much more effectively by offering incentives to farmers, to provide on-farm or off-farm housing or by prioritising farm workers for government housing subsidies.

In this way tenure reform would be aimed at transforming and modernising the relationship between farmer and worker, which, Atkinson (2007) posits, cannot be achieved by forcefully binding either in perpetual bonds on the land through the enforcement of tenure rights on farms.

### **iii) The agrarian approach**

Atkinson's (2007) contention that the transformation of "backward" social relations between farmer and farm-worker is shared by radical agrarian-reform advocates such as Mngxitama (2001:4), who contends that farm workers and -dwellers remain trapped in "semi-feudal" relations on farms; he criticises the rights-based tenure reform, arguing that:

These laws created to protect farm dwellers were not calculated to break the power of the rural elite created by colonialism and apartheid. They simply seek to improve the relations within the context of semi-feudal relations.

However, that is as far as the agreement goes. Whereas the thrust of the modernisation approach is towards progressive professionalisation of farm work, without extensive restructuring of land holdings, Mngxitama (2001) and others who advocate for a radical agrarian approach argue that tenure security cannot be resolved outside of addressing the legacies of dispossession in former settler colonial states.

In a study of women farm workers' persistent struggle to access secure housing tenure and food security, Shabodien (2008: no page number) concludes that:

... the solution to the housing problem is not a housing solution after all. Housing in the context of farming must be located within the framework of agriculture and the need to transform the entire agricultural sector. We can fight evictions and ensure that workers stay where they are, then simply create poverty traps this way.

Moyo et al (2000) believe that the precarious land-tenure situation of farm workers and -dwellers in Zimbabwe would best be addressed through an integrated development framework that is premised on land redistribution in order to address their specific socio-economic problems. They put forward the proposal that:

Land rights for farm workers begin by enabling them to have a residential plot of their own. Every Zimbabwean should have a plot of land to build a house on. Farm

workers also need land set aside for a small subsistence garden and field within the homestead (Moyo et al, 2000:195).

Indeed, white conquest of land and the emergence of a reliable pool of cheap black labour serving capital were two key processes in the making of the modern South African State (Bundy, 1972; Wolpe, 1972). Out of this historic conquest emerged political questions on land and agrarian concerns and their place in national liberation struggles. Thus, Cousins (2004:2) put forward an *agrarian question of the dispossessed* which encompasses the breadth of socio-economic problems facing rural populations, proposing that:

... rural poverty needs to be conceptualised in terms of an agrarian question of the dispossessed, that can only be resolved through a wide-ranging agrarian reform that must include the redistribution of land and the securing of land rights, but must go beyond land questions and restructure the agrarian political economy as a whole.

Thus, this thesis contends that neither the rights-based approach nor the modernisation approach can deal adequately with structurally-entrenched tenure insecurity. In foregrounding dispossession, an agrarian approach to tenure reform necessarily invokes racially based, historical dispossession as one of the premises for formulating tenure security reform that goes beyond rights to live on the farmer's land. In examining the assumptions behind the agrarian approach to tenure reform, two questions arise: (a) "Does a land question exist?" and (b) "Does an agrarian question exist?"

The discussion which follows will argue that these questions remain pertinent, and that they provide a critically encompassing framework for understanding the nature of the tenure insecurity as it is presented by the expansion of the game-farming sector. The argument is made in two stages: (i) the nature of land and agrarian questions and (ii) the wildlife sector in the context of land and agrarian questions.

## **LAND, AGRARIAN QUESTIONS AND FARM WORKERS AND -DWELLERS**

Historically, the overthrow of racial oppression broadly was encapsulated by the national question. According to Mafeje (1997:8), the national question in Africa "referred to liberation from colonial domination and exploitation" which would "usher in 'nation-states' and 'nations' in the sense of one people"; an outcome which according to Mafeje failed to happen in much of Africa. Jordan (1997) states that the national question

refers to the oppression of one or a number of other people/s by a dominant colonial/imperial power. Consequently, the right to self-determination or to national

freedom/independence does not apply to the dominant group, but is applied exclusively to the oppressed or dominated group.

That this domination was articulated and imposed on the basis of white supremacist ideology necessarily means that race is a defining feature of the national question.

Thus, Mafeje (1997:11) theorised, the national question of southern African states could not be said to be resolved unless the following conditions had been met: that there would be

anti-racial domination and redistribution of wealth between whites and Blacks. Without this we cannot talk of democracy in southern Africa.

In other words, until the racialised structures of economic maldistribution are transformed, then democracy could not have been said to have been achieved which Mafeje (1997:11) argues

includes a continuous and continuing improvement of the conditions of livelihood of the oppressed and exploited mass of the population.

Democratisation, however, only achieved partial resolution to the core concerns (as articulated by Mafeje) of the national question. Jordan recognised in 1997 that the national question remained unresolved, however, he observed that it was

... not in the form in which it is conventionally understood! Racism is no longer institutionalised; all South Africans now have the franchise; racial restrictions on property rights and on access to the professions, trades, forms of work have been abolished; the instruments of labour coercion have been done away with; and a democratic Constitution has put an end to legal repression.

There were limits to liberation which “were registered in continuities of historic relations to property, production and economic power” (Bernstein, 2003:212).

## **IS THERE A LAND QUESTION?**

Moyo (2007:62) states that while former Lusophone colonies were able to resolve their land questions, in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa:

... negotiated settlement left both national and land questions relatively unresolved. In particular, the racial dimensions of the national question have not been adequately addressed. Thus, racially inequitable structures of wealth, income and land distribution remain intact, while liberal democratic constitutions and market principles protect these inequalities and inequities combined with macroeconomic stabilisation, extroverted trade liberalisation and deregulation of domestic markets.

The “land question” in this context refers to the persistent racial imbalance in land ownership and

whether, and to what degree the rights held by whites over land that was expropriated historically are valid and socially and politically legitimate (Moyo, 2007:64).

Moyo (2008:20) posits that the peculiarity of the land question in Africa has its basis in “living memory” and resides within the national question, and the demands for redress of racial imbalances in property and the economy. In this regard, the land question is “normative” and

tied into expectations that former colonial masters should pay the ‘victims’ of current land reform expropriations, if not the victims of colonial expropriation, who have suffered long-term loss (Moyo, 2008:20).

It is in southern African states that “the most explosive land questions have arisen”, in particular, “Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, where extreme settlerist land expropriation occurred” (Moyo, 2007:60). Land alienation from conquest in southern Africa ranged from 30 to 80%, with South Africa experiencing the largest extent of land conquest (Moyo, 2008:29).

### **IS THERE AN AGRARIAN QUESTION?**

Concomitant with land questions, agrarian scholars debate whether or not an agrarian question still exists. In the classic sense, the “agrarian question” refers to the agrarian question of capital, that epoch in which the development of the productive forces in the countryside effected transition into capitalist agrarian and industrial relations (Bernstein, 2003:209). Bernstein (2003:203) posits three dimensions to the “classic” agrarian question. These are (i) struggles by agrarian classes towards socialism, (ii) the emergence of capitalist productive forces within the agrarian economy, and (iii) the transition from agrarian to industrial capitalism (Bernstein, 2003, 2007). McLaughlin (1998:31) states that:

in recent years, the Agrarian Question has re-emerged in the context of neo-populist concerns over the survival of the family farm in the U.S. and peasantries in the Third World.

Indeed, the debate on the agrarian question turns on the extent to which petty commodity production remains a viable force in the face of commercial agriculture (Neocosmos, 1993).

In the 1970s and 1980s revisionist Marxist and social history scholarship, devoted to the debate (often combative)<sup>17</sup> on the periodisation of South Africa's agrarian transition, was preoccupied with explicating the nature and forms of the agrarian classes arising (or disappearing) as a result of this transition.<sup>18</sup> Bundy's (1972, 1979) path-breaking contribution put forward the thesis that short-lived but thriving African peasantisation preceded, and motivated, coercive proletarianisation by the white State which would impoverish Africans and feed the system of labour migrancy upon which industrialisation was built. Phimister (1974) put forward a similar argument on the emergence and deterioration of peasant production in southern Rhodesia between 1890 and 1914.<sup>19</sup>

Critiques of the Bundy thesis raised questions on the nature of African peasantries vis-à-vis the emerging African working class, and the ongoing significance of land in household reproduction. Isaacman (1990: 9) labelled the "rise and fall" model as a premature "strangulation" of the peasantry in scholarly analysis. Indeed, debates within wider Africanist literature have demonstrated that persistent peasant concerns over land and autonomy were the crucible from which African anti-colonial struggles and subsequent post-independence political contestation were forged (Mbeki, 1964; Isaacman, 1977, 1985; Isaacman et al, 1980; Hydén, 1980; Klein, 1980; Ranger, 1985). In the South African context, Beinart, Delius and Trapido (1986) and Van Onselen (1996) provided a combination of rich local-level studies which document differentiated forms of resistance and adaptation by the dispossessed in the form of labour tenancy and sharecropping. Bradford's (2000) gendered rebuttal of Bundy's African peasantry thesis demonstrated that pre-industrial agrarian producers combined various kinds of petty commodity production with wage labour. In contrast to Bundy's study (1972, 1979), Bradford eschews deterministic notions of Marxian agrarian transformation in favour of an empirically-grounded analysis. Neocosmos (1993) launched a critique of the "linear proletarianisation

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<sup>17</sup> For examples of this heated debate see:

Morris, M. 1988. Social History and the Transition to Capitalism in the South African Countryside. *Review of African Political Economy*. 41:60-72;

Murray, M. 1989. The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Critique of the 'Social History' Perspective. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 15(4):645-665;

Keegan, T. 1989. The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Reply, *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 15(4):666-684;

Bradford, H. 1990. Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs: The Transition to Agrarian Capitalism in Revisionist South African History. *Radical History Review*. 46(7):59-88.

<sup>18</sup> There is a vast global scholarship on the emergence of peasantries within classical agrarian transition. Shanin (1966) provides a definitive conception of peasant production as located primarily within the household. See: Shanin, T. 1966. The Peasantry as a Political Factor. *Sociological Review*. 14 (1): 5-10.

<sup>19</sup> See Phimister, I. 1974. Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1914. *African Affairs*. 73(291): 217-228.

thesis”, contending that the notion that “the agrarian economies of the South are primarily ‘labour reserves’” does not match the reality of peasants whose petty commodity production has occurred under highly repressed State relations. Thus, Neocosmos (1993:48) argued, for example, that the 1.1 million “farm workers” recorded as being removed from white-owned farms by Platzky and Walker (1985), were actually “peasant labour tenants”.

In the context of African democratisation and more intense global integration since the end of the Cold War, the question of whether or not land-hungry classes still exist remains the central pivot of agrarian debates. In this thesis we limit the debate to three scholars who have encompassed the southern African context within their respective positions on the nature of the agrarian question in the contemporary global era.<sup>20</sup>

Bernstein (2003:210) puts forward the position that under conditions of global integration and commercial exchange, the agrarian question, in its classic formulation, “is no longer a concern of capital on a global scale”. This view supposes that petty commodity production or subsistence agriculture is a marginal force, certainly not a driver, in the greater convulsions of global capitalist economy. Bernstein re-focuses land questions away from “idealised” agrarian classes, but on an embattled global proletariat. Trade internationalisation has created an

underlying contradiction of a world capitalist system that promotes the formation of a world proletariat but cannot accommodate a generalised living wage (that is, the most basic of reproduction costs) (Bernstein, 2003:217).

The degradation and cheapening of wage labour on the world scale has largely been recognised as a “race to the bottom” (McMichael, 1999:11). Thus, late capitalism inevitably creates a

global army (or reserve army) of labour ... that is not only growing but pursues its reproduction in conditions of increasingly insecure and oppressive wage labour... (Bernstein, 2003:210).

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<sup>20</sup> For analytical purposes, the debate is confined to Bernstein, Moyo and Hendricks because of their particular focus on land and agrarian questions which are the preoccupation of this thesis. However, the debate on the global status of the peasantry is much wider than these scholars. Bryceson (1996, 1999, 2002) in particular, has advanced the debate on notable trends in the “de-agrarianisation” and “de-peasantisation” of rural Africa. See: Bryceson, D. 1996. Deagrarianization and rural employment in sub-Saharan Africa: A Sectoral Perspective, *World Development*, 24 (1): 97 – 111; Bryceson, D. 1999. African Rural Labour, Income Diversification & Livelihood Approaches: A long-term Development Perspective. *Review of African Political Economy*. 26 (80):171 – 189; Bryceson, D. 2002. The Scramble in Africa: Reorienting Rural Livelihoods. *World Development*. 30 (5): 725–739.

By “fragmentation of labour”, Bernstein (2003:210) refers to the rupture between “proletarianisation with industrial work (or any relatively stable wage)” forcing people into conditions of “insecure and oppressive wage labour combined with a range of likewise insecure ‘informal sector’ (‘survival’) activity”.

Under these conditions, land re-emerges in significance, not because of an unfulfilled agrarian transition in the “classic” sense, but precisely because industrial capitalism can no longer absorb its own labour force. Within this scheme then, land reform, particularly redistributive reform, becomes an imperative not only for “agrarian classes”, but for an assortment of rural and urban workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie seeking land (Bernstein, 2003; 2007). Thus, Bernstein (2003:217) proposes an “agrarian question of labour”, which suggests that struggles for land under conditions of contemporary globalisation are, in essence, struggles of a “growing proletarianisation of labour combined with the forms of its fragmentation in an era of global capitalist restructuring” (Bernstein 2003:217).

However, where Bernstein (2003, 2007) sees a redundant proletariat on a global scale, Moyo (in Moyo & Yeros, 2005) sees various forms of resistance by agrarian classes in Africa and the global South that continue to maintain a presence on the land as “worker-peasants” or “semi-proletarians” who have a foot in both wage and land livelihoods. This is debated to be indicative of the unresolved agrarian question and re-emerging land questions in Africa, Latin America and Asia. While agreeing with Bernstein (2003, 2007) that capital absorbs the costs of its own reproduction, Moyo states that “Socio-economically, we find that the peasantry has not entirely ‘disappeared’” (Moyo & Yeros, 2005:9).

Moyo (2008:6, 34, 56) disputes Bernstein’s (2003, 2007) contention that there is no agrarian question, arguing that:

evidence from Latin America and to a lesser degree in Africa, suggests the re-emergence of land struggles based on new social movements and political alliances, which challenge emergent land and agrarian markets because of growing concentration of landholdings and the widespread marginalisation and poverty of the peasantry and semi-proletarian classes.

Moyo’s (2005, 2008) perspective finds credence in Mafeje’s (2003) view on peasantries in Africa, although there is disagreement in some respects. While Mafeje (2003) has contended that there is no land question in Africa, with the extreme exception of the ex-settler colonies of southern Africa, he asserts that an agrarian question remains. By arguing that an agrarian question remains, Mafeje (2003) highlights the ongoing resilience of peasant and

subsistence agriculture in Africa. In spite of commercial global agriculture, however, the view is that there is no maldistribution of land. Moyo (2008:34, 56, 76), however, while affirming peasant production, has claimed that land and agrarian questions are re-emerging in Africa in the context of unequal and discriminatory land access due to tenure systems, increasing commodification of land for extroverted purposes, increasingly concentrated landholdings and lack of access for urban settlement. In this context, Moyo (2008:122) criticises what he views as a tendency by scholars such as Bernstein (2003) and Mafeje (2003), to “underestimate the scale and scope of the constituency that demands radical land reform.” In highlighting the significance of peasantries (or nascent peasantries) Moyo (2005, 2008) advocates for wide-ranging land reform that promotes small-scale over large-scale commercial farming.

However, the search for a peasantry was long given up by Hendricks (1995:50) at the dawn of democracy in South Africa; he declares that the black desire for smallholder farming was not widespread enough to warrant agrarian reform in the form of “re-peasantisation” which was no more than “rural romanticism”. Hendricks (1995:41) argues specifically that the farm workers in the “white *platteland*” are an indication of the “overwhelming proletarian reality of rural South Africa.” With regard to the people living in the former reserves, Hendricks (1995:48) states that they were a “displaced proletariat” whose continued practice of livelihood from communal land had not prevented proletarianisation. Ottoway (1996:130) makes a similar observation, stating that the South African peasantry never quite came into its own, but, unlike Hendricks, calls for a land-reform policy that would “kick start” some form of peasant-based or mixed livelihoods. There is a resonance in Hendricks’ (1995) and Bernstein’s (2003, 2007) positions, for both view classic agrarian classes as casualties of capitalism’s onward march, and the greater political problem lying with the working class. Hendricks (1995), however, diverges with Bernstein by not positing any agrarian question, but rather asserting that only a land question of racial maldistribution exists in South Africa specifically.

It is apparent that the three positions outlined above rise and fall on what constitutes the “peasantry” or the “proletariat”, and the extent to which (a) these continue to exist empirically and thus (b) have conceptual purchase for land and agrarian questions. Moyo (2005) has criticised both the Hendricksian (1995) and Bernsteinian (2003, 2007) view, stating that the “peasant question (or even the small farmer development trajectory) has been denied by official land-reform policy and intellectual debate”. Indeed, the scholarly

erasure of peasantries is belied by the sub-Saharan reality as documented by Moyo (2005, 2008).

However, there are empirical “blind spots” to a position that cheers the endurance of a peasantry in South Africa where there is a particularly extreme land question. Ntsebeza (2006:7) has argued that, where the South African land context is concerned, Moyo’s position is overly general, and that:

in the light of the proletarianisation debate in South Africa outlined above... Moyo does not do justice to his comparison of southern African countries.

There are empirical realities of proletarianisation which must be understood in the South African context, particularly in the former Cape Colony, and this will be the focus of Chapter Three. Additionally, both Bernstein (2003) and Moyo (2008) problematise the notion of an unchanged agrarian question. Bernstein (2003:215) states that:

the main issue here is the assumption of an agrarian question rooted principally, or even exclusively, in *agrarian classes*, that traverses the entire epoch of modern history from the first (agrarian) transitions to capitalism to the contemporary conditions of imperialism/‘globalisation’.

Bernstein (2003) thus bifurcates the epochs of global capitalism between (i) the era concerned with classic transition, and (ii) the era of globalisation. It is of significance that, in the global era, the distinctions between the various forms of agrarian and working classes has become increasingly blurred as people take up both wage labour and land use at different moments in order to survive (Bernstein, 2003:215).

While the terminological distinctions between the peasantry and the proletariat are of conceptual significance for debates on the era of classic agrarian transition, it does not necessarily follow that these concepts describe fundamentally distinct or mutually exclusive forms of labour under contemporary conditions. Indeed, it is of analytical importance to recognise multiple labour and survival practices. Key questions are to ascertain under what circumstances do wage forms of labour and land-use practices converge and diverge. Thus, Bernstein (2003:217) contends that there is a need to

jettison any remaining assumptions of a sociologically homogenous proletariat, and to confront issues of translating into “political facts” ... the “social facts” of working mass that pursue their livelihoods (means of reproduction/“survival”) through ever more disparate combinations of wage- and self-employment...

In the vein of Bernstein (2003), Moyo (2008) also rejects the notion of a static and unchanging land and agrarian question where political salience is bound primarily to colonial dispossession and agrarian transition. He argues that:

struggles for land in Africa have tended to grow over the last two decades in tandem with massive rural dislocations, increased poverty, growing insecurity over land and natural resource property rights, and numerous violent conflicts over the control of resource and of the State (Moyo, 2008:9).

Thus, the “land question is not only an agrarian issue but also a critical social question” (Moyo, 2008:60). Mkandawire (2007:3) posits that this social question addresses the

problems engendered by social differentiation along class, ethnicity, gender and other social cleavages that arise or are unresolved within a nation.

While these cleavages have their origins in colonial dispossession, they have been transformed by the development trajectories and black political incumbency of the post-colonial State. Moyo and Yeros (2005:14) argue

capitalism has subordinated agriculture to its logic worldwide, but without creating, by necessity, home markets capable of sustaining industrialization, or fulfilling the sovereignty of decolonized states. In this sense, the agrarian question remains unresolved, and in this sense it also remains intimately related to the national question.

The question therefore is not whether there is a demand for land, but “What are the multiple and competing demands for land?” “Who is using land?” “Who seeks it?” “For what purposes?” and “At what scale?” The social question of the rural poor in Brazil through the Landless Workers Movement (*O Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra (MST)*) provides sufficient urgency to the matter of equitable land access (Wright & Wolford, 2003) in order to facilitate the “democratic resolution to the agrarian question”, to borrow from Neocosmos (1993:65).

“Who wants land?” “For what purposes?” and “Under what conditions?” This forms a more layered approach to understanding the way in which farm workers and -dwellers construct themselves in relation to land use and, indeed, in terms of understanding their response to tenure insecurity within the agrarian economy. This agrarian framing of the tenure security problem thus takes a structural approach while rejecting any teleology on how agrarian classes ought to behave in terms of their land and agrarian positioning.

## **GAME FARMING, LAND QUESTIONS AND SHIFTS IN SETTLER-NATIONALIST CAPITAL**

By employing an agrarian framework to tenure insecurity, the thesis situates the game-farm conversion trend within the broader context of land questions and agricultural history of the semi-arid areas. Control over land is inextricable from conservation whether driven by public or private entities. Historically, the power of defining the value and purposes of the wildlife and conservation sectors in South Africa has been the exclusive preserve of white settler-colonial interest groups, conservation primarily served white political hegemony over land management (Brooks, 1990; Carruthers, 1995; Beinart & Coates, 1995; Brockington, 2002; De Wet & Fabricius, 2002; Brown, 2002). In South Africa wildlife conservation formed part and parcel of colonial conquest and dispossession, thus, with the end of apartheid, numerous conservation areas came under claim for land restitution by indigenous communities who were forcefully removed (Beinart & Coates, 1995; Carruthers, 1995; Brockington, 2002; De Wet & Fabricius, 2002). Post-independence contestations and struggles involving conservation areas, people and State agencies have been a dominant theme in literature on the evolution of wildlife policy and practice in Africa; much of it investigating the sustainability of community-based management and benefit-sharing schemes in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanzania (Lewis & Alpert, 1997; Igoe & Brockington, 1999; Duffy, 2000; Baldus & Cauldwell, 2004; Seno & Shaw, 2002; Neumann, 2002; Nelson, 2007).

In South Africa's democratic era, forceful evictions resulting from conversion were viewed as evidence of the localised land struggles precipitated by conversions; indeed, they demonstrated resistance from farm workers and -dwellers (Luck, 2004; Xaba, 2004; Naidoo, 2005; Manyathi, 2008). The central concern for scholars and land rights NGOs (discussed in Chapter One) in other parts of the Eastern Cape and in KwaZulu-Natal has been that game farms were causing unprecedented displacements due to land consolidation; Manyathi (2008), of AFRA, characterised these as "new forms of dispossession". This thesis, however, challenges this 'dispossession' narrative insofar as it cannot be said to apply neatly and uniformly to all conversion-affected areas in South Africa, specifically areas such as Cradock in the Eastern Cape. The thesis suggests that conversions and associated displacements in the semi-arid areas must be understood as being correlatively rather than causally related.

The suggested link between specific *causes* and attributed *effects* must be critically examined, for, as Massey (1995:12) posits,

... spatial patterns are not necessarily the result of spatial causes. Even a highly systematic spatial pattern, a clear geographical regularity, cannot be assumed to have a geographical cause.

The discussion that follows below, and in subsequent chapters, argues that the structural factors underlying the “turn to the wild” in the agricultural sector are significant in shaping a number of problems, both historical and contemporary, facing farm workers and -dwellers in commercial agriculture, including perpetual tenure insecurity. In this chapter we focus mainly on the broader economic context of conversion, other aspects are elaborated upon in the rest of the thesis.

Archer (2002:138) suggests that the turn to commercial wildlife production in the Karoo has happened over the past two decades because “the declining real price for wool” has led farmers to adopt “alternative land uses as a survival strategy”. Economic stagnation in the semi-arid areas in the 1970s and 1980s also saw out-migration by whites who took their skills to bigger cities (Nel & Hill, 2008). The crises facing agriculture and the South African political economy in the 1980s, and the subsequent rise of game farming to take the place of conventional agricultural farming in some areas, evidence Harvey’s notion of the “spatial fix”.

Harvey (2001:25) argues that:

one of the central contradictions of capital (is) that it has to build a fixed space (or ‘landscape’) necessary for its own functioning at a certain point in its history only to have to destroy that space (and devalue much of the capital invested therein).

That is, “Capitalism, we might say, is addicted to geographical expansion much as it is addicted to technological change”; that it “has an insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring” (Harvey, 2001:24). Spatial fix thus refers to capitalism’s inherent “craving” for space (Harvey, 2001). The emergence of game farming must be seen within the context of general liberalisation of the agrarian political economy of southern Africa. From the 1980s, the process of deregulation and liberalisation of South African agriculture flowed from crises of inefficiency and economic dysfunction caused by the State protectionism that had hitherto built up white agriculture.

Bernstein (2007:38) states that since the 1970s there have been major shifts in the global political economy:

... a familiar list would include the deregulation of financial markets; shift in the production, sourcing and sales strategies and technologies of transnational manufacturing corporations (and agribusiness); the massive new possibilities attendant on information technologies, not least for mass communications, and how they are exploited by the corporate capital that controls them; the ideological and political ascendancy of neo-liberalism in (a selective) “rolling back of the State”, including structural adjustment programmes, economic liberalisation and the “State reform”/“good governance” agendas imposed on the countries of the South (and former Soviet bloc).

Vink and Schirmer (2002:51) state that:

by 1976 (coinciding with the Soweto unrest) the economy had moved into a serious recession caused by the OPEC oil-price hikes and a global slowdown in growth. However, South Africa’s recession turned into a period of prolonged stagflation that lasted until 1994.

Facing political insurrection, the Botha regime made policy choices that would prove adverse to the fortunes of white agriculture; there were decreases in its subsidies as the government increased military and education spending, as well as Bantustan agricultural budgets (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:52). The liberalising of the financial sector, in particular austerity measures placed on the Land Bank, in the 1980s had a “knock on” effect on agriculture (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:56). Interest rates spiralled and indeed, “interest rapidly became the single largest cost of production in agriculture” (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:56). Without the bank’s subsidies interest, input costs for farmers increased (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:56). By the 1990s, there was a “wholesale withdrawal of (this) assistance to farmers by the South African government” (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:58). Hall and Ntsebeza (2007:10) state that:

White farmers confronted with the sudden withdrawal of State support, and exposed to foreign competition in domestic markets, had to adapt rapidly to remain in business. Winners and losers emerged from this process and there was a rise in bankruptcies and farm sales, which depressed land prices in some regions – though since the late 1990s land prices have risen dramatically across most of the country.

Amongst the winners were those who had capital that could be used to invest in or convert to game farming. Amongst the losers were those who lost their jobs and homes as workers and -dwellers as farms went out of business or were passed on to new owners.

Thus, it was precisely the devaluing of land and the increased impossibility of agriculture which availed land to be re-used and re-imagined as a different kind of productive asset.

Van Zyl, Binswanger and Thirtle (1995:12) note that:

the high debt loads from capital and land purchases reduced farm profitability and decreased returns to capital-intensive investment. Thus, many farms once thought to be viable by the criteria set in the 1970s were exposed as not viable in the financial crisis of the 1980s.

Agriculture has historically produced a contradictory situation for many Karoo farmers – accumulated investment of capital over the last 150 years could not weather declining ecological fortunes in the form of droughts and adverse terms of international trade. Farming became an almost impossible enterprise and thus, over time, land became “worthless” for conventional farming in spite of all the capital invested and embedded on the land in the form of machinery and other infrastructure – the operational costs were just too high. Infrastructure on a farm is economically meaningless if it cannot be put to productive use. Harvey (2001: 26) argues

Overaccumulation, in its most virulent form (as occurred in the 1930s, for example) is registered as surpluses of labor and capital side by side with seemingly no way to put them together in productive, i.e. “profitable” as opposed to socially useful was. If the crisis cannot be resolved, then the result is massive devaluation of both capital and labour (bankruptcies, idle factories and machines, unsold commodities, and unemployed laborers).

Only when the land was re-imagined for game farming or eco-tourism, did the value of the land to capital re-emerge; new sources of capital were found to re-capitalise farming. The “re-construction” of farm as game farms demonstrates the spatial fix. Harvey (2001:24) relies on the ambiguity of the word “fix” to provide a multi-layered conception of the spatial fix; not only does capitalism “crave” space, but it remedies or fixes its crises in space. It could be contended that conversion to game farming “fixed” the problem of labour redundancy arising from the problems of the 1980s.

### **RE-DESIGNING THE FARM, PRODUCING ‘THE WILD’**

Because it is an act of ‘re-wilding’, of returning to ‘the natural’, the aesthetic dimensions of conversion as a land-use change can mask the underlying operation of capital inherent within.

The transformation of the landscape is a capital investment. Herod (1997:8) argues that:

the secret to capital's success lies in the ability to construct the appropriate material geographies which it can use to facilitate the extraction and realization of surplus value during the accumulation process.

These “material geographies” are not constructed arbitrarily; they are part of broader macro-economic trends.

Thus, the use of land in tourism endeavours occurs because:

Developing countries are considered to have a comparative advantage in tourism, in that they attract tourists from the North, who seek sunshine, beaches and other natural and cultural attractions found in the South. Governments in the South, facing financial problems and an end to secure markets for their goods in former colonial powers, have recognised that tourism can provide an answer to their problems. Most governments, regardless of their political ideology, accept the importance of tourism.... National tourism policies tend to be geared towards the generation of economic growth and the concept of tourism development is regarded as almost synonymous with economic growth, Westernisation and modernisation for governments. Tourism means employment, balance of payments, regional development and foreign exchange (Duffy, 2000:70).

Whereas the marketing of the South African “wilderness experience” was once dominated by State conservation entities such as the Kruger National Park, private individuals “have grasped the opportunity to benefit from the growing eco-tourism market” (Brooks, Spierenburg, Van Brakel & Lukhozi, 2011:261).

Unlike changes of land use between conventional forms of farming, game farming changes the face of a farm, stripping it of much, but not all, of its original infrastructure, and rearranging boundaries and the “feel” of the farm in ways farms do not do when changing to conventional agricultural land use. Whilst other forms of agricultural conversion will add capital and machinery investments for the purposes of conventional production, game-farm conversion engages in creative and symbolically-laden acts of “re-inscribing” wilderness and nature onto agricultural land. It is no mean financial feat, for to “return to a natural system requires capital investment” (Wolmer, 2005:269). Conversion to game ranching is generally recognised as a capital-intensive endeavour; ABSA (Amalgamated Banks of South Africa) states that “even the most successful game ranch requires R6 in capital outlay for every R1 of revenue generated annually” (Wildlife Campus, date unknown). Thus, the re-wilding of the Karoo landscape, in terms of the spatial fix, was the restructuring of “investments spatially, embedding them in land, to create an entirely new landscape... for capital accumulation” (Harvey, 2001:28). Those investing in these game farms are usually

wealthy individuals who may either buy up their own, or partner with existing owners to form joint ventures. The conversion of a conventional agricultural farm into a wildlife-incorporating entity requires the mobilisation of capital towards the transformation of the landscape and the acquisition of the primary attraction – wildlife. Conversion is thus a function of capital without which the southern African multi-million dollar political economy of private wildlife utilisation land use would likely not have developed.

Some studies have focused on the discursive dimensions of this landscape transformation, deconstructing the process through which the landscape is given meaning and purchase as an authentically wild space. Conceptions of ‘naturalness’ and ‘wildness’ play a central role in the success of the wildlife sector and warrant discussion; much of the capital invested in conversion is aimed at achieving a version of wilderness that can be considered sufficiently wild, depending on the objectives of the wildlife establishment.

Drawing on the Baudrillardian (1993) conception of hyperreality, which posits that late capitalist modernity is characterised by the consumption of simulated “authentic” experiences where fantasy and reality are merged and indistinguishable, Haywood (2007:196) describes luxury game lodges like Shamwari in the Eastern Cape, as “private re-wilding tourist ventures that simulate ‘wilderness’ (as) – *hyperwilderness*”. This wilderness is a market-driven, artificially rendered “exclusive” wilderness packaged for consumers who can pay for the experience. Thus, this re-authenticated wild space, previously conventional farmland,

is actively marketed as an exclusive tourist commodity. Appreciation and preservation of wilderness has been primarily driven by wealthy individuals and so, not surprisingly, the new hyperwildernesses rely on luxury tourism (Haywood, 2007:200).

Wolmer (2005:267) states of Zimbabwe that the

manufacturing and marketing of wilderness has been particularly evident on private game ranches and in the so-called conservancies of the lowveld, where former cattle ranchers have gone to new lengths in the creation of a wilderness spectacle.

Predominant aesthetic choices evoke symbolism which suits the imaginations of those classes consuming the wilderness product. Familiar Eurocentric tropes of “wild”, “idyllic”, “Edenic”, and “exotic” landscapes occupy a central place in the marketing narratives. Within the hunting sector, the romance is brought down to the story of the individual hunting lodge and the land-owning family through a marketing narrative emphasising the rootedness of the family to that land and their role in the preservation and rehabilitation of

wilderness. The land-owning family is portrayed as pioneering and resilient on the colonial frontier, putting forward the idea that the people offering this hunting safari are robust, hardy, salt-of-the-earth and reliable with an intimate knowledge of Africa. Generational hunting traditions associate the land-owning family with a “pristine”, but formidable, African landscape that tests the character of the hunter. Although the archetypal hunter has traditionally been regarded as one who eschews the trappings of luxury, only needing a weapon and rudimentary shelter; top hunting outfitters compete on the basis of the comforts that they can provide their high-end clients.<sup>21</sup> One enterprise offers a “combination of relaxed luxury and old traditions”; another promises that “each safari is tailored to the requirements of the client”; all stress their “fine cuisine”.<sup>22</sup>

Green (2010:290) argues that the moral discourse of conservation creates a new space “in which whites can reinvent themselves heroically without worrying too much about the effects of their intervention”. There is a merging of “two widely divergent discourses” – “the clichés from the realm of commercial advertising” on the one hand, and the “profound seriousness of discourse about the environment” which “demands to be taken seriously as an ethical project” on the other (Green, 2010:290). This apparent contradiction between the uninhibited materialism implicit in the consumption of luxury on the one hand, and the self-declared heroic seriousness of an environmental project on the other, is reflected in a number of paradoxes inherent in the production of wilderness for tourist consumption. Promotional materials emphasise both the familiar *and* the exotic; destinations in the global South are constructed as

untouched, unspoiled, and sensuous paradises which incorporate some familiar elements, for example, language, cuisine and European management in order avoid the threat of the ‘exotic’ becoming too foreign (Harrison, 2000:45).

Close proximity to modern infrastructure remains so that tourists feel comfortable in knowing they will reach their bush get-away with relative ease. A key industry guiding text states that “the ranch must have the ‘atmosphere’ of a wilderness area and totally exclude the hunter from urban civilisation” while also being “easily accessible from major cities or have a suitable airstrip” because “this gives busy businessmen from foreign countries an opportunity to find time for a hunt in their rushed programme” (Du Toit & Van Rooyen, 1996:397). The design aesthetic of the landscape at once evokes ruggedness and control; of

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<sup>21</sup> Consummate trophy hunters will seek out their desired trophy in difficult terrain even if there is poor infrastructure; Massyn (2004:6) argues that hunting “is not as fickle as non-consumptive tourism. Hunters are less likely to be diverted by political and security issues”.

<sup>22</sup> Cradock hunting marketing websites.

being lost in the wild yet always connected to civilisation. A hunting-marketing website states that Africa is “wild and cruel, yet warm and hospitable”.<sup>23</sup> If it is a fantasy, it is one that is carefully controlled, its boundaries delimited; the tourist need never fear that any real harm could befall them while revelling in the sense of being somewhere “untamed”. An arrangement of objects and symbols within the game reserve are necessary to simultaneously evoke, without contradiction, order and potential disorder, private indulgence and ethical conservation, unspoilt Eden and cutting-edge modernity, colonial aesthetics and political correctness (Green, 2010).

The wildlife sector thus invests heavily in reproducing an order of symbols, narratives which are palatable to those who are targeted as the consumers of its exclusive product. The re-constructed wilderness is thus neither for all nor is it, ironically, a ‘gift’ bequeathed by nature.

## **RECONSTRUCTED SPACE AND INSECURE LABOUR**

If capital has been re-invested in reshaping new landscapes of consumption, in the form of game farming, to adapt to its internal crises, how then has labour fared? What has been the fate of labour under these conditions that have prompted capital to seek a spatial fix, for indeed, in South Africa and across the African continent, “deregulation and liberalization were a fact of life” in the 1980s (Vink & Schirmer, 2002:58)? While the paradox of having to reconstruct a landscape in order to make it sufficiently natural for consumption can be elided through successful marketing, in reality, the rhetorical centre does not altogether hold easy. There is an inherent tension in the attempt by capital to “fix” its own spaces of accumulation on the one hand, and the conflicting demands and claims made on those spaces by other stakeholders, such as farm workers and -dwellers, and the post-apartheid State.

Recent studies on the spatial dimensions of conversion have provided a more layered analysis of the interactions between sense of place, identity, and culture. Lukhozi (2008) shows that the spatial re-organisation of a farm into a game farm ruptures existing cultural relationships to land, although relations with farmers are not necessarily conflictual. Farmers, however, rearrange space in forms that primarily suit their needs. Furthermore, their perceptions of labour-tenant families and farm workers were imbued with conservatism and racism (Kolk, 2008; Van Brakel, 2008). Connor (2005) and Josefsson

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<sup>23</sup> Cradock hunting marketing website.

(2008) show that State conservation agencies are culpable in land appropriation and the imposition of tourist-driven conceptions of African cultural history. Wolmer (2005) has shown that not only do ideological constructions of land, nature and wildlife shift, but differences of perception on what makes for adequate land use are a key factor in the conflicts over farm conversions.

Brooks et al (2011:262) state that the vision of the luxury wilderness experience is “disrupted by the assertion of other people’s identities and histories on the land” and that the landscape is “not a tabula rasa on which a commodified nature can simply be ‘produced’”. The histories of farms are complex; the people living on that land are not just the land owners who are usually descendants of European settlers in the area, but are also farm workers and -dwellers born and living on those farms. Haywood (2007:202) argues:

... private re-wilding, however ecologically desirable, can sadly also be perceived as perpetuating the colonial project by other means. In addition to the socially contentious thwarting of historically disadvantaged people’s desire for farmland, others may see re-wilding as an attempt to erase the visible history of occupation. The land reverts to indigenous bush, indigenous species are re-introduced and the colonial farmer’s visible presence diminishes as the former farm disappears from view. Also out of sight are the indigenous people, who are either excluded by game fences and economics, or become semi-invisible servants working in lodges.

However, Haywood’s (2007) argument presumes some form of total erasure or severance with a past in which farm workers and -dwellers were more visible in the agricultural landscape. This is true to some degree, but not entirely. In operational terms, game farms require a certain amount of infrastructure. First, workers require accommodation to be provided on the game farm. Secondly, as Wolmer (2005:269) observes:

Attempts to manufacture “wilderness” quality are particularly evident in conservancies and game ranches where – as former (and sometimes current) cattle ranches – cattle troughs, dip tanks, water pipelines, fence lines, paddocks and other legacies of the industry are sometimes all too obviously visible to tourists. One dilemma is that artificial water supplies are necessary if ranches want to stock large numbers of game all the year round...”

In this regard, an analytical emphasis on the *constructed* nature of wilderness can conceal continuities not only in actual processes of production on the game farm, but also in the material conditions of labour on that farm. The visible ruptures in the “look” of the landscape, and how they are justified through the discourse of conservationism and wilderness, do not imply a break in the capitalist relations of production on that particular space. By emphasising the transformation of the landscape, the relation between labour and capital is prematurely cast as having been transformed when all that has changed is what the

farm produces. Merely looking at the spatial transformations or the “aesthetic” nature of the enterprise does not provide a satisfactory answer on how to view the consequences of this industry’s expansion. The link between the “aesthetic transformations” and the impact on labour must be questioned and interrogated rather than assumed to be self-evident.

Game farms must be located within the fuller context of labour history and viewed along with a number of contemporaneous processes affecting labour. Capitalism’s spatial reconfigurations continue to provoke questions on the possibilities and practicalities of land and agrarian reform. For farm workers and -dwellers on white-owned farms, household reproduction requires access to a home. Crisis in employment is reflected in a housing crisis for tenure-insecure South African farm workers and -dwellers because access to a home is tied to the availability of employment. Arguably, this

crisis of labour as a crisis of reproduction – (is) hardly unique to capitalism but undoubtedly intensified by its globalising tendencies (Bernstein, 2007:45).

Harvey (2001:24) argues that:

the contemporary form of globalization is nothing more than yet another round in the capitalist production and reconstruction of space.

Lastly, Herod (1997:3) also posits that it is not just the hegemony of capital that shapes space, but also labour’s responses and enactment of what agency it can wield. Thus,

workers have a vested interest in attempting to make space in certain ways...Whilst capital’s efforts to create landscape in particular ways have been theorised as an integral part of its self-reproduction... workers, too, seek to make space in particular ways...to ensure their own self-reproduction and ultimately survival...

This thesis argues that farm workers and -dwellers are acutely aware that their being tied to housing on farms sets terms against their own long-term socio-economic interests. Farm workers and -dwellers thus seek to actively resolve tenure insecurity through various strategies over the course of their lives. It will be shown that over time, farm workers and -dwellers maintain kinship links between farms and with town, and that these links mitigate tenure insecurity (as well poverty). Over time, pressures to seek alternatives to being exploited workers have led to the gradual dispersal of the family unit away from the farm. Thus, dispersal, and the gradual diminution of the on-farm family, have been ongoing processes in the lives of farm workers and -dwellers, particularly in the Cradock area. In Cradock, game-farm conversions have collided with these processes, in some cases accelerating this already existing process of dispersal, and in others having no effect at all.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure insecurity must be understood within the context of broader land and agrarian questions. In doing so, the chapter argues for tenure insecurity to be understood as a structural phenomenon based on land and broader economic inequality. It has been put forward that land and agrarian questions remain pertinent in the era of globalisation but that they take on new forms under conditions of labour fragmentation. The notion that agrarian questions require an analytical link to the classic notion of "the peasantry" is problematised and dispensed with. The chapter put forward the position that the wildlife sector's impact on farm workers and -dwellers must be understood as part of a greater trend in trade liberalisation and economic restructuring, which gave rise to new forms of capital accumulation and spatial re-organisation. Conversion to wildlife was one of these outcomes and consequences for traditional agricultural labour flowed as a result. Spatial re-organisation in the form of farm conversion and the instability of farm workers and -dwellers on the land are inextricable from these wider convulsions of the agricultural sector. The following chapter provides the historical context out of which the land question in the semi-arid areas arose, and specifically relates it to the greater importance of the wage in contrast to land to the Eastern Cape semi-arid area farm working class.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### **The Semi-Arid Area Working Class in the Colonial Agrarian Context**

Bradford (1990:69) asks of the agrarian transition in South Africa, “but when did labor-power become a commodity?” Bradford (1990:69) believes this question can be answered with relative certainty for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Cape where “rural capitalist development... had a century’s headstart [sic] on the rest of South Africa.” This chapter elaborates on this “head start” specifically in relation to the wage-earning, farm-labouring class and its predominance in the semi-arid areas. It argues that the land question in the semi-arid areas has its basis in the near total conquest of land and the extensive incorporation of the indigenous people into the wage economy by the mid-1850s. It sets out the historical context of conquest and dispossession in which wages came to predominate over autonomous land-based livelihoods amongst the indigenous people of the semi-arid areas.

The chapter thus supports Hendricks’ (1995) contention that there is an “overwhelming proletarian reality” in rural South Africa, specifically in the semi-arid areas. Hendricks (1995:46) has argued of the white commercial farms that:

... the proportion of white settler presence and the consequent dispossession of African land facilitated the replacement of the pre-existing small farmers with rural Boers who could, with enormous State aid, capitalize their agriculture and employ a rural black proletariat. Given this sweeping nature of land expropriation, the level of proletarianization, measured in terms of material dependence upon wage labor, is, necessarily, very high.

Related to this “proletarian reality”, is the historical absence of an *economically significant* indigenous labour-tenanting and share-cropping class as a force in the development of the semi-arid midlands colonial agriculture. Dubow (1982:63, 64) notes that:

... squatting in the Eastern Cape – or at least in Graaff-Reinet – was considerably different from that existing in Natal or the Boer Republics; large homogenous groups of African squatters were not in evidence, both absentee landlordism and the presence of large speculative land-owning companies existed on a relatively minor scale and there was a significantly higher ratio of white farmers to squatters. Moreover, Graaff-Reinet is distinguished by the fact that squatters were black, white and brown.

The history of labour tenancy provides a key historical dimension in analysing farm workers’ and -dwellers’ present-day responses to displacements caused by land-use change.

KwaZulu-Natal provides useful comparisons. In KwaZulu-Natal there have been several cases involving families who can be seen as labour tenants.<sup>24</sup> For the purposes of comparison, a brief sketch of two examples is provided. In 1990, two hundred residents of the Ganna Hoek farms in the Colenso district resisted the eviction notices served on their families when the owners sold their farms to a consortium that would establish a game farm. They approached the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), a land rights NGO in KwaZulu-Natal, to help them with their case, and AFRA agreed in order to start fighting cases that would set legal precedents for labour-tenant families (Harley & Fotheringham, 1999:133).

The community decided to take the owners to the Supreme Court in 1993, and AFRA had to conduct research to prove the community's history of labour tenancy on the farm and, thus, a right of occupation (Harley & Fotheringham 1999:133). However, after negotiation, the court bid was dropped and AFRA assisted the families to procure the land from white owners (Harley & Fotheringham 1999:133). Notably, this was prior to the 1994 elections, and prior to land reform legislation. In some of the litigation that did arise in subsequent years, the labour tenants' form of residence at Ganna Hoek was described as a "*kraal*", which implies a Zulu extended family and kin living arrangement.<sup>25</sup> Recognition as a "*kraal*", gives an implicit character of familial permanency and cultural rootedness to the labour tenants living at Ganna Hoek farm.<sup>26</sup>

In the *Ntshangase vs Respondents* case, conflict arose when Ntshangase was unable to graze and water her cattle when the farm she was living on was converted into a game farm.<sup>27</sup> The new owners had fenced the residential plot out of the game farm, which meant that the game fence prevented her from exercising her grazing rights as she had for all her life on the farm. The fence also prevented her from being able to use a road to town which cut through the farm. In their defence, the game-farm owners tried to argue that Ntshangase had no right to

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<sup>24</sup> According to the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, Act No. 3 of 1996 (RSA, 1996:2-3) – a

“labour tenant” means a person –

(a) who is residing or has the right to reside on a farm;

(b) who has or has had the right to use cropping or grazing land on the farm, referred to in paragraph (a), or another farm of the owner, and in consideration of such right provides or has provided labour to the owner or lessee; and

(c) whose parent or grandparent resided or resides on a farm and had the use of cropping or grazing land on such farm or another farm of the owner, and in consideration of such right provided or provides labour to the owner or lessee of such or such other farm, including a person who has been appointed a successor to a labour tenant in accordance with the provisions of section (3) (4) and (5), but excluding a farmworker...”

<sup>25</sup> Judgment *Thukela Wildlife cc vs Respondents*, Randburg Land Claims Court 12 May to 17 July 2000, LCC16/00;

<sup>26</sup> The term *umuzi* is more linguistically accurate than the term “*kraal*”, which is an archaic colonial term.

<sup>27</sup> Judgment *Ntshangase TK vs Respondents*, Pongola Land Claims Court 12 August 2002, LCC27/02.

remain on the farm after they had purchased it. However, the court found that she had occupation rights both in terms of the Labour Tenants Act (RSA 1996) and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (RSA 1997). Another defence the owners put forward in delegitimising her tenure rights was that “the previous owner of the farm, a certain Ms van Rooyen, never visited the farm, nor did she ever stay on the farm”.<sup>28</sup> This defence implied that the absence of the owner nullified Ntshangase’s “labour” or “tenanting” presence; in fact, it was precisely the absence of the owner that further strengthened her claim to being a labour tenant.

An industry guide on game-farm procurement lists land claims as an impediment, and points out that “certain areas in South Africa have a higher frequency of land claims” (Ekofocus Management Consultants, 2009). It is striking that the number of labour-tenant claims submitted in the Eastern Cape in 2002 amounted to 79 as compared with 7 713 in KwaZulu-Natal and 9 709 in Mpumalanga (Department of Land Affairs, 2002). Karoo property agent, Wayne Rubidge, also noted that significance of land claims in farmer migrations to the Eastern Cape; he stated that:

investors were generally South Africans from provinces to the north which were under land claims and these buyers were relocating with their expensive herds of roan and sable antelope and buffalo.<sup>29</sup>

It can be postulated that, in contrast to KwaZulu-Natal, the land regime in the semi-arid area facilitates land-use change that is largely uncontested by farm workers and -dwellers. Claims against commercial farms have been negligible. In the KwaZulu-Natal cases cited, there were three grounds which farm workers and -dwellers invoked to make concrete claims against farms: These were (i) extensive land-based livelihoods, (ii) an extended and kin-defined family presence on the farm, and (iii) a sense of historical permanency and family homestead resilience on that farm. These factors combined define one key aspect these farm dwellers enjoyed, and that is their relative autonomy to root their families’ identities and lives on that specific farm land and also subsist from it. This autonomy is premised on land as “the central component of the livelihood’s asset base” (AFRA 2004:56). In contrast, “the wage” is the central component of semi-arid area working-class livelihoods.

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<sup>28</sup> Judgment Ntshangase TK vs Respondents, Pongola Land Claims Court 12 August 2002, LCC27/02.

<sup>29</sup> Herald Reporter, 2008. *Investors Game for Eastern Cape Farms*, [http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/2008/10/29/news/n31\\_29102008.htm](http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/2008/10/29/news/n31_29102008.htm).

## THE EMERGENCE OF A RURAL SERVILE CLASS

The foundations for the semi-arid area working class were laid with the expansion of Cape Dutch settlers into the interior east of Cape Town and their brutal subjugation of the indigenous Khoisan. This conquest dismantled the pre-colonial hunter-gatherer and nomadic modes of life (Peires, 1981). There were no clear territorial boundaries developed between clans: “Transhumance knew no boundaries” (Peires, 1981:9). A number of clans of “mixed” Xhosa and Khoi descent inhabited the region between the Sundays and Fish Rivers; the more established and powerful ones such as the Qhunukhwebe were more permanently settled towards the southern areas of these rivers where rainfall was higher and cattle could move back and forth for summer and winter grazing (Peires, 1981:9). Peires (1981:56) states that:

in the 1780s, Chungwa and his father Tshaka were firmly established in the area between the Fish and Sundays... Being largely Khoi in composition, the Gqunukhwebe attracted slaves and the Khoi servants. In retaliation, Boers started shooting Gqunukhwebe.

In 1795 the Dutch controlled four districts that would later form the basis of the British-governed Cape Colony: Cape District (primarily Cape Town and the surrounds); Stellenbosch District (going right up into the Atlantic west coast into parts of what is now the Northern Cape); Swellendam District (Southern Cape); and Graaff-Reinet (which incorporated the Eastern Cape midlands up to the Fish River) (Le Cordeur, 1981). While wheat and wine became the favoured commodities in the Western Cape, the drier eastern districts (then known as Graaff-Reinet) developed into a pastoral economy where farmers primarily reared cattle, goats, horses and sheep (Mason, 1994). Free burghers trekking into these eastern districts from around 1730 brought with them what few possessions they had on ox-wagons, including their slaves (Storey, 2008:34). While their distant cousins and former Dutch East India Company (VOC) colleagues in the Cape Town estates were able to accumulate wealth on account of the climate and larger holdings, the frontier Boers struggled: the environment was semi-desert and difficult to farm, and labour was not easy to find; few were prosperous in the latter half of the 1700s. *Trekboers* “declared themselves ‘completely ruined’” having failed to “reap substantial profits from livestock farming: the overwhelming majority in fact lived in extreme poverty” (Dooling, 2007:26). Thus, they “turned on the indigenous populations with extraordinary ferocity” (Dooling, 2007:27, 28).

*Trekboers* conquered these areas using the horseback charge-fire-retreat method of the commando system. Khoisan were pushed further and further east; new settlers trekking into

the Graaff-Reinet and Cradock areas in the 1770s encountered embittered Khoisan retreating from the onslaught of the commandos. Not only did the advancing Colony have the effect of gradually decreasing open land, but the introduction of firearms and the hunting trade virtually destroyed game numbers (Storey, 2008). Storey (2008:39) states:

Khoisan homes, pastures, and hunting grounds were destroyed and they were either killed or taken captive into conditions that increasingly came to resemble slavery, even though, legally speaking they were not slaves.

Etherington (2001:48) states of the *trekboer* farmers that:

their main sources of new farmhands were the indigenous people of the panhandle [Cape] region. Many defeated and impoverished folk actively sought work with the trekboers; the commando system generated a steady stream of individual recruits.

In his evocative, popular account of the Karoo, Lawrence Green (1955:32) claims that, in Cradock, commandos were still executing Khoisan up to the 1830s.

It was a ruthless and bloody method, the explicit policy being to shoot all adult men in what was a virtual campaign of extermination, while capturing women and children in bondage as servants on their farms. The benefit of capturing children was that “They were least likely to run away and would grow up knowing no other world than the farm”; they were the foundation of a new labour and class system in the semi-arid areas (Etherington, 2001:48). This system, known as the “*inboekstelling*”, a form of “chattel bondage”, created a generational rupture which completely broke the millennia-long Khoisan independence on Africa’s southern tip: “by 1795 upwards of 1 000 ‘Bushmen’ had been taken captive and taken up as farm servants” (Dooling, 2007:27). Mason (1994:74) states:

In the Graaff-Reinet District, for instance, farmers relied so heavily on free servants that slaves constituted only 12 percent of the local population, while Khoisan and Bantu-speaking Africans made up 40 percent.

Thus, much of the labouring population were effectively victims of war. In fact, by the 1840s, the “*inboekselings*”, often coloured workers of mixed ancestry, formed a “new underclass”, from the Cape through to the highveld (Delius & Trapido, 1983:53).

The assault on Khoi independence was met with fierce resistance, with groups attacking Boer farms and travelling parties from the 1770s (Keegan, 1996:32). Vicious warfare erupted which caused such deep insecurity that many Boer farms in the Graaff-Reinet District were virtually abandoned. Green (1955:26) states that:

When Governor van Plettenberg led his famous expedition in 1778 there was not a white farmer left on the Sneeuwberg plains.<sup>30</sup>

Freund (1972:631) states that the war of 1799 to 1802 effectively paralysed Boer control of the eastern frontier, and that it was a sort of “protest against colonial working conditions”. It was, as historians put it, a “war of independence” (Dooling, 2007:63).

The Dutch colonial government blamed “the cruelty of white settlers” for this intense retaliatory warfare (Freund, 1972:632). Quite apart from the campaign to remove and exterminate Khoisan, those who found themselves in farm employ faced the most horrendous conditions. Having brought the ideologies of slave subjugation from the Cape, *Trekboer* society came to be notorious for the ill-treatment of servants. British auditor Barrow reported, based on visits at the end of the 18th century, that:

white colonists in the eastern districts were perpetuating a sluggish, squalid culture, based on the cruel exploitation of slaves and indigenes (Freund, 1972:632).

From within this violence, a labour-control regime emerged reflecting conflicting white interests within the eastern districts. On one hand settlers wanted security and peace, however, on the other they wanted supremacy over labour and land. Thus, in 1792 the Dutch landdrost at Graaff-Reinet was booted out of power by insurrectionist settlers angry that he was being lenient on Khoisan (Dooling, 2007:44). After the British took the Cape in 1806, they were better able to enforce certain master-servant regulations. The Caledon Code of 1809, premised on preceding Dutch laws, emerged from a realisation by the British after the last war between 1799 and 1803, in alliance with neighbouring indigenous clans, that there had to be better regulation of labour conditions of slaves and servants to decrease the violence in the district (Dooling, 2007:63). All Khoi servants had to register their place of residence and were compelled to sign a contract with the farmer who employed them in front of a magistrate; Khoi were required to carry a pass endorsed by their master whenever they travelled (Storey, 2008:48). In its intentions, the Code was supposed to provide for a formalisation of these unequal relationships, allowing some kind of recourse for servants. However, the Caledon Code

marked the final stage in the transition from independent people to ‘Hottentots’ – landless labourers in the servile employ of white settlers; virtually bound to those farms (Dooling, 2007:63).

Failure to produce a pass meant classification as a vagrant (Dooling, 2007:63).

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<sup>30</sup> The “Sneeuwberg” is a mountain range that goes through Graaff-Reinet, Cradock and neighbouring districts.

Further to that law, in 1812, Khoi children could be apprenticed for ten years to white farmers who had provided for them materially, through family residence on farms, to the age of eight. This, Dooling (2007:64) asserts, in effect bound

entire Khoi households to settler farms. Indeed, this was highly gendered servitude, for the 'Hottentot' servant was 'at liberty to include his wife and children' in any contracts.

With the ability to hold young Khoi children in their labour force to eighteen, settlers in effect had a self-reproducing labour pool. Khoi became in effect, colonial subjects; Xhosas were considered aliens to white-settled farm areas (Dooling, 2007:63). Caledon commanded the expulsion of Xhosas in 1809. However, there were protestations, many stating

that they had already been living and working on farms for up to twenty years and had 'no other country' (Etherington, 2001:63).

Storey (2008:51) notes

Within this milieu, the practice of the farm working family unit, subjected to the farmer and his authority, became entrenched as social practice. The Caledon Code would be repealed in 1828 on the eve of slave emancipation (1834); giving Khoi servants amongst other freedoms, equality before the law, and no longer compelled to register a fixed abode.

However, these ordinances had built into them mechanisms of disciplining and controlling servants:

Thus, when slave emancipation arrived in 1834, while ostensibly freeing slaves, it effectively created not real autonomy but "proletarianisation and economic dependence among the labouring classes" (Keegan quoted in Storey, 2008:52).

From emancipation in 1834 into the 1850s, some labour tenancy arrangements arose alongside wage payments within certain parts of the south-western Cape (Dooling, 2007:125, 126). Adam Kok, the famous leader of the Griqua, had grazing rights on a farm 170 km away to the north of Cape Town in the 1850s (Etherington, 2001:52). Peasant production took place in Namaqualand of the Northern Cape because here ex-servants, ex-slaves and other refugees could access land at mission stations (Rohde & Hoffman, 2008). However, land was scarce in the eastern midland districts; already in the 1770s even white newcomers struggled for access to land:

the majority of colonists were not trekkers but settlers who, having acquired a desirable farm, often kept it for life (Newton-King, 1999:23).

In the midland areas around Cradock and Graaff-Reinet, there arose for a short-lived period (while the State administrative and legal authority of the white colonial State remained weak and unable to police farm boundaries or enforce order) groupings of precariously independent livestock-producing poor whites, Khoi and Xhosa, “attempting to avoid integration into the colonial economy as wage labourers” (Dubow, 1982:9). Independent squatting on the Cape Colony Crown Lands was a somewhat precarious livelihood, characterised by frequent movement; indeed,

any piece of government ground available for grazing was used by squatters who led a quasi-nomadic life, moving from place to place, in search of water and pasturage... The majority of squatters lived a marginal existence, possessing just sufficient stock for subsistence, and supplementing their meagre herds by plundering the odd sheep or goat... (Dubow, 1982:66, 67).

They attempted to evade the controls of the master-servant regime emerging on the farms by “squatting” on vacant Crown Lands between farms (1982:70). Dubow (1982:9) argues that:

The fact that capitalist relations were not generalised by the 1860s and that labourers retained some access to the means of production, provided some servants with the opportunity for upward mobility. Developing capitalist relations of production resulted in increasing polarisation between masters and servants (or, in other words, between capital and labour).

As white settler farmers aggressively agitated for the Crown Lands to be sold and incorporated into private farms, Xhosa workers who had accumulated stock were likely to leave the Colony for independent African polities where colonialism did not yet reach (Collett, 1990:125). This practice was common, especially in the years following the Cattle Killing when Xhosas arrived in the Colony on one-year contracts to find work and rebuild their herds. Dubow (1982:67) argues further:

... the Khoi had suffered serious dislocation from their precolonial social relations. Thus, their existence was largely determined by a fierce desire to maintain their social and economic independence – a desire which was frustrated by their lack of social cohesion. By contrast, African squatters retained substantial aspects of their kinship relations and were thus able to effectively accumulate and remove large numbers of stock beyond the borders of the Cape.

In Cradock, James Collett, one of the wealthier progressive farmers, recorded that in the 1860s one of his workers who had arrived with 14 sheep left after two years with 116 sheep, 12 cattle and 4 horses (Collett, 1990:148). It is of significance that, although this worker accumulated stock, he received remuneration of five pounds annually (Collett, 1990:148). Ross (1990:149) documents of the eastern midland districts that:

After 1834 (or, to be more precise, after 1838, when the “apprenticeship” that required ex-slaves to work for their former owners came to an end,) many of the informal means of labor control were maintained. One of these was the farmers’ near-monopoly over the land, which allowed them to exclude most labourers from independent access to land on which to grow their own food or keep their stock; in consequence they had no option but to work for the farmers, at least much of the year.

The combination of landlessness and legalised patriarchal regulation meant that farm servants and their descendants were workers without freedom. Laws such as a number of Masters and Servants Acts in the latter 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup> century legally

vested ‘masters’ with enormous personal authority over virtually every aspect of the worker’s existence; every instruction they issued was held to be a lawful command (Marcus, 1989:49).

Farm labourers were first and foremost servants. Low wages were somewhat offset by the system of ration payment; land-based livelihoods were not entrenched, rather they were used as a bonus privilege by owners (Kooy, 1977; Antrobus, 1984). Ration payment evolved as both an incentive in the slave era, and a means of keeping the cash component of the wage down in the modern economy (Atkinson, 2007:118). Mason notes (1994:79)

Almost from the beginning of colonial agriculture, payment in kind was a more important part of farm servants’ income than cash wages. As early as 1695, the conquest of Khoisan lands and the subjugation of Khoisan societies had advanced far enough that many had little choice but to enter the colonial economy as farm laborers. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of paying Khoisan farm workers in kind as an alternative or supplement to cash wages was well established, especially in the northern and eastern districts.

Alongside the labour regime and the violence, a culture of incentives took root. Practices of domination coexisted with “‘reciprocal exchanges’ and inserted ambiguity into the practice of domination” (Crais, 1992:44). Allowing slaves a bit of livestock and a vegetable garden was a critical incentive in ensuring slaves returned after periods of shepherding far from the farm (Mason, 1994:76). Khoi servants frequently absconded, escaping harsh treatment at the hands of Boer farmers to neighbouring Xhosa polities eastwards on the Fish River (Storey, 2008:45). Some slaves, in exceptional cases, were able to own property (usually livestock) and trade either their skills, livestock or produce on the open market, states Mason (1994:72):

The most fortunate of slaves, like some servants and unlike luckless slaves, accumulated property in cattle and other livestock, cultivated fruit and vegetables on plots of land that their masters gave them for the purpose, and bartered, sold, and traded their livestock and produce with their owners and other settlers, with non-white servants, and with other slaves.

By the 1830s and 1840s settlers had accumulated wealth through wool, agricultural production and land speculation (Crais, 1986:133). Le Cordeur (1981:37) says that, in response to the demand by the British manufacturing sector,

the eastern districts acquired a staple export, with which they would soon begin to overtake the west in productivity: by 1850 more than 70% of total wool exports from the colony came from the Eastern Province.

By 1853, the Cape gentry (relatively wealthy landowners) and the colonial government had effectively won over much of the region up to the Kei River and had not just created a military and political boundary, but had also fortified, it with the economic dominance of the Cape landowning class. Institutions of State in the form of local government simply cemented the power of white settler elites over territories (Crais, 1986:142). Already in the 1830s, growing numbers of Africans sought employment and occupation on lands appropriated by colonists for agriculture. War after war, and the devastation of the Cattle Killing prophecies in 1857, pushed Xhosa into the Colony including towns such as Cradock (Manona, 1988:52). Bundy (1972:375) states that:

Even the drastic effects of large-scale land expropriation were cushioned, as the Cape possessed neither the coercive instruments, nor its economy the need, to clear all white-owned land of African occupiers. Land speculators and farmers alike, in the absence of a developed commercial agriculture, found it more profitable to have African tenants (who might be cash tenants, tenants paying in kind, tenants performing labour dues, or a combination) on their lands.

Crais (1986:143) points out that “labour tenancy served as a reserve of labour reproduction, supplemented by migrant labour during periods of peak labour demand”. However, this tenantry seems to have been far more predominant and resilient in the more arable districts such as Albany, across the Fish River, epitomised by Grahamstown and its surrounds. Thus,

“Squatting” was widespread in the 1880s; in 1883 the Cape Commission on Laws and Customs was told that “most Africans in Albany electoral division rented land from white farmers”; an example was cited of an entire farm occupied by “squatter-peasants” who paid the not inconsiderable annual rent of £5 to £10; the tenants lived by agriculture, doubling up as transport riders when opportunities offered. Apart from the maize and sorghum they raised for themselves, they sold wheat, barley and oats in local towns (Bundy, 1979:79-80 cited in Manona, 1988:65).

Manona (1988:67) also identified labour tenancy in the Albany area which remained strong until the 1920s:

... ploughing on the half was known as *iblas*. Its origin may be traced back to the mid-1830s when, as already noted, sheep farmers were so desperate for labour that they found it necessary to engage black workers who came with their families and

cattle. Informants have given the impression that the practice depended on the availability of family labour. They said it gave their parents a good living and a measure of independence since some of the farmers did not live on these farms. Some men owned several spans of oxen and could thus benefit significantly from sharecropping.

McClendon (2002:50) argues that, prior to the 1880s in the former colony of Natal,

the colonial State, white settlers and speculating landowners all depended heavily on the rise and continued success of an African peasantry.

In fact, labour tenancy became the only way in which white farmers could access huge reserves of labour, and African farmers could obtain land to farm outside of the reserves (McClendon, 2002:48). However, this arrangement was dependent on the African patriarch's control of his family vis-à-vis labour provision, thus

a man had to have labour to supply: his own or that of his sons, daughters, and wives. This, of course, required women's reproductive labour, in the sense of both giving birth to and raising children and raising crops (primarily defined as female labour) to feed them (McClendon 2002:6).

Higher rainfall areas, more suitable to crop cultivation and cattle keeping, were historically permanently occupied by African clans and more likely to experience labour tenancy after dispossession. Connor (2010:98) documents the significance and attachment of farm workers and -dwellers in the southern areas of the Sundays River Valley:

Farm workers today profess that their ancestors claimed particular portions of land, or settled on them as labour tenants and/or share croppers, an assertion supported by MacLennan and Milton, who record a purchase of land by groups of Xhosa-speakers from the Dutch. It was also reported in 1809 that "some of Ndlambe's people" had claimed "that the region between the Bushmans and Sundays River belonged to them and they would never vacate it". During the cattle killing of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Valley became particularly attractive for groups of refugees, who settled on outlying ancestral lands such as BoPlaas as well as on ground near the burgeoning towns of Kirkwood and Addo.

### **THE DECLINE OF THE *BIJWONER* TENANT CLASS IN SEMI-ARID AREAS**

In the semi-arid midlands, however, it was white labour tenants on the farms of wealthier whites who came to be the predominant labour-tenanting class into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the small "multiracial" squatting peasantry having been dispersed by workers within an entrenched master-servant regime. Bouch (1980) argues that, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, successive droughts impoverished white farmers who could not capitalise their farms, pushing them into tenant or "*bijwoner*" status on other settler farms. Whites of declining fortune, states Bundy (1986:105), included

the formally propertyless – who lived on the farms of others under a range of tenancy agreements, usually designated at the time as “*bijwoners*” or squatters – and also those who were effectively propertyless, even while they clung to the principle of proprietorship in the shape of tiny and unworkable fragments of oft-divided farms.

From the 1850s it was only a few white wealthy farmers, the landed gentry of the Eastern Cape, who managed to capitalise their farms, introduce new technologies and develop their enterprises, while other whites got left behind, so to speak (Bundy, 1986). Not all white settler farmers had the necessary capital to respond competitively to the demands of the semi-arid environment, thus

the droughts of the 1860s convinced those who could afford it to build dams and to experiment with pumps, while the same phenomenon delivered the economic coup de grace to others (Bundy 1986:108).

In the recession and droughts of 1860, which bankrupted some prominent and wealthy farmers in Cradock (Butler, 1977:76), more were added to the class of landless whites, their financial precariousness being rescued only by moving towards towns or sheep-shearing, reaping or road works (Bundy, 1986:106).

In contrast to the black and coloured servants, “*bijwoners*” were a largely independent, autonomous class; their arrangements with farmers were mutually beneficial (Bryden, 1889:253; Butler, 1977:145), as they performed any form of farm labour in exchange for a place to stay and run their own sheep. A subset of these tenanting whites were “*bijsaaiers*” – wheat sharecroppers who “sowed on another man’s ground and paid a portion of the crop as rent” (Bouch, 1980:55).

In the 1880s, two technological innovations revolutionised sheep farming, sounded the death knell for the white tenant class and caused a general exodus of redundant workers and shepherds from the farms. These were the wire fence and the windmill, which re-organised the pastoral landscape into “concrete” parcels of land and transformed the very production on farms (Archer, 2000). This re-organisation of space fundamentally changed class relations in the countryside. The introduction of the technologies spelt disaster for shepherds on stock outposts no longer necessary since the sheep could be put into fenced camps and water could be pumped at closer proximity (Archer, 2000:685). More profitable farmers, who could capitalise their farms and invest in the new technology, became more efficient and more productive; smaller farmers were progressively pushed off the land (Archer, 2000:685). Van Sittert (2002:114) suggests that the new fences, the enclosed spaces and the

controlled boundaries posed problems for the propertyless classes which had hitherto been uninhibited by boundary markers:

To these “wandering natives”, “trekkers”, squatters and poor whites, fences constituted an unwelcome impediment to both the freedom of movement and routine violations of private property through trespass or theft essential to their daily subsistence... It was still possible to “wander” over a farm in the late 1870s and encounter “enclosed places” mainly in the form of buildings, cultivated land or kraals clustered around the old *ordonnantie*. Within a decade, however, the enclosure movement had rapidly curtailed the scope for such “wandering” in parts of the colony by creating “enclosed places” of whole farms.

Butler (1989:59, 60) identifies climate as one of the main causes of economic fragility:

There were many reasons for poverty in the Cradock district. It is a Karoo area, a thirstland suitable for ranching only, especially if there is no irrigation. It lies between the 10" and 12" annual rainfall contours, one of a group of Midland districts hard hit by frequent droughts. Furthermore, it suffered after World War I, like the rest of the eastern Cape, from the collapse of ostrich farming, the rapid decline of horse breeding, and then during the depression from the fall in the prices of wool, its long-term staple, and lucerne (alfalfa).

Dams and irrigation technology developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily to deal with the water needs of farms and also envisaged to promote wide-scale arable production, failed in fundamental transformation of the pastoral nature of the Karoo economy (Beinart, 2003). Technological innovation never quite trumped the ecological constraints of the Karoo. In the late 1880s, Cradock district’s “economy remained fragile, and a cycle of booms and busts would stunt the town’s growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century”; it has remained “a poor rural town, buffeted by a hostile climate and volatile commodity markets” (Tetelman, 1997:13, 16).

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, towns in the Karoo began to experience an unprecedented level of influx by destitute whites into the urban town centres as the countryside was transformed by the new sheep camping systems. Although poor whites had existed within the rural milieu on farms, the sight of whites living in squalor in the cities and, in particular, with coloureds and blacks, caused moral panic amongst white middle classes. Lewis (1973:28) documents that between 1921 and 1926, it was the sheep-farming districts which saw the largest numbers of whites leaving

Small farms were bought up and large farms were fenced. This tended to displace shepherds, bywoners and small farmers, that is, those elements of the population who had been making only a marginal living out of farming. Small stock districts, were, moreover, usually relatively arid districts. Thus, the engrossment movement in those districts meant a reduction in reserve grazing and this in turn meant droughts were more damaging to the few small farmers who remained. Thus, it is not surprising that most of the districts which suffered an absolute decrease in white rural population between 1911 and 1921 were sheep-farming districts.

While white landlords and farmers contested the terms under which black labour tenants in the former Orange Free State and southern Transvaal ought to be controlled at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Keegan, 1985), semi-arid towns were experiencing an exodus from farms of both black and white labour due to declining fortunes. By the 1920s,

over large areas of the eastern Cape, poorer and inefficient whites were being expelled from the farms by landowners who had no use for them (Bouch, 1980:58).

In 1939, the Native Farm Labour Committee Report (South Africa, 1939:11), which investigated the shortage of labour on farms, stated that in the Cape Province labour tenancy, although present in a few parts,

has virtually ceased to exist. In the latter province labourers who ordinarily live on the land and work with more or less regularity throughout the year for a small cash wage, supplemented by casual labour on a purely cash basis, have replaced the labour tenant.

Drawing from the Agricultural Census of 1935/6, the Committee (South Africa, 1939:38) further stated that:

Natives on farms throughout the Cape Province have to depend largely on their cash wages, which are generally very low, and on their rations, which are on a somewhat more liberal scale than is usual in the other provinces. Land cultivation (where climatic conditions permit) and grazing rights are allowed in a certain percentage of cases, but are very limited. They do not play the same part in raising the annual income of the workers as they do in other provinces. The economic position of Natives on farms is therefore, not reflected accurately by statistics as to the crops produced and animals owned by them.

As anxieties over increasing white poverty became a national concern, black sharecroppers in the former Orange Free State were being accused of displacing whites; in effect Keegan (1985:384) argues that:

the populist agitation against independent black tenant farming was the assumption that the very success of black farming on white-owned land was responsible for the failure of so many whites to survive as rural producers.

However, in the Eastern Cape Karoo's first two decades of Union, white party politics was not driven by concerns over labour supply to the extent that it was in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Bouch (1980:55) contends that, in the Karoo,

Setbacks and even disasters affecting day-to-day survival engaged the attention of Cape farmers far more than worries about competition for labour.

In contrast, the Committee stated of the former Natal Province's labour cohort that 70% was drawn from labour tenants and 30% from migrants (this excluded the wattle and sugar cash-crop plantation labour) (South Africa 1939:29). By the end of the Second World War, there was almost full employment within the white population (Knight, 1977:31). This solved the problem of poor whiteism. There were however, mixed blessings on the horizon for black and coloured workers, who would face greater restriction of movement with the advent of apartheid on one hand, and yet greater choice with the expansion of secondary sectors, which enabled escape from farms, on the other.

Thus, the "swift rise and short heyday of African sharecroppers" on the highveld found no parallel in the Cape Colony, in particular, in the eastern districts (Ross, 1986:57). Whereas Van Onselen (1996:105) found legendary black sharecropping families in the south western region of the former Transvaal such as the "Marumos, Maines, Masihus, Seiphetlhos, Tabus, and Tjalempes" in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was no comparable class in the semi-arid white commercial farming districts of the Eastern Cape. Why was it thus? The extensive pastoral economy simply did not require them. Droughts in 1914, 1915, 1919 and 1922, plus locust attacks during the rainier 1921 interregnum, destroyed farmers without the water and capital resources to survive (Bouch, 1980:56). The Karoo economy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century pushed the labouring classes, of all "races", off the land into the towns.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is within a historical context that the proletarianisation in the semi-arid livestock districts must be understood in contrast to more arable areas where labour tenancy proved a resilient feature into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The extent of dispossession in the semi-arid areas was near total; there is an argument to be made that the land question in these areas is more acute in that there was near total dispossession alongside complete proletarianisation. This entrenched the labouring class as a non land-owning servile class within semi-arid area property relations. Additional to the conquest, ecological constraints shaped the economic fortunes of the farm-labouring class of the semi-arid areas. While military dispossession provided the context in which land became the exclusive preserve of the white agricultural class, ecological and economic constraints precipitated greater proletarianisation and exodus with the effect of rigidifying capitalist property relations in the semi-arid countryside.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **New Fences, Old Land Regimes: Introducing Bontebok Private Nature Reserve**

It is of analytical import to ask the question: “What, if anything, is particularly new or unprecedented about the consequences of these farm conversions for tenure-insecure farm workers and -dwellers?” In Chapter Three it was shown that in the colonial period, settler agriculture developed in the semi-arid areas on the basis of near total land alienation and the conversion of the indigenous population into a wage-dependent servant class. This period of conquest, along with the development of technologies which led to the dismantling of the “*bijwoner*” labour-tenanting class, set in place racialised land ownership and class relations; these formed the basis of the development of patterns of modern agriculture.

This chapter addresses the question posed above by focusing on three dynamics pertinent to farm conversion and situates these in the period of State-driven modernised agriculture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are: i) motives for conversion, ii) spatial and aesthetic transformation, iii) labour efflux and labour rationalisation.

It focuses the analysis primarily on the main research site, Bontebok Private Nature Reserve in Cradock, to demonstrate that farm conversions occur alongside ongoing processes of rural depopulation, that conversions have collided with this depopulation – in some instances intensifying it, whilst in others having no bearing on it at all. In the main, it challenges the conceptualisation of conversion-associated displacements as a dispossession, and puts forward the argument that these displacements can be seen as ‘business as usual’ in the semi-arid areas given the already existing extreme land question based on colonial dispossession.

In the context of demands for land and agrarian reforms, Moyo (2008:78) has criticised the emergence and justifications of wildlife land use in southern Africa, arguing that:

In southern and eastern Africa ... Land-use conflicts and policy debates uphold moral and socio-economic value in allocating prime land to wildlife and tourism uses, and consider such allocation to be of greater utility than the land use utility of the majority of human beings (small farmers) vis-à-vis the few individual large farmers and the animals themselves!

The implication of this assertion is that the advent of the wildlife sector has brought about a new hierarchy of land use which ostensibly places the “moral” over “utility”. For Moyo (2008:77), the environmental justifications for ever greater consolidation of land for wildlife impinge directly on African land questions, because they compound

the previous exclusion of the peasantry from substantial lands by the State in the name of attracting national, regional and international capital in the tourism, forestry and biotechnology sectors.

The discourse of conservation is seen to provide greater moral purchase for land use while small-scale producers are further marginalised. AFRA (2004) takes the view a step further, characterising the expansion of game farms in KwaZulu-Natal as a kind of “dispossession”. The perceived monopolisation of land by the wildlife lobby is in the context of concerns that foreign capital is engaged in new forms of “land grabbing” in Africa as the global race for food and bio-fuel production intensifies (Hall, 2011).

Hall (2011:199), however, cautions against all-encompassing and sweeping conclusions on land-use change, stating that “distinguishing between grabbers, investors and destination markets remains a conceptual and empirical challenge in this area of research”. It is conceptually problematic to cast all land acquisition and expansionism in one mould; in certain scenarios there are complex layers and processes of contestation, consensus and acquiescence that are obscured by casting all land-use change as predatory or reactionary. Contemporary forms of dispossession and marginalisation requires nuanced examination and regionalised contextualisation.

To begin with, it must be noted that within white-dominated agriculture, moral justifications on the environmental advantages of game farming are contested by other farmers. While it is beyond the scope of the thesis to deal with these debates, it suffices to say that, within Cradock and surrounds, game farmers’ conservationist claims are disputed by livestock farmers and research (Chesterman, 2009).<sup>31</sup> A game farm fencer (who also farms) said:

I’m passionate about the land; game farming and land management do not work together ... game farming is driven on the perception that domestic animals destroy the land and so their motivation for saying that you can repair the land by taking domestic animals away is probably the most criminal fallacy that’s ever been created. But it’s done because a lot of the money drives game farms. So I hate to be sceptical but that’s the reality.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Field notes, 12 December 2008. Cradock.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, Game Farm Fencer, 15 September 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

The ethics of some game-farm owners were called into question. Specifically, lifestyle game farming was perceived as an indulgence of the wealthy that has no economic or social value; an ex-farmer commented:

Some of them around the corner are 28 000 or 30 000 hectares, bought with what I call “Jo’burg” money or overseas money. In other words money that, for whatever reason, does not have to pay its way.

I know of one American chap who just bought 48 000 or 50 000 hectares down near [a nearby town]. That’s being made for a private game reserve. If you take the amount of money that is paid for that ground, you’re never going to be able to pay its way. You’re better off putting the money in the Post Office and getting the interest.

The bad half of the game industry is not done for commercial reasons, the good half is done for commercial reasons and is properly managed and they work hard and they are the ones that take all the people around as professional hunters... they run lodges, they entertain. They generate two-thirds or twice as much as what the other ones do.<sup>33</sup>

Sheep farmers lamented the dismantling of farming infrastructure that had been built up over 150 years of sheep farming, typified by the removal of internal fencing camps and the abandonment of fences by the wayside (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Sheep fencing lies abandoned next to game fences near Nieu-Bethesda, eliciting complaints from farmers that this expensive infrastructure could never be replaced.**

<sup>33</sup> Interview, Game Ranch Manager, 29 November 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

There were also views which mirrored those of farm worker and -dweller communities struggling against game farming, where fragmentation of the white community was attributed to the land consolidation processes of game farming.<sup>34</sup> Cradock farmers also turned the tables on the State, and directed criticism at State-driven conservation, declaring that land consolidation by the Mountain Zebra National Park threatened farming in the area, or, as a land official put it, “farmers feel that SANParks<sup>35</sup> is bullying them [into selling their land for conservation]”.<sup>36</sup> Game farming is thus neither wholly accepted nor simplistically defended in Cradock and neighbouring districts. In Cradock it was not considered a land use to be defended above all others; Moyo’s supposition that animals take precedence over people does not hold in all circumstances.

The State itself holds contradictory positions on the value of the game sector. While Provincial and National Ministers such as Nkwinti and Xingwana have criticised game farming, particularly for associated negative socio-economic and tenure insecurity consequences, Cradock local government planning and policy documentation views game farms and lodges positively within its socio-economic development strategies. In its 2007/2008 Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the Chris Hani District Municipality (under which Cradock falls) stated that:

game reserves are the only effectively protected and controlled areas within the District. However, it is noted that the natural environment, including areas such as game farms, parks and nature reserves, have to be managed in such a way that the community sees them as a benefit and not as a bone of contention (Chris Hani District, 2005:80).

The Chris Hani District Municipality states that it intends to “promote game farming and other eco-tourism opportunities” (Ibid). There was no mention of game farming as having negative effects on farm workers’ and -dwellers’ land livelihoods.

The Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality in which Cradock is situated also aligns itself with the Chris Hani District Municipality’s objectives by including game farming within its own economic development framework. The Inxuba Yethemba 2007/8 Annual Report identifies game farming as part of the regional economic mix, stating that “Great potential exists for tourism, game farming and agriculture more especially along the banks of the Great Fish River” (Inxuba Yethemba, n.d:10). In their 2010/2011 IDP, the Inkwanca municipality within the Chris Hani District Municipality allocated R800 000 to support the

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<sup>34</sup> Field notes, informal discussion, 2 December 2008. Cradock.

<sup>35</sup> South African National Parks.

<sup>36</sup> Interview, Cradock Land Bank official, 12 January 2010. Cradock.

Masizakhe Hunting and Game Lodge project as part of its socio-economic development (Inkwanca, 2010).

Evidently, the rhetoric of national government, critical of game farming, does not match the perceptions and actions of State officials working at the “coalface” of economic development in rural towns. A former Land Affairs Minister took the view that State officials criticising game farms made fallacious arguments:

On the one hand people are challenging game farming, but that’s game farming as a form of land use then. Then they start talking about these foreign owners that own game farms. Well, is game farming a problem or isn’t it? That’s the first discourse that has to happen. If it isn’t a problem well then move on to the next problem because we also have foreigners that own wine farms. Is that a problem or isn’t it? That is what you have to interrogate. Tokyo Sexwale owns a wine farm. Good, it’s great, we hope more black people would own wine farms and game farms but is *game* the issue? Is it a form of land use that should be banned? Is it a form of land use that should be regulated? Should it be limited? The policy [debate], it’s un-nuanced, and it’s unsophisticated, and it disappoints me that people in high positions approach it in such a crude fashion.<sup>37</sup>

He problematised the causal link drawn between game farms and evictions, asserting that the trend was common:

It needs to be researched. Is it the law, or is it the practitioners? That’s why I am saying, first there are three things here – where are evictions happening, at what sort of scale; are they legal evictions or are they illegal evictions, and then the game farming comes in, is it as a result of the game farming or is it on other farms as well? I can tell you now it is happening on other farms as well. The question for your research: is it amongst other things, happening more on game farms? Are game farms particularly by their nature resulting in a displacement of people? Are they getting court orders? Probably they are getting court orders and probably because of the Act.

It’s clear people who are displaced or people who are denied access blame whatever the nature of the thing is that is in their or perceived to be in their way.<sup>38</sup>

Contested and contradictory perspectives, within the State and in commercial agriculture itself, reflect the complexity of the game-farming sector’s positioning within the broader agricultural economy and land markets. This chapter uses the main research fieldwork site to contextualise economic motives driving the sector and the complex, often contradictory, outcomes of spatial destruction and reconstruction arising from conversions.

Chapters Five and Six will deal more directly with farm workers’ and -dwellers’ histories and responses. It is critical to note, as already stated in the Introduction, that the use of this single case, the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve, was a consequence of access constraints

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<sup>37</sup> Interview, former Land Affairs Minister, 8 May 2010. Cape Town.

<sup>38</sup> Interview, former Land Affairs Minister, 8 May 2010. Cape Town.

to farms within the Cradock area. What is significant thus is not the generalisability of what has unfolded in Bontebok, but rather the extent to which its scenarios differ from conversions explored within literature and debates on how the private wildlife sector's expansion impinges on land questions and farm workers' and -dwellers' tenure security. The geographical unevenness in the development and expansion of the game sector provides the point of departure. Harvey (1982:416) points out that geography and regional context do matter, for:

Capitalism does not develop upon a flat plain surface endowed with ubiquitous raw materials and homogenous labour supply with equal transport facility in all directions. It is inserted, grows and spreads within a richly variegated geographical environment which encompasses great diversity in the munificence of nature and in labour productivity...

Thus, the wildlife sector spreads over varied conditions; its impact is shaped by pre-existing local situations, in as much as it reshapes these.

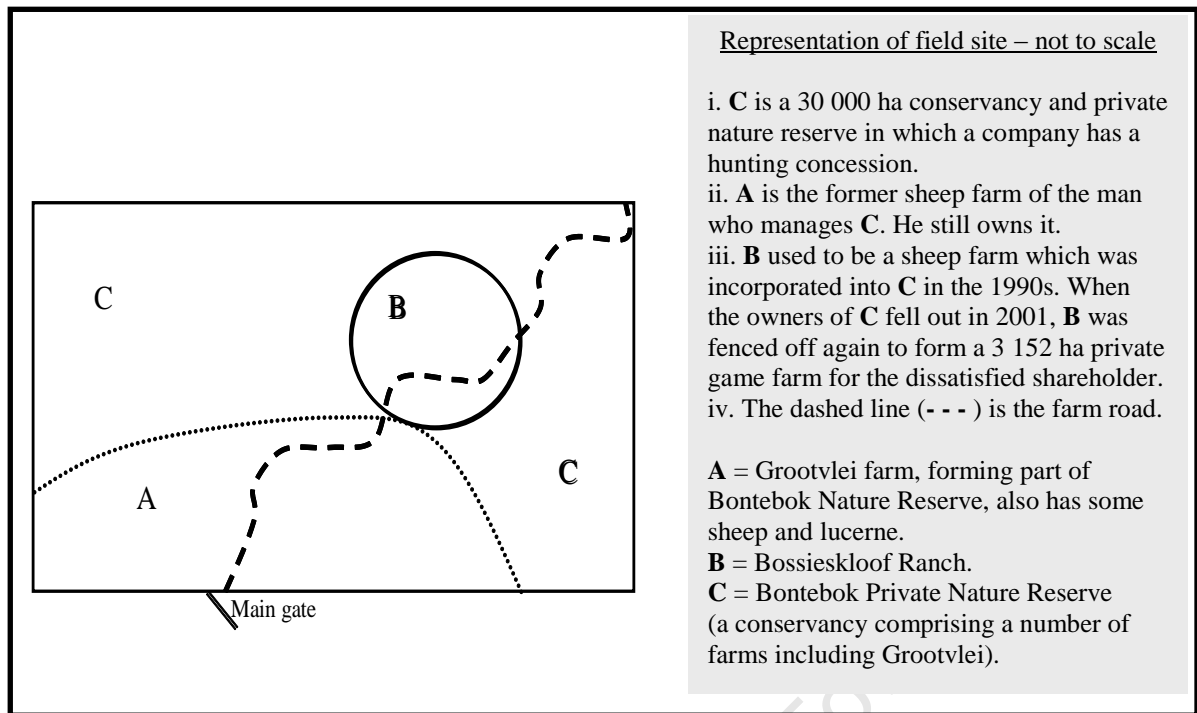
## **CASE STUDY: A PRIVATE WILDLIFE NATURE RESERVE**

### **FIELD SITE**

Figure 4 depicts the primary field site. The farms comprising the site have undergone a number of complex transformations in terms of boundaries and ownership over the past two decades. Bontebok Private Nature Reserve is a 30 000 hectare legally registered private nature reserve under section 12 of the Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance No. 19 of 1974. It was formed out of ten sheep farms bought individually by four South African businessmen over a number of years, beginning sometime in the late 1980s going into the 1990s.<sup>39</sup> Many of these farms had been in the same white families for four to five generations. Bontebok Private Nature Reserve is one of the largest hunting farms in the Cradock district, holding more land than the Mountain Zebra National Park.

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<sup>39</sup> To put this into perspective, the world-famous Eastern Cape luxury ecotourism lodges, Kwandwe and Shamwari, are 20 000 and 25 000 hectares, respectively.



**Figure 4: Diagram of primary field site**

Grootvlei Farm and Bossieskloof Game Ranch are neighbouring farms.<sup>40</sup> Formerly they were separate sheep farms owned by two brothers, before being converted and incorporated into the greater Bontebok Private Nature Reserve. Grootvlei currently has no fences as it is part of the greater Bontebok Private Nature Reserve. The owner of Grootvlei runs some sheep on the farm but his main source of income is his international hunting enterprise, which holds a concession within the greater Bontebok Nature Reserve. Bossieskloof Game Ranch was once part of the greater Bontebok Nature Reserve. At the time of this research Bossieskloof Ranch was owned by an internationally-renowned hunter and self-defined conservationist who retired from corporate business in the early 2000s to dedicate himself full time to making Bossieskloof a model, scientifically-managed, conservation ranch. In 2001, Bossieskloof Ranch opted *out* of the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve and reverted to being a self-contained unit. The dashed line illustrates the road passing through both farms from the main gate accessed from the highway.

Since the late 1980s, the kinds of transformations – social, spatial and agricultural – that have occurred within the boundaries of what is now Bontebok Private Nature Reserve illuminate a number of fairly common scenarios relating to game-farm conversion and its consequences in the semi-arid districts. National media reported on the dispute that arose

<sup>40</sup> Henceforth referred to as “Grootvlei” and “Bossieskloof”.

when the owners of Bontebok Private Nature Reserve had a disagreement, resulting in the secession and establishment of Bossieskloof Game Ranch. These media reports were used by the researcher to provide fuller insight into the conversion process at Bontebok but not cited in order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents. Thus, although the voice of one owner is prominent in the analysis, the information was corroborated, even though not cited directly. What is of significance are farm workers' and -dwellers' experiences, which we deal with in more detail in Chapters Five and Six of the thesis.

## **LABOUR DISPLACEMENT AND RURAL DEPOPULATION**

The process of converting these farms brought together farmers in financial straits and wealthy corporate-based businessmen into a consortium to drive the venture. An agreement was made to bring their properties together into one consolidated, continuous area holding wildlife. Two key personalities drove the processes of purchasing and conversion from the late 1980s, a high-ranking Johannesburg businessman who is a renowned hunting enthusiast and a Cradock farmer who owned Grootvlei when it still ran sheep.

The businessman at Bontebok Private Nature Reserve explained why they opted to create a large, open wildlife area, as opposed to owning individually fenced-off game farms:

I think we wanted to create as natural an environment as possible, where the game could roam as freely as possible... and live as natural a life as if they were in the wild. There were two basic reasons for that: one, it comes back again to making money. Overseas hunters want to feel as if they are in wild Africa when they come to hunt... they're looking for the romance... it's part of the total experience. They want to stay in tents and travel anywhere without seeing lights or roads or electrical wires or telephone wires or hear any sound. They want the romance of being in a wild area... the bigger the area, the more romantic it is and the more you can charge. The second thing was we felt that the game would do better when it was free to roam and follow its natural patterns of eating and drinking and socialising. Probably a third reason was that together we would be able to do more.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the envisaged nature reserve would fulfil both an ideal vision of game in a reconstructed natural habitat whilst also paying its way via income derived through trophy-hunting clients. Each individual owner, even though not living at the Private Nature Reserve, could hunt and vacation on the property.

The business arrangement at Bontebok Nature Reserve allowed the owner of Grootvlei to keep his sheep farm, thus not having to bear the costs of conversion alone. He acted as a manager of the conservancy while the other partners were absentee owners. He holds a

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<sup>41</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

concession allowing him to run his private outfitting business at Bontebok. The Cradock district is perhaps unique in that the majority of its hunting outfitters and game farms are owned by South Africans. Within the greater Eastern Cape, foreigners of European and North American origin have also been investing in wildlife, either individually or through consortiums. However, it was South African capital which paved the way for the rise of the industry, linking up the local hunting scene with global tourism.

Once the farms had been purchased, and the deals concluded, the first step in the conversion process was that all of the people (comprising nine of the ten farms) – workers, their families and owners – had to leave, barring the employees at Grootvlei since their owner had retained his farm as a part of the nature reserve scheme. The fate of some of those who left will be discussed in the upcoming chapters. The process of converting the farms into one single wildlife area required the demolition of most of the internal infrastructure so that the area could be aesthetically and ecologically “rewilded” for game. Removing visible signs of human progress or “civilisation” from the wildlife area is particularly critical to the commercial marketability of a hunting business, as clients expect to see as little evidence of human habitation as possible. Thus, old stock-grazing camp fences came down, workers’ houses, barns and sheds, for example, were, in the words of the respondents, “*plat gestoot*” – flattened – and a new perimeter game fence erected to form Bontebok. All the farm workers’ houses were demolished on eight farms (the ninth farm was undeveloped and had no staff houses), leaving only those at Grootvlei where the owner resided. Farmers’ houses were largely left untouched for vacationing owners, with one or two being removed where they were in hunting terrain.

#### **FARM WORKERS AND -DWELLERS**

It must be noted that farm workers and -dwellers who remained after conversion were interviewed at the Bossieskloof ranch where they had been living and working since 2001. As stated in the Methodology section, tracking down farm workers who had long since dispersed from what would become Bontebok Private Nature Reserve was difficult. Two types of respondents connected to Bontebok were interviewed – those who left at various points in its history for various reasons and those who stayed after conversion.

Those who stayed were two farm-working and -dwelling families currently living at Bossieskloof ranch – the Summers and the Jacobs families. The Summers family had the longest-standing relations with Grootvlei and Bossieskloof before and after they were

converted; the running theme in their life histories was the life of poverty and inequality that they experienced as a farm-dwelling family. A common phrase emerging from the interviewees was – “*ons het swaar groot geraak*” – “we grew up under great hardship”. Interviewees included Rosie Summers, the grand matriarch who arrived at Grootvlei over 40 years ago with her husband, Kobus Summers, who died and was buried on Bossieskloof in the early 2000s. Her son, Abraham Summers, was the current head patriarch of the family, born on Grootvlei and living with his wife, Bella, and their school-going children at Bossieskloof at the time of research. Mary Summers, Rosie’s daughter, was also born at Grootvlei and currently lives at Bossieskloof, and her school-going son lives in town with relatives.

Five ex-workers and -dwellers were tracked down. Two were Summers family members who left post-conversion because of working conditions at Grootvlei – these were the brother and son of Abraham Summers. The other Summers family member, Cathleen, left when Bossieskloof, where she lived with her husband and children, was sold by its owner to the businessman leading the consortium for conversion. The other two respondents, Maxwell Ngqika and Aaron Matyumza, lived on two other farms. However, as will be shown, one had already left years before the conversion.

The businessman explained how they went about purchasing the farms which would be converted, pointing out that they were commercially unviable and unable to support both the farmers and the workers there:

Let me tell you the first farm that I bought [negotiated for a colleague]... the woman’s husband had died of cancer. She was living in [a neighbouring town]. There was one black guy on the farm and it was just bankrupt. My colleague then bought [two neighbouring farms]. One wasn’t bankrupt but it was about to become and on [farm name omitted] there was one old guy living there on his own, and he was barely keeping his head above water. Across the mountain, [the farm] was also owned by an absentee landlord, he was a lecturer at a university. Another colleague bought [farm name omitted] which was just a tiny little piece of uneconomic land... it was 1 300 hectares stuck up in the mountain... it just made no sense. The house was derelict... there was nobody staying there... it [the farm] was just used every now and then by a farmer who used it for emergency grazing. The same with another farm which they bought; there was no house, no electricity, no people... it was just a vacant piece of land. Then my colleague bought on top of the mountain a little block of land... again, no house, vacant.

Maxwell Ngqika, who lived on one of the incorporated farms and had to leave upon conversion, stated that by 1989, his employer’s husband who had done much of the farm management had died; she had sold most of the sheep and was renting out portions of the

farm to other farmers.<sup>42</sup> When he inquired about why she was selling, his employer explained that the consortium led by the businessman had offered her a good price. The businessman felt that, at the time, the workers on those farms faced diminishing prospects; he explained:

I mean you understand, you're the sole employee on a bankrupt farm which is deteriorating... you're no fool, you can see things going backwards, the fences are falling down, the windmills don't work, the number of sheep are getting less, you don't have a sense of security as opposed to what's happened over the last ten years which has been very different.<sup>43</sup>

It cannot be ascertained precisely how many people were displaced from the total nine purchased farms (this excludes Grootvlei Farm, the tenth farm, where workers remained). A rough estimate had to be deduced (Table 2) based on what people were able to remember during interviews. It must be pointed out that often respondents were confused as to whether people left before or after conversion. This in itself indicated that conversion was not a momentous or unusually disruptive occurrence.

The estimates (Table 2) of farm worker/-dweller density at conversion (based on interviews) are rough. However, they provide useful estimates for comparative purposes of population density with higher population densities (Figure 5).

Lower density areas may likely experience an individualisation of farm worker problems due to distance; mobilisation and resistance against perceived threats to livelihoods is likely to be fragmented. The precarious economic situation of the farms involved in the conversion is a critical factor. Although the figures in Table 2 do show that labour reduction is inherent in the expansion of hunting farms when consolidated over large spaces, when Bossieskloof reverted to operating as a single 3 000 hectare unit, this *increased* labour numbers within the area again because it needed its own labour. This brings about a complexity in the issue. Bossieskloof was viable as a 3 000 hectare hunting unit because the land owner kept it for personal purposes; trophy hunting happened on a very limited scale. While the owner explained that he generated income through the hunting and the culling so that the ranch could at least “wash its face”, it was an entirely different model than that of the outfitter based at Grootvlei who required the larger Bontebok area for regular commercial hunting purposes.<sup>44</sup> Different motives for conversion (one for lifestyle, one for business) can lead to

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<sup>42</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 23 November 2009. Cradock.

<sup>43</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

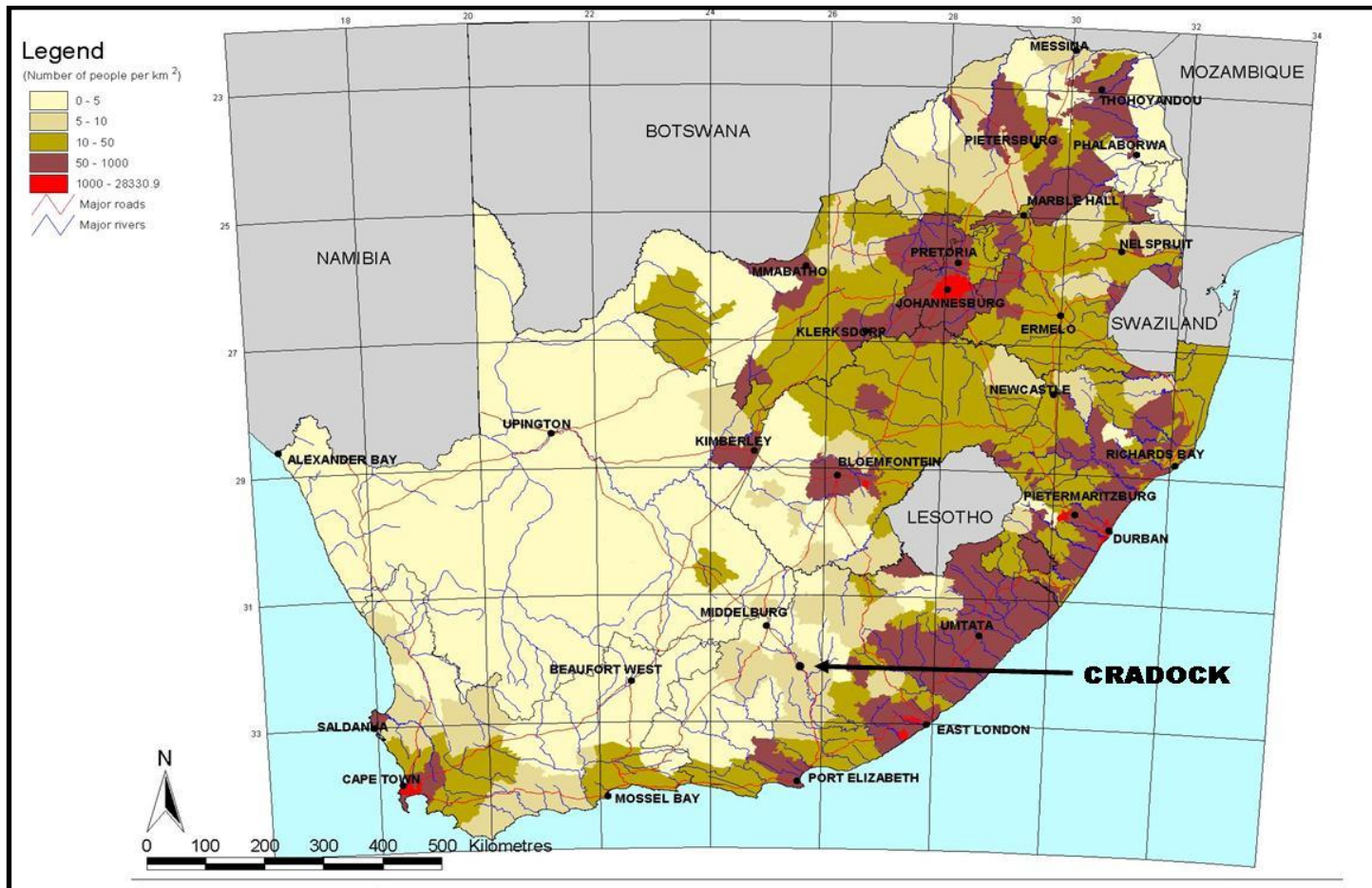
<sup>44</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

different labour requirements on the game farm, this will be discussed later on in the chapter.

**Table 2: Estimated number of farm workers/farm dwellers affected at the point of conversion**

<b>Number of farms consolidated</b>	10 (30 000 hectares = 300 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Number of farms with families</b>	6
<b>Average households per farm</b>	1
<b>Number of households displaced</b>	5
<b>Average number of working adults</b>	2
<b>Average number of children and additional members</b>	3 (ranged from 2 to 4)
<b>Average number of household members</b>	5.5 (numbers range from 3 to 8)
<b>Estimated farm worker/farm dweller population prior to conversion</b>	55
<b>Estimate of farm workers/farm dwellers displaced by conversion</b>	27.5 (10 working adults)
<b>Estimated farm worker/farm dweller population density over 30 000 hectares Bontebok Reserve (1 ha = 0.01 km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	1 per 545 ha 1 per 5.45 km <sup>2</sup> 0.18 per km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Comparative population densities in 2000 (Figure 5).</b>	<b>Craddock:</b> 5 to 10 people per km <sup>2</sup> <b>Middelburg:</b> 0 to 5 people per km <sup>2</sup> <b>Port Elizabeth:</b> 50 to 1000 people per km <sup>2</sup>

The problem of cause and effect with regard to labour rationalisation and conversion remains complex when this kind of differentiation between various forms of ranches is taken into account. Bernstein (2007:46) has argued that within the overall decline of wage work, and increasingly precarious nature of the global proletariat, contradictory trends exist within niche sectors and areas. Although overall employment is on the decrease, some labour-absorbing sectors do emerge, as in the example of “high-value export commodities ... which are ... both capital- and labour-intensive, as well as internationally competitive” (Bernstein 2007:46). Different kinds of game farms can either increase or replace labour, depending on the nature of the enterprise.



Source: Adapted from Environmental Potential Atlas for South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism & University of Pretoria GIS Business Solutions. [Online: [www.environment.gov.za/enviro-info/nat/images/pdens.jpg](http://www.environment.gov.za/enviro-info/nat/images/pdens.jpg)]

**Figure 5: Population densities in South Africa, 2000**

## MOTIVES FOR CONVERSION

Having hunted for years in the Karoo, the businessman felt that he wanted to have a stake in wildlife ranching and game conservation. He stated that his love for hunting began as a child, and, since there were very few properties dedicated to hunting in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, he would assist with wildlife culling on farms, in exchange for a traditional walk-and-stalk hunt:

At that time there were only about three farms with game on them... that is game farms in South Africa... this is mid '60s, early to mid '60s. In fact the first paying safari here in southern Africa was conducted by [name omitted] in Zimbabwe in 1964 and really at about the same time, [a South African] was doing the same here in the Eastern Cape funnily enough. You know you would see advertisements for farms for example, so many hectares, so many boreholes, and then in big black letters it would say "*geen wild*", "no game", because that was seen as a real plus, as a real advantage, that you didn't have to go and shoot the game [as part of farm management]. I collided with this movement. In the late '70s, I came back from overseas. I was a lawyer, then went to [a British university] and then I went to [another foreign country] then I came back. A friend of mine took me hunting again, must have been '79; we were poor in those days. I couldn't afford to pay to hunt so I started culling again. Went down to Hofmeyr as [a friend] wanted us to cull springbok for him and, true to the pattern I had established, I said: "Fine, I'll cull for you, but then you must arrange hunting for me", and I wanted to hunt Blesbok. [This friend] took me to Grootvlei which was the farm neighbouring Bossieskloof. I met [the owner] and within his farm, it was a sheep farm, he had a small area, I think it was about 500 hectares, with game on it.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, although predominantly a sheep farm in the 1980s, Grootvlei was already practising a model of mixed land use, although in a very limited sense. The owner and his brother at Bossieskloof were fourth-generation sheep farmers in their area, a family tradition linked to the Boer commandos fighting in the Second Anglo-Boer War in the area. Local legend, popular ancestral records and graves on Bossieskloof indicate that the Dutch Boer émigrés from Cape Town who tried to settle on that specific farm engaged in numerous conflicts with San clans in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. These public ancestral records also indicate that the *Trekboers*, who were to settle on the land and name the farms, also brought with them slaves, servants and livestock.<sup>46</sup>

Typically, Cradock's well-established hunting farms continue to be owned by or operated by the families that have been on the farm for several generations. For the owner of Grootvlei, the proposition and a capital injection from the businessman and his partners

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<sup>45</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>46</sup> These records were accessed via a detailed family genealogical website which named several family members of the early inhabiting family whose descendants' names were also seen on grave stones at Bossieskloof.

would allow him to transition away from sheep farming as he was struggling financially.<sup>47</sup> The businessman made an offer to the brother at Bossieskloof who was in dire financial straits. A local accountant, who has worked with many farmers in the area, recalled the circumstances under which the owner of Bossieskloof sold to the businessman in 1989:

He just couldn't make it; he's a builder in [another town] now. He sold his farm. He had nothing left when he finished. I'd say most of them [sheep farmers] struggled. You don't often sell when you're struggling. You see it is coming, it's not here yet but every year is with less income.<sup>48</sup>

From the perspective of these farmers, like others in the semi-arid areas during that period, "hardnosed economic reasons" led them to either sell or convert to wildlife productions (Archer, 2002:138).

Economic motivations on the side of struggling farmers converged with a growing interest in the hunting scene in South Africa in general in the 1980s. A former-farmer-turned-venison-exporter and game-farm manager stated that economic imperatives forced struggling Cradock farmers to part with their farms:

One must remember a lot of these farms have been in a family for generations, why would the current owner sell it? It's because he was unable to make money with commercial farming. In the '80s it was impossible to make money as a commercial farmer. I know... I was one. I paid 28% [interest] because the banks charged me 3 % above prime because I was a risk.<sup>49</sup>

Another Cradock farmer, who turned to outfitting, cited economics and personal interest:

I started game farming in 1980 because I was really interested in the outdoors and nature as a whole and believed it could be as good an economic commodity as small stock farming [but] with a lot less hassles. Also the area is well suited to these hardy, more adapted game – consuming less water and a more varied plant life.<sup>50</sup>

That Cradock farmers turned to wildlife production for a financial lifeline, the growing popularity of trophy hunting from the 1960s spurred them on (Carruthers, 2008). However, a number of pioneering farmers in the late 1970s and 1980s took the leap into game farming not solely because of financial considerations, but also because they believed that the Karoo ecology was better suited for game and, by extension, that its economy would be more

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<sup>47</sup> This farmer could not be interviewed as he did not honour several appointments made with him. Information was gleaned from other interviewees. Furthermore, I arranged to meet him off his farm because he has a very conflictual relationship with his neighbours (the workers interviewed and the businessman). I had spent a good portion of time with these workers and he had seen me do so; thus an off-farm interview with him would have protected them. However, he never arrived for arranged interviews.

<sup>48</sup> Interview, Cradock Accountant, 24 November 2009. Cradock.

<sup>49</sup> Interview, Game Farm Manager, 29 November 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

<sup>50</sup> Email correspondence, Cradock Hunting Outfitter, 24 May 2010.

sustainable if built around wildlife enterprise. One of Cradock's pioneering hunting families converted its famous livestock stud into a game ranch. The owner stated that her husband's decision to convert was driven by the conservationist vision and, although she agreed, she felt their stud farm was "solid, very good income in those days, and I knew that we were taking a huge chance with the children to bring up and so on".<sup>51</sup> Converting to game farming on the Cradock stud was part of "vision":

It was quite hard on us for a while, but [my husband] was so set in his mind, so absolutely convinced that the only way that this area, this arid Karoo, could survive would be to get rid of the cattle, sheep and goats. That was the whole thinking behind it. And we would have long discussions about this, [he] and I. He just felt that the only way we could save the land and the small towns like Cradock and keep them floating and keep them going so that people could survive in these areas was to bring in things like game and therefore you are bringing in foreign investment and the minute you bring the foreign investment in, you've got more jobs for people and for training people and for development of skills... Almost simultaneously with ourselves starting it here, we had certain friends in different parts of the country who thought: "Hell, this is a good idea"... and straight away started the game-ranching business in different ways but didn't get rid of the animals – the cattle, sheep and goats. They weren't committed like [my husband] was. I venture to say, and I think I am absolutely correct – we were the first dedicated game-hunting property in South Africa; absolutely dedicated to game.<sup>52</sup>

By the 1990s, the demand for hunting, by both domestic and international tourists, made game lucrative. A farmer on the Somerset East border with Cradock stated his reasons for capitalising on the trend:

These urbanites, as it were, were in cities and they were looking for places to hunt and farmers had the land and they had the animals and they saw it as a way of making money and the people in town were happy to pay. It's caused a huge boom in this industry. It's created a very welcome income source for the farmers. And you know it's like anything, people try it and people leave it. If you like it you do it, if you don't like it you carry on. Those that don't like the invasion of people, they would... they would do culling, and they're paying pretty well at the moment... up to R16 per kilogram for animals that are well shot. Game has provided an important source of income for us... I am still predominantly a farmer in terms of sheep and goats and cattle. But I would say the game represents about 20% of my income.<sup>53</sup>

New entrants in the form of investors and hunters were connecting with the rural economy for lifestyle purposes. The migration of middle- and upper-income whites from cities into small rural towns since the 1990s has been noted by Ingle (2010:406) as a "*counter-urbanisation*" trend;

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<sup>51</sup> Interview, Cradock Hunting Lodge Owner, M. Spierenburg and L. Ntsebeza, 27 May 2007. Cradock.

<sup>52</sup> Interview, Cradock Hunting Lodge Owner, M. Spierenburg and L. Ntsebeza, 27 May 2007. Cradock.

<sup>53</sup> Interview, Somerset East Game Farmer, 10 June 2009. Somerset East.

Many erstwhile city dwellers have opted for a “Karoo-lifestyle” as offered by the region’s many farms and small towns. This has resulted in a marked escalation in land and property values where towns have been “rediscovered”. Some villages, which only a decade ago exuded an air of dereliction and hopelessness, have been transformed almost beyond recognition into trendy “boutique towns”.

The move into game ranching by wealthy businessmen based in urban areas has been criticised by some local farmers who view this form of game-farm purchasing as simply obtaining a “nice-to-haves”; one sheep farmer called them “chequebook conservationists”, for they can pay for their ranches but do not know how to actively manage the land and game soundly.<sup>54</sup> Another traditional stock farmer involved in the fencing business felt that for some wealthy game-farm investors it was about ego and competitiveness, which he felt made the sector commercially unsustainable for some newer ranches saying,

There’s also quite a bit of a trend, you’ve got one guy coming in and [he] tells his mates and they all come, and [start] jumping in on it and bragging to each other.<sup>55</sup>

## **SPATIAL AND AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATION**

The spatial arrangement of agricultural infrastructure (sheds, windmills, paddocks, grazing camps, feedlots, machinery, dams, for example) on farms ostensibly follows its production requirements. However, social infrastructure – that is, houses, sanitation, schools, electricity and water – has historically been provided and arranged according to the racialised hierarchy on farms. The “quintessential...square, white-washed houses” of the Karoo, which are conventionally used by workers and their families in the contemporary era, are usually 19<sup>th</sup> century *bijwoner* homes which have been occupied by successive farm-working families (Atkinson, 2007:2). Thus, in a way by accident of history, farm workers and -dwellers have occupied houses on the farm wherever the available infrastructure is situated.

With increasing prosperity and government subsidy support, white farmers have, however, been able to build relatively large and grand homesteads from the 1860s (Collett, 1990:125). In white Karoo literary nostalgia and reminiscences, the farmer’s homestead is an enduring symbol. Farming-family homesteads have been described as “gracious” (Southey, 1990:114; Atkinson, 2009:2). From the perspective of the workers, however, the farmer’s house is “*die huis*” or “*ihuisie*”, and although that Afrikaans term merely means “house”, in the language of the master-servant world of the farm it denotes the *farmer’s house*, a space that

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<sup>54</sup> Interview, Somerset East Game Farmer, 10 June 2009. Somerset East.

<sup>55</sup> Interview, Game Farm Fencer, 15 September 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

workers do not traverse freely even though the farmers and their families entered the homes of workers and paid social visits whenever they deemed necessary.

In the hunting farm landscape, the farmer's house can become transformed into the guest lodge, although commercial outfitters may add extra buildings for clients. The colonial symbolism imbued in the traditional manor is layered with objects and artefacts that complement hunting and adventure narratives. It is notable that most Cradock hunting lodges, in particular their entertainment and dining areas, are generally fairly modest in comparison to their luxury eco-tourism counterparts. On the Grootvlei portion of Bontebok, new lodges were erected in the veld itself to give the farmer's clients more of the bushveld experience, although it is fenced off for safety. During the day, however, gates were left open and game was observed roaming within the perimeter of the hunters' lodge.

Haywood (2007) suggests in the notion of hyperwilderness that the aesthetic needs of a game lodge necessitate a symbolic invisibility of farm workers and -dwellers from the landscape as it "reverts" to its natural state. In practice, this is not entirely the case. Concealing the farm's prior history is never fully achieved, nor is it necessarily the aim. Farm workers and -dwellers on Cradock hunting farms continued to live in the same houses that had been on the farm for decades. At Bontebok, the major difference was that farm workers' houses were destroyed on those portions belonging to absentee landlords as they were not bringing in their own workers. However, on the Grootvlei portion of the reserve, farm workers' houses remained situated next to the farmer's home. Similarly, once Bossieskloof was fenced out of the nature reserve, farm workers' houses were built next to the main lodge. Farm workers' housing is not considered a "blot" on the landscape if it is located on portions of the farm which are not necessary for hunting. Thus, the process of re-wilding actually leaves a significant amount of infrastructure, particularly that which is located around the farmstead, intact.

The property's perimeter has to be adequately fenced (Figure 6) in order to be issued with a certificate of adequate enclosure (CAE). Legally, a private game farm must erect fencing of a specific height and quality in order to be issued with a CAE, thus (i) hunting on that farm is not restricted to hunting season and (ii) owners can stock permitted species, and claim ownership of, and responsibility for, their game. Perimeter fencing is one of the greatest expenses and most prominent re-arrangements of space when a farm is converted.



**Figure 6: The Bontebok Private Nature Reserve 2.4 metre high game fence next to a conventional short fence of the neighbouring farm**

There are various legal stipulations for the form of fencing required for the types of animals that are stocked. On average, the requirements for game such as springbok and blesbok must be 1.5 metres in height (Skinner, 1989:294). For larger ungulates, the fence must be 2.4 metres in height; the distance between each of the seventeen strands is specified (Skinner, 1989:294). There must be a 10 metre spacing between poles (Skinner, 1989:294). In 1989, the cost of erecting fencing was approximately R3/m (Skinner, 1989:294). Since then, the cost has risen, making the capital outlay for conversion enormous. An experienced game farm fencer stated that he viewed the fencing cost alone as a prohibitive factor for potential success:

A game fence is now costing you R80/m... That's not electrified... electrified you [are] looking [at] close to R100 and, if you take a 600 hectare area, it will give you 8 kms of fencing so you have got to have R800 000. The rule now is you buy your land, the fence will cost you half what your land costs you and the game will cost you double. So it's a massive, massive expense.<sup>56</sup>

Once the fencing has been completed, the farm can be stocked incrementally with game depending on the land's carrying capacity. A converting farm may require a period of time in which vegetation growth can be restored to sufficient levels prior to it being stocked with

<sup>56</sup> Interview, Game Farm Fencer, 15 September 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

game extra to what already occurs naturally on the land. Abraham Summers, one of the main respondents in the study, who was born on and worked at Bossieskloof at the time of conversion, did the clearing and cleaning along with his brother and other casual employees brought in to do the work (Figures 6 and 7). He recalled,

It took about five years to convert the farm. First the people had to leave, then the game fencing went up. Game was brought in – blue wildebeest, waterbok, eland, *bergkwaggas* [mountain zebra].<sup>57</sup>



**Figure 7: Well-preserved original stone sheep paddocks from the pre-fencing era used as vegetable gardens by farm workers and –dwellers on the Bossieskloof Game Ranch in 2010. They are located near the main farm house and workers’ houses and were erected in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

## **LABOUR EFFLUX AND LABOUR RATIONALISATION**

Brooks et al (2011) demonstrate that attempts to re-inscribe the landscape are contested by farm workers and –dwellers whose way of life is directly transformed by the spatial transformations of game farming. In particular, as put forward in Chapter Three, these contestations evolve around the disruption of autonomous and extensive land-based livelihoods; families tend to be permanently fixed to one farm. In Cradock, it can be

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<sup>57</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

postulated that there has been a greater detachment and fragmentation of labour from land over time from the farms. There have been shifts in the presence of on-farm labour between the generation farming in the inter-war period and the 1970s era of high mechanisation. In general, today's generational farmer in the semi-arid districts would have started the trend towards labour rationalisation on their farms from the 1970s.

The venison exporter and ranch manager felt that the greater process of labour out-migration and farm depopulation could not be directly, or solely, linked to game farming:

I think you would find on average that because the farmer has been farming “*agteruit*”, farming bankrupt, he hasn't been farming for a big profit, he has been trying to cut costs and invariably finds that not all of his staff houses would have been occupied. So, by natural attrition, not because he is trying to wind it down, but for pure economic reasons, he was doing with less, certainly than his father. I question at the end of the day how many farm workers have actually lost their work [due to game farming]. I guess there must be a number, but I would have thought that, in many cases, the new owners would have said that we need staff on the farm.<sup>58</sup>

Farmers generally commented that they were making do with less labour than their grandfather's and father's generation. The farmer in Somerset East stated that labour requirements for sheep farming had been declining over the years:

Generally speaking if you pull down fencing and build a game farm and you build an eco-tourism type farm, that type of farm generally encourages more labour per hectare than my type of farming, for argument's sake. Whereas, in my type of farming, we've had less labour over the last few years... My grandfather had a lot more labour than I did. One gets more efficient I suppose. So, at the top end of the scale your eco-tourism game farms employ a lot more labour per hectare than does traditional farming. My labour pattern hasn't really changed but I think my labourers are earning more money...<sup>59</sup>

There were two State-driven processes that had contradictory effects on the amount of labour on farms over time. Up to the time of Union, capitalisation of farming and modernisation within agriculture in the semi-arid districts was driven by the wealthy and progressive settler farming class; in Cradock this included the Colletts and van Heerdens, in Graaff-Reinet the Rubidges and, in Middelburg, the Southeys (Beinart, 2003). However, from Union in 1910, the white State began to play a more direct role in subsidising and promoting white agriculture. Lacey asserts that “The massive subsidising of farmers under the Pact government had been the most important thing in transforming agriculture” (Lacey, 1979:189). This resulted in ongoing subdivision and intensifying of production; in 1918 there were 17 596 white-owned farms in the Cape Province and 23 887 by 1925. There was

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<sup>58</sup> Interview, Game Farm Manager, 29 November 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

<sup>59</sup> Interview, Somerset East Game Farmer, 10 June 2009. Somerset East.

“heavy borrowing, mortgaging and indebtedness followed” (Lacey, 1979:188-190). The white State was attempting to keep white people on the land in the rural areas. The resulting paradox, however, was that “although there were more smaller farms in 1936, the percentage of whites in the rural sector showed a steady decline” due to the fact that the subdivided properties could not be commercially farmed (Lacey, 1979:190). Thus,

although designed to keep whites on the land, State agricultural policy mostly favoured the larger, modernizing farmers and had the ironic effect of accelerating the urbanization of the white poor (Jeeves & Crush, 1997:2).

There were scientific improvements in agriculture, through institutions such as Grootfontein Agricultural Development Institute in Middelburg (established in 1911) which interacted closely with farmers to develop scientific knowledge in livestock production that improved the overall output (Keay-Bright & Boardman, 2007). This created greater demand for labour: farm employment of Africans and coloureds tended to increase labour, with improved productivity. Thus, in spite of the efflux of whites who were not able to make their portions viable, overall the trend was towards a greater need for controllable labour on farms (Morris, 1980). Butler (1977:91) characterises Cradock’s farm workers and their families as having “as many as a dozen households with innumerable children” in the inter-war years.

However, this began to change with the emerging era of mechanisation beginning in the 1950s and reaching its high point in the 1970s. In the 1950s government subsidisation of tractors heralded a new era of State promotion of mechanisation and modernisation; between the 1960s and 1970, there was a decisive shift in the character of South African farming. Joubert (1995:137) states that:

This shift to tractors was associated with the development of a sophisticated industry manufacturing and distributing the relevant machinery. Government-funded institutes undertook associated research and development and there were centres where academic and hands-on training were offered. In addition government-funded organisations provided advice and extension in the planning and costing of tractorised mechanisation programmes to the large-scale farmers.

Van Onselen (1990:100) states of the Highveld that:

it was the arrival of the gasoline-driven tractor, a machine that delivered impoverished Afrikaner farmers from their dependence on one of the instruments of production – the draft oxen belonging to their African tenants.

Between the 1960s and 1970s, government consciously promoted mechanisation and other attendant modernising processes in the agricultural sector (Marcus, 1989:25). This was done

to modernise the sector and reduce white dependence on black labour in the agricultural sector, a shift from the early Union era (Marcus, 1989:25). Simbi and Aliber (2000:9) note that:

more or less at the point when mechanisation was changing from a complement to labour to a substitute for it, government policy on agricultural labour switched from assisting farmers through the old labour-repressive strategies, to assisting them with labour replacement.

However, as Marcus (1989:191) argued, the process of mechanising did not replace labour, instead it resulted in “modernised super-exploitation on the farms of South Africa”: rather than transforming coercive agrarian relations, “it modernised them, reshaping them without altering the terms of oppression and exploitation on which they have been built.”

Generally, heavy subsidisation and tax write-offs “reduced the cost of capital relative to the cost of labour” (Atkinson, 2007:55). On Karoo stock farms, tractors were welcomed but, more importantly, post-war farmers were also introducing new techniques which saw the “re-organisation of the production process itself” (Marcus, 1989:20). Farmers have trained staff to operate new technologies as well as to adapt to new methods of managing stock. A former farmer from the neighbouring Middelburg district opined that it all came down to how farm design has changed labour practice, stating that there has been less labour between his and his father’s generation:

Let’s just take the practice of inoculation. My father when he inoculated, there would not be under four people in the sheep kraal with him. They catch the sheep, pick it up, you would inoculate... at the mouth... The trend now is the Australia/-New Zealand method... much narrower, if you’ve got fewer labourers you’ll want just one sheep to come at a time... and you will inoculate in other places... in my father’s day no farmer would have let the black staff do the putting down... Well, I shouldn’t say “no farmers”, but most farmers, they did it themselves. When we came along we moved very quickly to training the staff, let them do that, we wanted to be on other activities.<sup>60</sup>

It was perceived that not only did the shifts in attitudes take place amongst farmers, but also amongst workers themselves more generally. One farmer stated that:

... the stress of managing people is probably directly correlated with their compliance towards the will of the manager. The subservience of black farm workers during the ’60s was significantly different to the ’80s. While farmers were never at the cutting edge of hard trade unionism, they continually found themselves wishing they could get by with fewer workers.

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<sup>60</sup> Interview, Middelburg farmers, 11 August 2009. Middelburg.

They were loath to employ the young:

“troublesome” blokes, making labour-saving equipment more attractive even though the capital cost could not be economically justified. The taxation policy, starting in the '70s, allowing farmers 100% tax deduction in the year of purchase of such equipment certainly also contributed to these capital investments, especially for the wealthier farmers who particularly benefited... Enlightened farmers readily took up the offer by government in the '70s and '80s to subsidise the building of better farm-worker houses. This was still costly, so this became a further disincentive to keep labour who were “nice to have around” for those pressure times but “were not really necessary”.<sup>61</sup>

The venison exporter/ ranch manager reflected the same experience of farm labour numbers declining in the 1970s and 1980s:

Since 1980 when I came farming, if I look at the veld farms, not the irrigation farms, the veld farms, the numbers of staff have halved. I was hiring ground in the Middelburg district where one farm had eight staff houses and I farmed it with one man in the end. Same farm, we just did different things. I didn't get rid of mine, I battled to find one to come and live on the farm on his own unless I put two families on.<sup>62</sup>

Farm workers have become more specialised, certain practices no longer require resident labour and forms of labour broking have developed in the region:

When our parents started you probably had your shearers on the farm, that was one of the first things that moved off farm, because it's such a highly skilled job they moved around from farm to farm. They were typically people who would reside in the Transkei and the Ciskei for two months, three months of the year and then they would be fetched and go from farm to farm, shearing for farmers.<sup>63</sup>

During the critical and labour-intensive summer sheep-shearing season, the farm temporarily accommodated teams of shearers who brought sleeping material, often using the sheds as a place to sleep. Southey (1990:163) recalled the flavour on the farm at this point in its production cycle:

... the farmer goes to town in his lorry and fetches the shearing team at an arranged venue. They travel very lightly, each shearer with a blanket, a small bundle of clothes and his precious pairs of metal sheep shears and sharpening stone. The team bring three-legged black cooking pots and maybe a few hens tucked under their arms to keep them in eggs. The farmer employs women on the farm to cook the shearers' daily food.

Shearing services were also provided by itinerant nomadic coloured shearers, known as “*karretjie mense*”, who travel and live in their donkey carts (De Jongh, 2002). In recent

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<sup>61</sup> Email correspondence, ex-Middelburg Farmer, 20 January 2011.

<sup>62</sup> Interview, Game Farm Manager, 29 November 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

<sup>63</sup> Interview, Middelburg farmers, 11 August 2009. Middelburg.

years, some farmers have opted to outsource the entire wool-shearing and –sorting component to companies; farmers who do so do not even have to “walk into their shearing shed”.<sup>64</sup> A farmer quipped that:

some old farmers must be turning in their graves to think of someone else sorting out their precious wool clip!<sup>65</sup>

However, the nature of the individual farming enterprise tends to defy a uniform understanding of labour requirements on the farm. Kooy (1977:104) notes variance in the number of workers that Karoo farmers required on their farms: numbers depended on the nature of the activity and the extent to which the farm ran a diversified enterprise. Farmers in the Karoo were noted to have diversified production on their farms which complicated labour requirements making it difficult to generalise (Kooy, 1977). Kooy (1977:104) observed that:

Most farmers had some sort of ‘sideline’ activity – lucerne cultivation, goats or cattle, for example – and, in some cases, it was more than a side line. One farmer drew 80% of his income from breeding race-horses, although he kept a flock of 3 000 sheep.

The number of workers required on the farm is largely dictated by the nature of the production and the management practices employed by the individual owner. A Cradock accountant took the view that, over the years, his farming clients had been concerned with reducing labour costs:

As the cost of labour goes up, the jobs go down ... so what comes to mind is game farming, less labour... The main reason why people change their farming other than the interests and things is labour. So, if you look at the angora goat situation at the moment, its quite a labour-intensive industry ... the farmers are getting out of labour costs ... the farmer says: “If I farm with angora goats, I need seven labourers on my farm... if I farm with cattle, I need four labourers... if I farm with game, I need one labourer.”<sup>66</sup>

Yet, historically, some extensive sheep farms in Cradock have had minimal labour requirements (Biggs, 2004:56). A hunting outfitter reported an increase in labourer numbers when he purchased what had essentially been a sheep-grazing farm in mountainous territory, for the purpose of hunting:

My farm is 2 000 ha and is one original stock farm. The previous owners had two working families on the farm which we took over. Because of the industry and

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<sup>64</sup> Interview, Middelburg farmers, 11 August 2009. Middelburg.

<sup>65</sup> Email correspondence, Ex-Middelburg Farmer, 20 January 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Interview, Cradock Accountant, 24 November 2009. Cradock.

tourism we had to build new housing and now employ five families on the farm and have eight full-time employees, doing lodges, skinning, tracking etc.<sup>67</sup>

The business model and design of the individual enterprise thus make a difference where labour management and employment trends are concerned. Outfitters, for example, will also hold hunting concessions on properties of associates where they can take their clients to hunt their desired trophy. In the Cradock area, livestock farmers who incorporate game within their properties commonly provide extra hunting ground and accommodation for outfitters and their clients. In this way, the stock farmer does not have to bear the costs of marketing and administering an entire hunting business, while being able to receive extra income for every trophy shot. Property listings in the Cradock area indicate that most game farms (on the market) are mixed enterprises with irrigation and livestock production. These farms will vary in terms of the numbers and quality of game that are offered. One such mixed farmer in Cradock, who owns a sheep farm which also has a hunting concession, reported that introducing the game component did not require changing the staff complement, the regular farm employees assist during hunting season.<sup>68</sup> Another game-farmer in the area focuses mainly on breeding prized species. He reported that because his farm was close to town, all his workers lived in town and were transported to the farm on a daily basis.<sup>69</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Concerns that latter-day wildlife conversions, amongst other trends, amount to new forms of dispossession and land grabbing in Africa, particularly affecting rural populations who are excluded from natural resources deemed to be under “conservation”, may be justified in certain contexts but not all (Moyo, 2008; Hall, 2011). Bontebok Private Nature Reserve is an example of a conversion that cannot be cast as a “land grab” or dispossession, given the prevailing structural relations between an already dispossessed labour force that has been shrinking in size on the farms as agriculture has modernised. Wildlife-related land transactions arising between various white elites in the semi-arid context amount to a mere re-arrangement as far as land ownership is concerned. The combined historical forces of the prevailing settler-colonial landowning structure and the modernisation of the agrarian

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<sup>67</sup> Email correspondence, Cradock Hunting Outfitter, 24 May 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Field notes, interview mixed farmer, Cradock, 2 June 2009. Cradock; email correspondence, Cradock mixed farmer, 18 July 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Field notes, interview, Cradock sable breeder, 26 November 2009. Cradock.

economy of the semi-arid areas have had an inherent tendency towards encouraging farm workers and –dwellers to leave farms from the late 1950s into the main era of modernisation in the 1970s. By the 1980s a substantial proportion of farm workers who had lived on farms were no longer permanent residents on farms. In the context of game farming, it becomes clear that rural depopulation is an ongoing process with which farm conversions have collided. Displacement resulting from conversion was determined by the size, purposes and business design of the operation.

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## CHAPTER FIVE:

### **Betwixt Town and Farm: Managing Tenure Insecurity**

In preceding chapters it has been argued that efflux and depopulation of the farms have been an indelible feature of semi-arid areas since the development of key labour-rationalising technologies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the modernisation processes of the 1970s. These forms of efflux are largely not by choice but because of diminishing labour opportunity. This chapter foregrounds migration that is driven by farm workers' and –dwellers' agency. Its argument is divided broadly into two parts– 1) historical migration patterns and 2) implications of this migration for farm workers' and –dwellers' articulation of their place on the land in the present.

The first dimension of the argument puts forward the position that farm workers' and –dwellers' perpetual tenure insecurity and poor working conditions have encouraged, and continue to encourage, ongoing migration between the farms and town, inevitably resulting in permanent urbanisation and the shrinking of on-farm households. Thus, farm workers and –dwellers engage in *pre-emptive* forms of migration to diminish the potential of being rendered vulnerable as a result of tenure insecurity. This migration is pre-emptive to the extent that it is a choice motivated by a need to secure either better wages and/or more secure access to housing in circumstances where dismissal or eviction could render families homeless. With wages as the predominant mode of remuneration, farm workers and –dwellers have, at various points in their lifetimes, opted to uproot and relocate their households to where the balance of opportunities presents the most viable form of survival.

The chapter further argues that this ever-present movement, either through force or by choice, has the effect of creating certain forms of socio-cultural dissociation by farm workers and –dwellers from land. Thus, although largely descended from the indigenous of the region, Cradock farm workers and –dwellers do not assert explicit claims of moral entitlement or claim to the farms on which they have been born, and lived and worked. More important than specific places of birth in terms of identity, are kin networks, and relationships with individual farmers. Longstanding relations with individual farmers form a stronger framework from which farm workers in the semi-arid areas frame notions of belonging and attachment to specific farms, than the actual farm itself. Social relations and

personalised relationships provide the framework of identity rather than atavistic notions of being “land users”. Identities and cultural practices were not associated to land in the direct material sense, but to the way of life on the farms. In this way, farm workers and –dwellers articulated deep attachment to the rural universe of the farms in general rather than to particular farms.

## **HISTORICAL MIGRATION AND ASSOCIATED DILEMMAS**

Farm workers’ and –dwellers’ relative moral “detachment” from specific farms on which they have lived or have been born stems from a core dilemma they face throughout their lives – the choice between farm and town. This dilemma arises from the conflicting imperatives that farm workers and –dwellers face with regard to securing the best form of livelihood and the need to access a physical home. This is a long-standing dilemma in the semi-arid towns. Smith (1976:193) noted of the Graaff-Reinet District, neighbouring Cradock, that:

The Blue Book on Native Affairs for 1907 drew attention to this tendency of the blacks to migrate to town rather than work for the farmers. This touches on what the great majority of farmers would have given as the reason for the labour shortages of which they complained: that there was discrepancy between potential number of farm labourers and the actual number of such labourers. Much of the history of labour relations in the Graaff-Reinet District is the history of the attempts of the white farmers to close this gap, and *a section of the black population to find alternative means of livelihood* [researcher’s emphasis].

The propensity for migration to town accounted for why, on farms such as Grootvlei, family sizes were shrinking long before the trend towards wildlife conversion. One respondent, Michael Gaba (born 1955 on a Cradock farm that is today a high-end luxury hunting farm), stated:

When you live on a farm, you have people here [in town]. Maybe an uncle, an aunt, a brother. They go to the farm and you go to them... If you notice, most of the people who live in town [in Cradock], in the township, they are descendants of people from farms.<sup>70</sup>

Gaba is a black policeman in the area, and had spent his life between farm and town, eventually settling in town permanently after his mother’s death on the farm in the mid-1980s. The farm, on which he lived for the majority of his childhood and some few adult working years, was purchased in 1994 by a farmer who would experiment with a few

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<sup>70</sup> Interview, Michael Gaba, 15 August 2009. Cradock.

agri-businesses before eventually converting it into a 12 000 hectare hunting farm. By the time the farm was purchased, Gaba had long moved to town in the 1980s; his mother was dead, and he had no more family left there. The remaining workers on the farm moved on with the farmer to another farm. Nobody was evicted and nobody was rendered jobless. Gaba's life exemplifies a pattern of kin and social relationships which indicate that not only is the farm not isolated and "sealed off" as a community, but also that farm workers maintain *living* and socially necessary relationships off-farm. In this chapter it is proposed that these links evolve out of both family bonds and the economic necessity of creating a safety net in the event of eviction or dismissal (which is accompanied by eviction).

There were three forms of migration, (i) farm-to-farm, (ii) between farm-and-town and (iii) permanent settlement in town, identified by Hunter (1936) and Roberts (1959), which continue in the present. Constant movement inevitably results in permanent urbanisation as younger generations use links with growing numbers of kin in town to move away from the on-farm household. The process of urbanisation is continuous and, as Atkinson (2007:114) notes, migration is perpetuated by certain forms of social networks and these networks "play crucial roles in shaping who migrates and how". Once one family member has moved to town, other members will use that association to attempt their own move off the farm (Atkinson, 2007:114). The lives of all the respondents who were born on farms were characterised by a regular search for improved working and living conditions, when not rendered jobless and homeless through farmers' decisions. Connor (2010:96) noted this constant movement in the Sundays River Valley, noting that:

Physical movement and disruption are historically ingrained features of life for farm workers in the Valley... These movements can be described as 'serial', long-term, or ongoing experiences of displacement, mainly because displacement has occurred regularly throughout the history and lives of the people.

As in Graaff-Reinet (1976), the process of urbanisation by black and coloured people in Cradock began in the early 1800s. Tetelman (1997:14) states that:

An 1824 census of adult males revealed that some sixty Khoikhoi and eleven "slaves" – presumably Africans – lived in Cradock. A non-white "location" comprised of "squatter huts" emerged during the late 1830s. The location was demarcated informally, and blacks were not legally compelled to live there. Nevertheless, scarce economic opportunities and white racism ensured that few blacks lived in white areas.

Backhouse observed the following in his travels to Cradock in the early 1830s:

The number of Hottentots in this neighbourhood was considerable, many of them were employed as servants, but a large number were living above the town without any visible regular means of subsistence, in miserable huts, in half huts; the latter were open on one side, and were patched up of sticks, reeds, skins and various other things. Canteens were among the chief attraction of the people of this place, and inhabitants were deeply implicated in the production and sale of spirituous liquor. Probably defective wages and payment of labour in spirits were among the chief causes of defective industry on the part of the Hottentots. Their forlorn state induced the London Missionary Society at a subsequent period to place a Missionary among them in Cradock.<sup>71</sup>

In 1843, the location was gazetted, and blacks and coloureds leased sites and built their own housing (Butler, 1985:102). Like other frontier towns, Cradock's black areas came to be characterised by disease, squalor and lack of adequate housing and basic sanitation amenities as the number of people settling there increased (Manona, 1988; Tetelman, 1997).

By 1926, the African area had been defined as separate from the Cradock municipality in accordance with the 1923 Urban Areas Act. The 1920s and 1930s were a critical point in the urbanisation of the town as drought and economic downturn pushed people off the farms into the town. Tetelman (1997:14) states that:

In the early 1930s, the location's 5 000 residents were crammed into a hundred self-built houses and 132 houses recently built by the municipality, as well as a small housing scheme for paupers. Residents constructed shanties in their backyards for lodgers, but this did not ease overcrowding.

In the 1930s, evidence of migration flows between farm and town by Africans is quite strong in Cradock. The depression of 1933 devastated the Cradock economy and that of the surrounding regions. The local Cradock Town Council was torn between providing relief for poor whites on one hand, and on the other hand for blacks in the townships who had also lost their jobs on the farms. In September 1933, the Cradock Magistrate petitioned the Secretary for Native Affairs for relief funds after noting unemployment increases amongst Africans:

The unemployment of 300 able-bodied adults, and their consequent distress, is due no doubt, to the prevailing depression. They formerly received remunerative employment on farms, but owing to the depression, their employers have had no alternatives but to dispense with their services.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> MS 14 680, Cory Library, 'Narrative of a visit to South Africa', James Backhouse, 29 May 1839.

<sup>72</sup> SAB, NTS, 58/336 – 69/336, vol. 7853, correspondence Cradock Magistrate to Secretary of Native Affairs, September 1933.

Although life was still primarily a rural affair in 1936, with 2 053 440 of the 5 455 047 rural Africans being on white-owned farms, the process of urbanisation became a fact of life (Leyburn, 1944:133). Leyburn states that the urban population of Africans in South Africa rose from 587 001 in 1921 to 1 141 642 in 1936 (Leyburn, 1944:133).

In 1938, persistent complaints from farmers about labour shortages are most likely related to the growth of towns, which offered farm workers alternative working and living opportunities.<sup>73</sup> Complaints of labour shortages must not be taken at face value, and must be viewed as a matter of farmers' perceptions unless they can be objectively assessed. As Smith (1976) argued, farmers' perceptions grew out of the gap between that labour supply which they could control and that potential labour over which they had no control. That being said, however, the Native Farm Labour Committee, even though it disputed the necessity of coercing labour, found that labour supply for farms was "insufficient" (again, although it had an ideological bent against "backward" labour tenancy as it was seen not to fulfil the needs of modernising farmers). The complaints of farm labour shortages had been a common national complaint by white farmers with rising productivity following State support of agriculture in the early teens into the 1920s (as briefly discussed in Chapter Four). The Herzogian era of government from 1924 to 1939 could be considered the white Union's high point of attempt to enforce a coercive labour-control regime before the advent of apartheid, because – as Platzky and Walker (1985:89) contend – for Hertzog, the Natives' "proper place was on the white farms rather than on the reserves". Yet attempts to retain labour on farms were constantly undermined by migration.<sup>74</sup>

The 1939 Native Farm Labour Committee's survey on farm labour shortages was conducted in the Cradock district, with the Location Superintendent, G. Wilken, being invited to participate, given the vociferous accusations from farmers about stock theft committed by township residents whom they claimed were unemployed and refusing to work on farms.<sup>75</sup> In their complaints to the Cradock Town Council and the Inspector of Native Locations, the Central Farmers' Association (CFA) stated that:

... there was a large surplus of natives in the location owing to the fact that natives frequently left the farms and found no difficulty in obtaining accommodation in the

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<sup>73</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/82; Report by R. Wonsky, Inspector of Urban Locations, 6 April 1940 on meeting held 28 March 1940, Council Chambers Cradock, with regard to complaints by the Central Farmers' Association.

<sup>74</sup> Under J.B.M Hertzog, the Pact government between the National and Labour parties held government between 1924 and 1933; between 1933 and 1939, Hertzog held a Fusion with Jan Smuts' South African Party.

<sup>75</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/82; Report by R. Wonsky, Inspector of Urban Locations, 6 April 1940 on meeting held 28 March 1940, Council Chambers Cradock, with regard to complaints by the Central Farmers' Association.

urban area location.<sup>76</sup> The CFA and the Council disputed the veracity of census figures on the extent to which there were unemployed men in the township.<sup>77</sup>

In 1942 the Town Council continued to try to solve farm labour shortages.<sup>78</sup> The town's Native Labour Advisory Board admitted in a special meeting to find solutions for the reported labour shortages that "certain farmers are not treating their natives reasonably" which led to them leaving for "towns, mines, and industries".<sup>79</sup> The inflow of farm workers and –dwellers into Cradock town was, however, not always voluntary. In one situation in 1948, a B. Murray wrote to the Cradock Town Clerk requesting that the Council allow a woman who had left a farm to be permitted to live in the township, explaining that:

They used to be on the farm Samenkomst but the man was paid better work on the brickfields... [when the brickworks no longer paid and the husband fell sick] the woman tried to find a home in the location here, but was unable to do so... She has now been told to get out of it [the brickfields shelter] by the Location Authorities. There is apparently nowhere for her to go except on the road – with a practically dying husband and a small teething baby. Without work how is she to live? Is that the treatment for a dog, leave alone a human being? She originally came from a farm where her parents worked, but they are no longer there and she has no place in the world seemingly where she can go.<sup>80</sup>

In response to this case, the Town Clerk asked the national Secretary of Native Affairs to review the case but complained, stating that the Cradock Council had decided to deny Africans entry because it had determined that the township was too full.<sup>81</sup> Unless the circumstances were exceptional in the eyes of the Location Superintendent, farm workers were regularly denied official permission to reside in the town, even if their employers made the request on their behalf to the Town Council.<sup>82</sup>

However, the opposition to efflux off farms by workers was not quite so straightforward. There were differing perspectives on the presence of the unemployed in the location. In a

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<sup>76</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/82; Report by R. Wonsky, Inspector of Urban Locations, 6 April 1940 on meeting held 28 March 1940, Council Chambers Cradock, with regard to complaints by the Central Farmers' Association, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/82; Report by R. Wonsky, Inspector of Urban Locations, 6 April 1940 on meeting held 28 March 1940, Council Chambers Cradock, with regard to complaints by the Central Farmers' Association, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83; Correspondence from Cradock Magistrate to Town Clerk requesting a meeting with Native Labour Advisory Board, 2 March 1942.

<sup>79</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83; Minutes of Special Meeting of Council and Native Labour Advisory Board, 13 March 1942.

<sup>80</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83; Correspondence from B. Murray to Town Clerk, 23 July 1948.

<sup>81</sup> CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83; Correspondence from Cradock Town Clerk to Secretary of Native Affairs, 27 August 1948.

<sup>82</sup> CA, 3/ CDK, 25/LLB/2, Vol. 18; Correspondence Location Superintendent to Town Clerk, 22 March 1954.

report on conditions in Cradock location, the Native Affairs Commission reported in 1938 that:

There are a number of Natives and Coloured persons in both Graaff-Reinet and Cradock and possibly in Middelburg who are not in continuous employment. They work as casual labourers during the shearing seasons and lie idle for the rest of the year. The urban local authorities as well as the farming communities do not want this state of affairs disturbed for, if this is done, farmers feel that their reservoir of casual labour will be destroyed. The urban community looks upon this class as an asset in a way in that all the wages are spent in town.<sup>83</sup>

The pursuit of farm work was primarily about earning cash; where this failed to deliver, workers sought new opportunities in secondary industries. In 1942, labour recruiting was conducted illegally in Cradock, via labour agents linked with Queenstown companies.<sup>84</sup> Sympathetic to farmers, the Cradock Magistrate wrote to the Secretary of Native Affairs, reporting that he had been informed there were labour recruiters from Queenstown holding licences to recruit labour in Cradock. He complained:

... there is a serious shortage of native labour in this district, particularly young labour. The labour on the farms consists chiefly of young-to-middle-aged men and older men. Unless the tendency of young natives to migrate to large towns can be checked, it is clear that the native farm-labouring class will disappear entirely in the course of a few years.<sup>85</sup>

In 1948, the General Manager of the Native Recruiting Corporation requested permission to recruit labour in Cradock, stating:

We already engage upwards of fifty natives annually from Cradock, and this number might be increased if the Location itself were opened to recruiting.<sup>86</sup>

The interests of the farmers stood first for the Cradock Magistrate, who stated that he disapproved of recruitment in Cradock because the “service contract system under the Native Urban Areas Act is not in force, it would be difficult to determine whether recruited natives are in service or not”.<sup>87</sup> The Native Service Contract Act of 1932 bound labour tenants to white farmers by tilting the terms of service in favour of the landowner; it bound tenants and their families to a requisite six months of service to farmers. This 1932 Act

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<sup>83</sup> SAB, NTS, 175/313, Vol. 3; Report of the Native Affairs Commission on an Inspection of Conditions at Graaff-Reinet and Cradock on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1938.

<sup>84</sup> SAB, NTS, 309/208, Vol. 2201; Secretary of Native Affairs to Cradock Magistrate, 18 March 1942.

<sup>85</sup> SAB, NTS, 309/208, Vol. 2201; Cradock Magistrate to Secretary of Native Affairs, 13 February 1942.

<sup>86</sup> SAB, NTS, 309/208, Vol. 2201; General Manager of Native Recruiting Corporation. Letter to Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 13 April 1948.

<sup>87</sup> SAB, NTS, 309/208, Vol. 2201; Cradock Magistrate to Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 10 August 1948.

applied to farm tenants and sharecroppers *outside of the Cape* [researcher's emphasis], where,

in effect... no native [could] live upon European land unless he can show papers to prove that he is a servant or a labour tenant, and in the latter case the exact amount and period of labour due from him must be stated (Perham, 1934:117).<sup>88</sup>

## INFLUX CONTROL

The ascension of the National Party to power in 1948 created a more stringently racist and conservative political climate in Cradock (Tetelman, 1997). In 1954, influx and labour controls in Cradock were adopted in line with national trends to better accommodate the labour demands of urban industry. The Department of Native Affairs established labour bureaux in Cradock and finally allowed recruiting (which had been forbidden a decade earlier) due to farmers' outcries.<sup>89</sup> However, in line with national stipulations, it walked a fine line by *excluding farm workers* from labour recruitment through the gazetting of Cradock as a proclaimed area under the Native Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 (as amended by the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952), which allowed for African urban residents, bona fide under section 10 of the Act, to register as "workseekers" whilst farm labour could not register themselves, barring them from seeking off-farm employment.<sup>90</sup>

However, more stringent labour- and influx-control mechanisms in and of themselves could not prevent farm workers regularly abandoning bad employers. Kingwill (1997:26), a prominent Graaff-Reinet farmer, came to recognise the importance of workplace security for farm workers in the 1950s:

Another important step in our staff relationships was when the idea of giving a Sense of Security to the workers [sic]. The normal practice was my right of instant dismissal for any worker, should he do something wrong – or even if I wanted to dismiss him for any other reason at all – including the right to dismiss when finances were poor or work needs less, and then hire again as the work load increased. I realised this was, surely, a source of great insecurity for them. It also meant a large "turnover" in the labour force. Workers did not stay much longer than a year or two anywhere at that time.

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<sup>88</sup> The Act enforced service on all members of a tenanting or sharecropping household, made provision for the whipping, and enforced the carrying of passes – The O'Malley Archives, [<http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/031v01538/041v01646/051v01779.htm>]

<sup>89</sup> CA, 3/ CDK, 25/LLB/2, Vol. 18; Correspondence Department of Native Affairs to Head Native Commissioner, Cradock, 15 April 1954.

<sup>90</sup> CA, 3/ CDK, 25/LLB/2, Vol. 18; Correspondence Department of Native Affairs to Head Native Commissioner, Cradock, 15 April 1954.

The rigorous application of racial classification and enforced carrying of passes for African, and not coloured, workers meant that some farm workers found it more difficult to access town more permanently from the 1950s onwards. Often farm workers evaded pass controls by having themselves classified as “coloured”; something that respondent Aaron Matyumza’s uncle did by giving himself an Afrikaans surname. Matyumza stated:

that “*dompas*” made it difficult for him to travel. To the point that that “*dompas*” made it difficult to get a house in town because you had to first bring your “*dompas*” to Wilken (the Location Superintendent) and the Bantu council officials. My uncle then escaped those things and said: “It is better that I just make myself Coloured.”<sup>91</sup>

Others, of course, were yoked with the pass. As the politics of Cradock became more deeply informed by the rigid apartheid doctrine that had won the National Party votes from rural towns such as Cradock, the conditions in the Cradock township deteriorated (Tetelman, 1997). The condition of farm workers was important in Cradock’s resistance politics in the 1950s, to the extent that ANC leader James Calata chose to forego participation in some national boycotts and campaigns for fear that certain negotiations with local farmers, although ultimately doomed, would be affected (Tetelman, 1997:67). Tetelman (1997:66) suggests that:

For some of the location’s black elites and for Calata, in particular, the real “menace” lay in the treatment of African farm workers. Even the normally reticent Advisory Board stressed that bad rural conditions caused influx to town, and it requested the NAD to help labourers in the outspans.

Maxwell Ngqika (who would live and work on one of the farms later incorporated into Bontebok in later years) was deeply affected by the restrictions that were imposed on black farm workers and –dwellers seeking to escape farms. He was born in 1949 in Cofimvaba and moved with his father to the Cradock farming district in 1962. He and his family lived and worked on the farm of a politically prominent Nationalist Party family. Ngqika worked on farms most of his life doing general work and seasonal sheep shearing when the opportunity arose. When he was of age, Ngqika moved off the farm his family had originally settled on and travelled around the district seeking work. He constantly faced restrictions due to influx control legislation. He recalled the difficulties of holding a pass that designated him as a Xhosa farm worker in Cradock:

It used to make things difficult. The farmers barred us. Once when I was younger, there was some work with a road contractor and we were told there was work but we had to get stamps from Wilken (the Location Superintendent) so we could work

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<sup>91</sup> Interview, Aaron Matyumza, 11 January 2010. Cradock.

there. So we took our bikes and came to Wilken. When we got there, he asked us where we were from and he said the white farmers we were working for still needed us, so we must go back: “There’s no option... go back unless you want me to phone them.” So we gave up and went back to them.<sup>92</sup>

Ngqika managed to circumvent the system on one occasion when he lost his pass, and was given temporary papers that did not state his farm-worker status. He immediately found work on a quarry by claiming to be from the Transkei, even going as far as pretending not to speak Afrikaans, the lingua franca of the farms, as part of the Act, but lost his job a few months later when he let slip that he spoke Afrikaans.<sup>93</sup>

The problem of influx control that plagued the farm workers – being caught between tenure insecurity on the farm on one hand, and urban influx control on the other – left them very vulnerable. Around the vicinity of Cradock, along the roadsides, temporary shelters had become commonplace amongst farm workers. These temporary roadside shelter areas were called *ezikhululweni*, the dumping grounds (outspans), where farm workers were forced to sleep in makeshift shelters, under donkey carts, or anywhere that they had because they were not allowed into the townships. Farm workers and –dwellers who found themselves without shelter feared the black councils (*izibonda*), thus having no choice but to stay out in the open sky. *Izikhululo* sprang up along the Fish River simply because it was not designated as part of the township, revealing the petty brutal edge of urban influx control. A local Cradock anti-apartheid activist recalled:

... [farm workers] were treated as “illegals” in their own country. My uncle was working on the farms and he used to visit at the end of the month. Before he came in he had to go via the pass office. It [the pass office] was like a border. On pay day they would move around town because they needed permission to be in the township.<sup>94</sup>

Tetelman (1997:66) states that attitudes had shifted very decisively in the white political administration:

The horrific conditions facing Cradock’s African farm labourers exemplified the “dehumanising” character of the new government. Farm labourers had always suffered, but they often could escape to the location. Up through the mid-1940s, the Native Affairs Department hesitated to restrict influx, much to the frustration of the district’s farmers and the Town Council. Yet in the late 1940s, official attitudes hardened... Cradock’s municipality now pressed to close off the urban escape valve, and the government supported the municipality. In an ominous sign for farm

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<sup>92</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 24 November 2009. Cradock.

<sup>93</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>94</sup> Interview, Sphiwo Ngalo (real name), 30 November 2010. Cradock.

labourers, the municipality refused to provide sanitation facilities to squatters living on the outskirts of town.

Farmers also used the *izikhululo* to dump workers they had evicted. Ngqika described these:

It was at the junctions where the main roads met the roads into the farms. You would have to take shelter leaning under the trees, others had donkeycarts. Then maybe another farmer would come and ask where you were from; he would look at your *dompas* and check the record of your behaviour. He might look at it and then shake his head or maybe say he would come and maybe he doesn't. But times were not as bad as now, there was *ubuntu* so you could send your children to ask for food. You also wouldn't sit still in that I, you would walk and get to another farm, send the children to ask for *mealie* [maize] meal.<sup>95</sup>

The existence of these dumping grounds indicates the level of pressure from the farms for access to relations and services in town.

## OFF-FARM LINKS AND ALTERNATIVES

Because tenure insecurity made them vulnerable and conditions on farms have been difficult, farm workers have had to maintain outside links to ensure that their families are able to access services and opportunities. Rosie Summers, matriarch at Grootvlei, was born in the mid-1930s in Tarkastad and moved to the farms in Cradock as a young girl to live with relatives. After marrying Kobus Summers, they moved to Grootvlei sometime in the 1940s or early 1950s. They lived their lives migrating to and from Grootvlei, eventually leaving it when the Bossieskloof ranch came about and presented better opportunities for the family. The Summers' family history on Grootvlei illustrates the process of the progressive decline of the on-farm household as well as the back-and-forth movement between farm and town. From the late 1970s, six of Rosie's ten children began seeking work outside of Cradock, moving to other towns and bigger cities as far as Kimberley, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Only three were to remain on the farms permanently (Abraham, Mary and Cathleen).

Rosie explained that there were periods in her tenure at Grootvlei that conditions became so unbearable that she and her husband tried their fortunes in other parts of the Cradock district:

When the *Ou Baas* ["Old Master"] died we went to the Fish River area, my husband worked there on a farm and I worked at the train station as a domestic servant. We then lived in Cradock but it was difficult. So we came back to live on the farms. When you are not used to town you cannot live there. I don't know if you understand

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<sup>95</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 2 December 2010. Cradock.

that? Even though the farm life is hard, at least there's a bit of hope ... It is hard in town because it needs money to pay for everything. Here at the farm you can at least find something to bring home. In town money does not stay on you. [On the farms] you can even get the salt from the white person's house on the farm. In town we rented. We felt in us that this life was not like the farm. I then went and telephoned [one of Ou Baas' sons] to come fetch us. We had lived about five to six months in town.<sup>96</sup>

However, they returned to Grootvlei because although the conditions on the farm were tough, town proved worse. Rosie's circular migration revealed the ambiguity of paternalism on farms. While *baaskap* and relations of domination made for poor wages on one hand and insecure terms of residence on the other, the organic nature of relations allowed them to return to the farm because of longstanding ties to the landowning family. The relationship with the farmer remained a significant part of the Summers' network.

Mary Summers (born 1961), Rosie's youngest daughter, born and educated for a few years on Grootvlei, was sent to live in town with her grandmother (Rosie's mother) at one stage in her childhood. She described the poverty and difficulties of fitting into town:

It was in the first instance difficult for me, because I was used to the farm life so it was different to try and fit into town but, in the end, I did fit in. But some days it is hard in the town, [inaudible], because there on the farm you have wood, fire, light, you have lamps. Sometimes [in town] we have no candles, if we are a little broke then we have no food in the house; then my grandmother says that during school break we must come home and have a little something, maybe pap or whatever.<sup>97</sup>

When she turned 17, the year that her parents moved from Grootvlei to the Fish River area (as described by Rosie above), she worked as a nanny for a white farming family, but felt it was not worthwhile due to low pay. It was not that she despised life on the farms, it was simply that it was difficult; as she recalled:

I am happier on the farm than in the town or in the city. But when I was done with [working as a domestic for another white Cradock farmer] I felt I was growing up and the pay was too little. So I said to my mother and father, "I am going to go out... A little bit to Jo'burg, a little in Kimberley, a little to Cape Town." When it was December when I came home, I had something... a box of groceries, maybe pretty curtains, to try to make your mother's house look nice.<sup>98</sup>

She described how she travelled back and forth between the farm and other places (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kimberley) seeking a better life for herself and, in recounting the story, felt a great sense of loss and sadness at the poverty she felt her family had been

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<sup>96</sup> Interview, Rosie Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>97</sup> Interview, Mary Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>98</sup> Interview Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

burdened with on the farms. She particularly felt the pain of having had no opportunity to further her education although she was an avid reader. She had spent her life trying to break away from the life she was condemned to at Grootvlei and described feeling a sense of shame at being poor on the farms, and longed to improve her situation.<sup>99</sup>

However, she also saw herself as something of a rebel, who wanted excitement and wider exposure to life, saying:

I was naughty, I was misbehaving. I didn't do drugs or anything but I got the wrong friends in the Cape. I had good work in the Cape.

That Mary ventured beyond Cradock to bigger cities indicates that migration also rests on individual will and not just on networks. As Atkinson (2007:118-130) notes, individual personalities and proclivities towards risk-taking behaviour are also key factors in determining which people are likely to migrate. Mary recounted how she first went to Johannesburg to work as a domestic servant and made new associations through which new opportunities were explored:

There are many people who looked for me to go and work for them. There were some people that had people in Cradock. Now, when you were going through difficulties, there were people here who would say: "Mary, I see you are having a difficult time here. Would you like to go and work for my sister?" Then they give me a train ticket and 'phone their sister and they say: "Meet this person. She can help you." ... When I first came to Jo'burg, friends I made here then said to me: "No, man, this is too little money." ... and then you go and find your next job.<sup>100</sup>

Her desire was to improve her lot in life, something which she felt was not possible on the farms. She stated:

I was a little desperate, for money. Money is always a problem. As a person you always want to be better than another person... you want to make something of yourself. When I see someone has nice pants on, I think: "Ag, why can't my mother not buy me that [sic]? So let me go and work so I can buy myself what I want."<sup>101</sup>

Between these trips she would return home due to the difficulties she faced in town. She was able to return to Grootvlei permanently in the early 1990s even after it had been converted and incorporated into Bontebok. Most of the people she knew had left over the years of her absence; her own friends had already long left for George because "they do not want to live on the farms".<sup>102</sup> The tendency then has been for on-farm households to splinter

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<sup>99</sup> Interview Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>100</sup> Interview Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>101</sup> Interview Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>102</sup> Interview Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

and shrink over time. However, the inability to independently establish oneself outside of the farms underscores the importance of having some form of home to which one can return. A foothold on the land is critical. Farm workers and –dwellers in the Karoo, who are tenure insecure but live on farms, still have access to a fundamental material base for household survival, however tenuous the arrangement.

Aaron Matyumza (born 1964) was born on the farms, and lived most of his childhood and young adult years on one of the farms neighbouring Grootvlei which was also incorporated into Bontebok in 1990. However, by the time of the conversion, Matyumza and his father had long since left the farm in the latter half of the 1980s, leaving one family – an old man and his daughter – who left after conversion. Matyumza’s family life also illustrates the pattern of to-ing and fro-ing between farms, and then eventually ending in a permanent move into the town. He describes how his father returned to the homelands, but chose to return to the farms at a later stage so that he would have the means to take care of his sick wife:

In 1978, my father went back to the homeland to go back and live there because he is from Tsomo. He was born there, my mother he met here [in Cradock] and then they had us. Now then in 1978 my father wanted to go back to his people but he started off first in [another town], and then Dongwe, we went and lived there. And then I noted that was a different life from that in the rural areas. On the farms we spoke a lot of Afrikaans because we lived with Afrikaans-speaking people. When we were speaking in Afrikaans together there then the people would say we are Khoisan-Coloured. But we didn’t live there long. My mother got sick and we went to live near the train station [in Cradock].<sup>103</sup>

His father’s return to the farm illustrated that it was out of necessity, and that:

Our father then went back again to the owner of [the farm next to Grootvlei] to look for work and the farmer said he would fetch us. Then a week passed and then he said that because my father had been in and out of [on and off] the farm he must find his own transport. So when we got there to live a second time, the farmer said, “You see now, you were gone and now you are back, so now know that I have changed, I am no longer that person.” [In the past] my father had been working the garden with the farmer’s wife. So he said that my father could not work there again, he must join the other labourers and go with the sheep and tractors. So when I left [the farm], that is what he was doing.<sup>104</sup>

He left the farm in the mid-1980s after retaliating when the then sheep-farm owner of Bossieskloof assaulted him:

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<sup>103</sup> Interview, Aaron Matyumza, 11 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>104</sup> Interview, Aaron Matyumza, 11 January 2010. Cradock.

I told them [my parents] what had happened... that I had hit the white owner of Bossieskloof [then a sheep farm]. In those days if you did that your own father would beat you because how can you beat a white man? So, I decided to leave through [another farm], hitchhiked on a truck and came here to Cradock town. At that time my girlfriend lived here... she had my child, so I came to live with her family in the townships, at the shacks.

The pursuit of adequate schooling is a major cause of farm efflux and is one the most common reasons why farm workers send their children off-farm to town relatives (Smith, 1976). As early as the 1930s and 1940s, farm workers and -dwellers in Cradock were sending their children to town for schooling purposes because there were generally not enough schools on farms until the 1960s.<sup>105</sup> This meant that they had to live with a relative. In the late early 1940s, Wilken, the Location Superintendent, kept a list of children whose parents were on farms and had sent them to live in the township for the purposes of schooling.<sup>106</sup> There were 34 children of between the ages 9 and 18 listed in 1942, probably nowhere near the true number, with details of their relatives, their parents' employer and the name of their farm of residence. The practice of sending children to school off-farm became the norm over time because parents preferred their children to obtain a higher quality of education and to go further; often farm schools provided limited primary education. Other reasons had to do with the social relations on the farms more generally, as Ngqika experienced in the mid-1980s when his children were forced to work on the farm which hosted their school:

He (the farmer) would fetch the children and take them to school under his wife and then again just remove them from his wife's class and make them work. At that time it was under oppression, there was nothing you could say as a Xhosa person, it was just about Baas. So I took them to Alice, to live with my mother... You might find that for a whole week they would be working going up the mountain herding sheep. A white would not suffer if the kaffir's children were there.<sup>107</sup>

Abraham Summers at Grootvlei sent his children to boarding school in town in the late 1980s and 1990s. In this context, then, the advent of game farming has not initiated, but rather accelerated, the pace of an already existing pattern of household fragmentation on the Cradock farms. Game farms have dismantled what was left of the already dwindling numbers and transforming nature of the on-farm household.

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<sup>105</sup> Interviews with farm workers and -dwellers point to this. Mary Summers' generation had access to school on the farm where her older siblings did not.

<sup>106</sup> CA, 3/CDK/4/1/83; List of Country Children Attending School at Cradock Location Schools, G.P. Wilken, 1942.

<sup>107</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 24 November 2009. Cradock.

Although it offers alternatives to farm life, town often presents further difficulties and contradictions. For one, the presence of kin in town does not necessarily mean that they are capable or willing to take on additional people into the household (Luck, 2004:42). This means that the farm workers and –dwellers often have to provide additional money to pay for those dependants of theirs living in town with relatives. Abraham Summers expressed an ambivalence about relatives in town and stated that they were not always welcoming or generous. He commented:

Yes, we had people in the town. But now look the money is little and you had to pay money for lodging [with relatives]. My pa couldn't also out of that four pounds [his then salary] pay for town.<sup>108</sup>

The expectation that those bringing their children off the farm will make a financial contribution to the town household can thus force those with no means to rely on their relationships with farmers. Farm workers and –dwellers are thus caught between kin and paternalist relations which can sometimes prove fragile and unreliable.

Because town is often difficult, and presents numerous challenges, farm workers more often try to find improved working conditions and wages on other farms. Kooy (1977:116) observed, in a study on farm labour in the Karoo, that:

Many workers are probably not attracted to the towns. It seems, from answers to questions like “Have you ever thought of moving to a town? If so, why don't you?” that workers' perceptions of town life were: 1) that it is more expensive – wash wages may be higher but everything, from house to meat and even firewood, may be paid for, and 2) the towns are dangerous places, with “rough” people.

Although this assertion did not take into account the various dynamics that were already causing migration off farms, as observed by other studies such as Roberts (1959) and Smith (1976), the observations are partially true insofar as farm workers and –dwellers are making highly constrained choices. The decision to move or stay is also always made on the basis of a trade-off, as Smith (1976:212–213) observed:

While wages in town were higher than in the country, the cost of living in town was higher, and blacks had to pay 10/- to 15/- a month for a hire-room in the seventies, or a 5/- for a hut site in the location... Country labourers generally enjoyed free grazing rights, a privilege which the black townsmen were either denied or for which they had to pay dearly.

The decision often involves splitting up the household: while children and other kin may move permanently to the town, many other farm workers remain on the farms for economic

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<sup>108</sup> Interview, Abraham and Bella Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

reasons. In addition to circulating between farms in the district, it becomes quite rare to find farm-working families that have resided on one farm beyond two generations, as they or their adult children will inevitably look for work on other farms. As Atkinson (2007:111) points out, the decision to stay or leave the farm depends on the individual's circumstances, and often workers

seem to prefer to stay on a farm ... if working conditions are poor on one farm, then many workers attempt to get a job on a nearby farm.

Roberts (1959:84) noted that “most workers tend to seek employment within a very small area throughout their working lives”, evidence of the local networks that farm workers create and maintain with white farmers. Farmers thus tend to see the same workers return for employment at their farms over their lifetimes. This circulation between farms and – at various points – the town has implications for the way in which farm workers and –dwellers in Cradock and the broader semi-arid Karoo understand their identity as “farm people”, and the absence of a firm attachment to a specific farm or “piece of land”, as something they can call a “permanent home”, on the farms over which they feel moral ownership.

### **IDENTITY, SPACE AND BELONGING: LAYING CLAIM TO “THE FARMS”**

Being tenure insecure, hedging one's bets by keeping associations between town and the farms, and being caught between dilemmas means that, by and large, farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas do not express a deep sense of permanent attachment to farms of their birth or to specific farms. What is evident, however, is that, while living on the farms, farm workers express a sense of belonging to “the farms” – “*die plase*” – in general as a rural society and way of being. This belonging is not seen solely in terms of being born on farms, but related to experiences of living and working there, and often described in contra-distinction to life in the towns. In this respect, farm workers and –dwellers lay claim to “the farms” as a particular way of being, a way of life to which they feel they belong. Rutherford (2008:403) defines “belonging” as those

routinised discourses, social practices and institutional arrangements that define particular forms of recognition that shape access to material and nonmaterial resources; the ways in which one becomes incorporated into particular places.

Belonging, however, implies a *self-recognition* of one's place, not merely “the ways in which one is incorporated”, in other words, it is also the manner in which one lays claim to being recognised.

Hunter observed in 1936 that farm workers and –dwellers did not consider themselves as either belonging to the reserves or town. It emerged from respondents in this research that they see themselves as “*plaasmense*”, people of the farms. They laid claim to their place on the farms as that space from which the totality of their lives, kin relations, struggles, victories and social sensibilities emerged. As Jan Jacobs, a worker on Bossieskloof ranch, stated:

We must go do everything [relating to life] on the farms (*Ons moet alles doen op die plaas*). We take our wives on the farms (*Vrou vat ons by die plaas*). But the hardship goes on. We have to take what we get.

Being “of the farms” is not necessarily tied to the idea of “land” materially or culturally, but to the farms as both home and a place of work, which presents farm workers with intractable contradictions, contradictions that they inevitably have to resolve by leaving. Thus, the farms are at once a place of hardship, inequality and insecurity *and* a place of belonging, family, familiarity and the relative safety of the farmer’s paternalism.

One’s farm “ways” and identity are also rendered starkly in town, the towns become a “reference point” against which the farm identity is articulated (Miller, 2005:123), as Mary Summers describes:

I did not fit into the town because I was so used to the farm life. I grew up on the farm, I had actually found it difficult to make friends with the children in town because they had a different manner to the one that I was brought up with. Maybe they would go to the shop in the evening, I was always scared. I just wasn’t used to certain things, like swearing and shouting. The people fight in the street, and you don’t know things because you grew up in the house.<sup>109</sup>

Bella expressed a preference for the farms; “Farm is better than town. I like the life on the farms. Town life is harder.”<sup>110</sup>

Matyumza felt that people on farms showed respect for social decorum and were sensitive to generational hierarchies; he described the dilemmas posed by leaving farm for town:

I don’t want to lie, it wasn’t easy to live in town. On the farm people must call me “*Bhuti*” [term of respect towards young men] only, now here these young boys they say “Ta”, “Bra” and I would fight because I don’t want to be called “Bra” ... because I wanted that life that I had become accustomed to on the farm. So I stayed but it was not so easy here because on the farm if you don’t have something you can go to the white person and say, “Hey, I need this.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Interview, Mary Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>110</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>111</sup> Interview, Aaron Matyumza, 11 January 2010. Cradock.

Matyumza's statement above not only shows how farm workers view themselves and the farm as a place of traditional values, but also reveals how younger generations can refuse the perceived submissive posture of the older generation towards white authority. Some farm workers understand their farm identity and place through self-deprecating discourses of powerlessness, which hold the farmer up as the all-knowing paternal figure. Cathleen Summers, one of Rosie's daughters, appeared to have accepted farm workers were fated to know little and to be uneducated. When queried about the political struggle in Cradock and how it affected her as a farm worker, the exchange below with the researcher is illustrative:

- Researcher:** But you knew about Mandela? Did you know anything about politics on the farm?
- Cathleen:** No, we knew nothing.
- Researcher:** So what did you make of apartheid and the political resistance in Cradock?
- Cathleen:** Nothing.
- Researcher:** Surely you knew. You were scared?
- Cathleen:** We were not scared, we didn't know. You see a farm is this thing – see when you are a farm person in town, people insult you and say “Don't bring your farm ways here”. So a person from the farm, there is nothing they put in their heads. All they think about is their work, they don't pay attention to anything else. And those days there were no televisions that could show you what was going on.<sup>112</sup>

This apparent “ignorance” of worldly affairs is associated with being viewed as “country bumpkins” or rural simpletons in the towns. Again, Cathleen used this same narrative of “ignorance” and dependence on the farmer with regard to the historic elections of 1994:

We voted on another farm. It was a miracle for us. We didn't really know what voting was about, but it was like a “surprise” [in the sense of something unexpected or a new entitlement]. We didn't really know. Look, on a farm it's like this, there's the “*plaasboer*” [farmer], he knows everything that is going on; he tells us that “Tomorrow, you must take your IDs.” He tells us today and the vote is tomorrow. We don't really know what we're going to do, we just hear about elections. We prepared as if we were going to a Christmas celebration; as if we're going to get something big where we're going.

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<sup>112</sup> Interview, Cathleen Summers, 7 January 2010. Cradock.

This powerlessness is underscored by the fact that farmers can evict at whim. Thus, Maxwell Ngqika expressed a commonly held view by farm workers in the Cradock area, that a farm cannot be considered a permanent home for workers and their families:

In a farm house one person comes in today and then another tomorrow. Maybe they quarrel with the white person and leave. Another person comes and gets that house. You can't say you have a house there... If you quarrel with the white person he will send you on your way, maybe leave you at the dumping grounds (*ezikhululweni*). He will say: "Come pack your stuff. Now."... and load your belongings on the tractor. You'll have to see for yourself where you sleep... and you then have to wake up and look for work...<sup>113</sup>

In this way, farm workers do not claim specific farms as home; they do not view the farm as a specific site to which they can claim a permanent entitlement. The claims to belonging are articulated in a more transcendent perspective, the claims to the farmscape, very generalised. Thus, although one "belongs" to the farms in the broad sense, one's belonging cannot be firmly tied to a place itself because one's place on a farm is always insecure. Thus, another set of dilemmas emerges, the farms are seen as a place of moral order, stable kin hierarchies and the observance of traditional values but also of powerlessness, civic marginalisation and self-suppression. Thus, one can belong to the farms and view them as "home", but also be dislocated and alienated by the social relations of servitude brought about by racialised land and class inequality. Thus, one can claim the farms as "home", but not be avowedly committed to living one's life out there under prevailing conditions of inequality.

This mode of "belonging" and "laying claim" is somewhat different from that expressed by farm workers affected by farm conversion in the traditionally arable areas of Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, where the land itself and specific site hold deep symbolic meaning for many families who can attach histories of family autonomy to it. Thus, Luck (2004:87) demonstrates, for these farm-worker and –dweller communities in the Grahamstown area, "deep significance" is attached to the "landscape as a place of residence, a locus of identity, a site to bury the dead, as a source of ritual and medicinal plants, and the home of their ancestors". They express their identities and family histories in relation to specific geographical spaces, rituals and grave sites; community patriarchal hierarchies were inextricable from land. In other words, there was a "deep non-material commitment to the land"; it held a moral value (Luck, 2004:95).

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<sup>113</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 23 November 2009. Cradock.

Similarly, in the case of farm workers and –dwellers in the Sundays River Valley affected by the Greater Addo Elephant National Park, Connor (2005) noted that experiences of removal and dispossession of land were strong elements of farm workers’ and –dwellers’ identities which they could trace back to labour-tenanting families in the area. Indeed,

memories of land occupation have not abated in the mind of most ex-workers, and that the actual experience of removal, which was highly traumatic for most, continues to remind people of that which they have lost (Connor, 2005:78).

Connor (2005:63) states:

informants displayed a detailed knowledge of their family history on these territories and claimed that this land was ceded to their ancestors by white farmers, but that these agreements were rendered void by quitrent, and later private, systems of white ownership.

In spite of a “non-fixedness” to specific places, farm workers and –dwellers in Cradock require access to land in order to carry out rituals and rites, both customary and Christian. Because of the inevitability of movement between farms, or to town, farm workers and –dwellers practise their customs and faith wherever they are. On extensive farms, church is usually rotated between households on the various farms, with one of the farm workers ordained as a deacon to preside over the services. On special occasions, a minister from the mother church in the town may come out to the farm to serve their specific denominations, which, on the Cradock farms, are predominantly Methodist and Dutch Reformed. If farm workers move with their families to new farms, deacons will continue to serve their congregants on other farms if distance permits.

Traditional African rites are also commonly practised by the majority of farm workers on Cradock farms. Cradock fell outside of the Cape coloured labour-preference zone, where at least 50% of workers are coloured; this area lies westwards of the Port Elizabeth to Gordonia latitude where there is a fair “mix” of coloureds and blacks in its farm labour population (Antrobus, 1984:29). Whether farm workers designate themselves as blacks or coloured depends on racial constructs that precede apartheid-era racial classifications. Within the white colonial mythology of the Karoo, workers were designated according to very distinct and highly reductive racial genealogies – if they were considered black, they were designated tribally as Xhosa; if they were considered coloured, they were associated more closely with Khoi/San lineage.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> See Butler (1977), Southey (1990), and even Jorritsma (2006) for examples of this. While indeed coloured people of the Karoo have Khoi/San ancestry, so do many of those later classified as Xhosa and white. The

However, customary practices of the farm workers only expose these racialisations as white colonial constructs. Rosie Summers, although “phenotypically” coloured, considers herself Xhosa, being from the Tarkastad area, even though her maiden surname is of English origin. Her late husband, Kobus, who was coloured and originally from the Nieu Bethesda area, paid *lobola* (“bride price”) for her when they married. Women who marry into the Summers family undergo the traditional practice of being dressed in traditional garb as *makoti*, “new wife”, while Kobus expected *lobola* to be paid for his daughter, Cathleen.

The customary rite of male initiation is a significant social custom that happens on farms. All the male farm workers (with the exception of two Zimbabweans), coloured and black, had undergone traditional male circumcision on the farms. Ngqika explained why circumcision was considered a significant event by the farmers:

If you wanted to take your boy... they knew that it was the custom of the Xhosas. And the Xhosas showed them that “This is our culture. We live by it.” They came to trust that a boy is better behaved when he is circumcised; that he can be trusted better at work. They would even help you when you made preparations for your son.<sup>115</sup>

In this way, farmers themselves recognised the traditional hierarchies as emerging from custom because it enabled shared patriarchal conceptions of family control and the dominance of the male farm workers. This suggests that custom was a conduit for labour control on the farms. If tenure also involves access to land for rituals, then the use of land for custom also worked in favour of the farmer.

The key difference noted amongst coloured and black workers was the ability to recount genealogies through clan names. Coloured respondents, having English or Afrikaans surnames, did not have any more associations or references to African clans they may have been descended from, and had no knowledge of likely white ancestry. As a result, the family history could not be told further than four generations, that is, the parents of their grandparents. This had to do with the colonial practice of extinguishing slave and servant identities by giving them “Christian” names, as part of conquest combined with the legacy of illicit and/or violent sexual acts across “race” lines between master and servant class. The practice of Christian naming has also affected some Xhosa families in the Eastern Cape. An

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mythology of coloureds as being solely or predominantly of Khoi/San descent simply reifies “race”, erasing the complex social and sexual interactions of human movement in the frontier zone. Jorritsma’s (2006) thesis on coloured workers’ music of the Karoo, while recognising the constructed nature of “race”, still proceeds on the premise that the forebears of the coloureds are different from *her* own ancestors, the colonial settlers, in all reality, where, in fact, present-day coloureds in the Karoo can lay equal claim to her white ancestors.

<sup>115</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

exchange with Michael Gaba revealed this complexity; his mother's father had arrived in Cradock as a young initiate from Lady Frere:

- Researcher:** What is the family name?
- Michael:** Gaba\*<sup>116</sup>
- Researcher:** Do you still have relatives in Transkei?
- Michael:** Gaba is my father's family, and they didn't even bring me up. I didn't even research them. The people I know are my mother's family
- Researcher:** And your mother's family name?
- Michael:** Suibok.\*<sup>117</sup>
- Researcher:** Are they coloured?
- Michael:** No, Xhosa. You know why the Xhosas have Afrikaans names? They were forced. When the white person asked you: "What's your surname?" and you said [for argument's sake]: "Qaqushe", they'd say, "Qaqushe? I'm not calling you that, I'll give you a name, Suibok", it was forced. Even if they couldn't spell your name, they gave you a new one.
- Researcher:** If you were Suibok by surname what were you by clan?
- Michael:** They were Mabamba\*<sup>118</sup> from the Transkei.

Thus, for the farm families of Transkeian origin, clan names are known, which usually means that once (even in the town), they could associate with and build loose customary kinship ties with those who shared their clan names. For coloured workers, who do not have former homeland roots and associations, lineage only goes back to the farms. However, this does not impede the performance of customary marriage and initiation generally on whichever farms they are on. When Abraham Summers recounted the family roots, he framed their history in terms of the immediate nuclear family:

How can I begin? I can begin with my father's father who stayed at [at a farm in the Cradock district], they come from there. The Summers were born there. The Summers travelled this land through. Then my father and my mom brought us into the world and raised us at Grootvlei. My father travelled around a few places here in the Cradock district when we were young. We went here and there but we returned to

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<sup>116</sup> A reminder to the reader that this is a pseudonym for the sake of anonymity and bears no reality to specific clan geography of the Gabas.

<sup>117</sup> This is his mother's actual maiden surname.

<sup>118</sup> This is the actual clan name.

Grootvlei where my father worked till he was old. Then we left when I was older and I was a man who could stand for himself and... at Grootvlei I took a wife, bore children; I had four children there.<sup>119</sup>

This experience stands in contrast to the stability of livelihood on land as evoked by farm workers in the Sundays River Valley nearer to Port Elizabeth, as Connor (2010:98) observed of that area:

Many present-day farm workers still idealistically recall their childhood and early adult lives on these outlying territories, and chiefly associate their erstwhile rural lifestyles with their experiences of labour tenancy, subsistence agriculture and cattle husbandry.

For the Summers family, “family history” was a history of moving from farm to farm.

Manona (1988:4) concludes in his seminal study of farm-to-town migration in the Grahamstown area that when the farm workers decide to leave their farm home, they

have no rights ... save those which may be activated if they leave parents or siblings on the farm, it is easier in one respect (one leaves nothing behind) but harder in another (one cannot go back) which are two sides of the same coin.

The decision to move to town permanently is almost an inevitability for farm workers generally. However, it has been demonstrated that, preceding the permanent move to town, farm workers and –dwellers maintain ties with “town”. Thus, it is rare that one’s final move to town happens outside of assistance from kin who have made the move. This pattern of efflux has been in existence in the semi-arid areas for over a century. Land-use change in the semi-arid areas, in particular conversion to game farms, has paralleled these migration processes.

## CONCLUSION

Farm workers and –dwellers claim their place on the farms as people of “the farms”; they articulate their identity as such. However, this identity is neither tied to atavistic or primordial attachments to land, nor to a socio-cultural attachment to specific sites and farms. This accounts for why farm workers and –dwellers may be inclined to move from farms without asserting a moral entitlement and claims to those specific farms and the land. If one returns to Chapter Three, which argues that the rural servile force of the semi-arid area exists under conditions of longstanding proletarianisation and near-absolute land

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<sup>119</sup> Field notes, informal conversation, Abraham Summers, 16 November 2009. Cradock.

dispossession, these general claims of belonging to a farm universe, to the farms, frame the way in which semi-arid workers and –dwellers conceive of themselves *specifically* as a *rural* rather than an urban class. The fact that farm workers assert this rural identity, and their place on the farms, indicates that reality of proletarianisation is not necessarily associated with “urbane” sensibilities. They are rural proletarians, who articulate a rural identity which begs questions on their view of land – “Do they seek access to it?” If they do, “In what forms and for what purposes do they require it?” That farm workers and –dwellers do not claim *specific* sites or farms only reflects the structural reality of their position within the land structures; the articulation of the rural identity, however, invites further probing. In other words, this articulation of a rural identity compels an inquiry into a potentially unvocalised land need, for – as Moyo (2005, 2008) implores – it would be premature to underestimate the potential for land need among seemingly proletarianised agrarian classes. This question is discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

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## CHAPTER SIX:

### Micro-level Power Relations on Cradock Game Farms

This chapter asserts that game farms in Cradock, by and large, continue with the “traditional” farm-management model premised on inequality, personalised working relations, exploitation and tenure insecurity. Thus, there is a continuation in the way power operates on farms after conversion. Game farms did not develop inherently unique labour relations; there was no demonstrable break with the past. Farmers remained powerful on their land; farm workers’ and –dwellers’ tenure security still depended on good relations with the farmer. Exceptional hunting farms are exceptional by virtue of their owner’s personal philosophies and outlooks rather than any inherently progressive impulse within the wildlife sector itself.

The discussion which follows focuses on farm workers and –dwellers living on Bontebok Private Nature Reserve and how they adapted to life after conversion and the implications this had for their tenure security. It draws points of comparison with secondary interviews conducted with farm workers from three further hunting farms in the Cradock district. The chapter makes two arguments in the main; the first is that farm workers and –dwellers continue to be affected by racialised inequality on hunting farms. Secondly, personalised rather than formalised labour relations, whether amicable or fraught, still govern the micro-politics of life on game farms. In this context, farm workers’ and –dwellers’ tenure insecurity continues to be weak because it depends largely on their standing with the farmer.

Aylward (2003:20 – 21) comments that,

Like any economic activity, nature tourism will have an impact on social equity, regardless of whether the impact is explicitly intended. This impact can be assessed in many ways ... the first is whether activity can be judged progressive against current norms. In other words, does nature tourism ... improve the situation of those who are worse off, relative to those who are better off? The second way is to simply assess what the level of impact is for specific target groups; that is, does the activity improve the lot of landless workers, poor people or disadvantaged minorities?

The game industry recognises that it must play some sort of role in “rural development” and build relationships with neighbouring communities to ensure “good neighbourliness” (Els, 1996). In this framework the communities being referred to are usually densely populated

black communal areas where contestations over land with white agriculture may be longstanding. In the semi-arid Eastern Cape agricultural districts, however, the geography, a geography of total conquest, precludes the notion of “neighbourliness” in the same sense, for the immediate neighbours of white game farms are most likely other white farmers. Thus, studies such as that of Langholz and Kerley (2006), who have posited that privatised wildlife protection can attain success in a number of competing commercial, social and ecological imperatives, provide the basis upon which to assess the sectors’ claims. Langholz and Kerley (2006:2) have claimed that:

Private protected areas have recently emerged as innovative and powerful engines for sustainable development (De Alessi 2005, Krug 2001, Langholz and Lassoie 2001). Mounting evidence strongly suggests that privately owned conserved areas can protect biodiversity, succeed financially, and contribute to social upliftment (Mitchell 2006, Kramer et al, 2002).

In their survey of ten ecotourism reserves located within the Cacadu and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area (between Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth), Langholz and Kerley (2006) reported improvements in the overall quality of housing and wages for workers. These improvements are cited as evidence of the private wildlife sector’s potential to contribute to betterment of farm workers’ overall well-being. These are strong indicators of improved conditions on farms. However, in much the same way that studies of resistance and protestation against game-farm conversions reflect regionalised conditions, so, too, does the study by Langholz and Kerley.

Beyond regional specificities with regard to job creation and housing provision on private game reserves, Langholz and Kerley (2006) fail to address the question of social relations on converted farms. It has been argued in preceding chapters that tenure security should be understood as social and political process (Cross & Friedman, 1997:17). Notwithstanding the importance of assessing the physical brick-and-mortar of houses and level of wages to determine the nature of conditions on farm, the culture of the farm and its approach to management provides a more substantive indication of tenure relations.

Orton et al (2001:471) maintain that “*family* employment and housing became the bedrock of gendered paternalism” on farms. Thus, tenure security on farms has been premised on patriarchal relations, with ultimate authority vested in the white owner, usually a man; while access to housing was tied to the employment of the male head worker who also acted as manager over his family members in their capacity as residents and workers on the farm (Orton et al, 2001). Thus, it is not merely whether farm workers have houses on farms, but

rather the terms upon which these amenities and living arrangements are structured. Du Toit and Ewert (2002:83), amongst others, have shown that the discourse of “progressivism” or “modernisation” within various segments of the agricultural sector have not eroded “quasi-feudal, master-servant relationships that persist on many farms”. Instead, paternalistic practices continue in the post-apartheid era, re-shaped somewhat by new labour and tenure security legislation. Atkinson (2007:97) argues that “paternalistic community bonds” are coming under strain due to labour and tenure security laws. This is viewed as having adverse consequences for farm workers and –dwellers who still depend on the farm in the absence of State and other support services within the farming areas; the “old rural order has started fading – with nothing coherent to take its place” (Atkinson, 2007:99).

Indeed, the shift away from paternalism has in many cases been a conflict-ridden process (Atkinson, 2007). This interpretation, however, only provides partial perspective on the meaning of these shifts in farm social relations for it gives inordinate primacy to the farmer-worker relationship, whereas, of equal significance is the fact that these shifts and changes also provide farm workers with a new space to articulate that which, as Du Toit (1993:43) documents, they have always known to be problematic about their working conditions, although they have hitherto been denied the ability to make “political meaning of these facts.” Farm workers and –dwellers, having lived with the contradictions and problems inherent with paternalism and *baasskap*, can also take up the shifts in political conditions to articulate old expectations and old demands outside of the language of *deel van die plaas*, but through notions of their own competence, justice and fairness (Du Toit, 1993:39-44). Similar shifts were present in the experiences of farm workers and –dwellers after the conversion of Grootvlei. Working relations deteriorated on Grootvlei along with shifts in the political dispensation in South Africa and along with the opening up of new possibilities with newer, more progressive, landowners entering the landscape. While the conversion brought about a new spatial reality, the centrality of inequality on the farms continued to shape the trajectories of farm workers’ and –dwellers’ lives. The differences between owners’ management approaches determined the extent to which farm workers felt their tenure security to be stable or under threat, underscoring the continued structural nature of the insecurity faced by farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas.

## THE END OF THE ROAD AT GROOTVLEI

When the Summers and Jacobs families were interviewed, they were working and living at the Bossieskloof ranch which neighbours Grootvlei and once formed part of Bontebok Private Nature Reserve before the owner fenced it off. However, prior to Bossieskloof's being fenced off, the Summers family had continued to work at Grootvlei where the family had lived for approximately 40 years; their departure was in 2001, twelve years after conversion. It became evident that they left Grootvlei because conditions of work deteriorated after the farm was converted. Without access to the farm owner at Grootvlei (although he was contacted and requested for an interview, for which he failed to arrive, and follow-up phone calls were not answered), it was not possible to obtain his point of view as to how a 40-year relationship with the Summers family ended with them going to work for the neighbouring ranch. What was possible to glean from interviews with the farm workers, the neighbour, and local gossip, was that this specific farmer was the archetypal *baas* who felt control over his workers slip with political transformation. The transformation of Grootvlei and neighbouring farms into the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve eroded working relations on Grootvlei. The first reason was the management and ideological approach. Related to this was that the consolidation of the ten farms substantially increased the workload but, because labour was rationalised over the area, this made working conditions difficult.

When the conversion process began in 1990, Rosie Summers and her late husband, Kobus, were retired and living on Grootvlei with their sons, Klasie and Abraham, and their families. Abraham Summers was the foreman. He, Bella (his wife), and Klasie (his brother) were the only permanent staff at that stage due to a high staff turnover at Grootvlei. Very soon after the conversion began, Klasie left with his family to work on another farm. He made the permanent move to town in 1998, where he rented with relatives. By that stage Klasie was determined to transition away from farm life and began formal training as an electrician with the help of the farmer for whom he worked. Once Klasie had completed his training he found work with Eskom, the State electricity supplier, in a coastal town. Klasie was emphatic that once he had moved, he had no intention of ever returning to the farms, citing low pay, poor conditions and lack of independence. He stated that:

On the farms you do a lot but you get paid very little... there is no overtime pay. A farm gives you no vacation, it gives you no rest, you work on Christmas.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 1 December 2010. Cradock.

Once his brother had left the newly converted Bontebok Private Nature Reserve, Abraham, in his capacity as foreman, was asked to recruit staff; this saw Piet and Jan Jacobs, two brothers along with their family members, come to work on the new private nature reserve. It is worth noting here that primacy of the male workers in this analysis, while problematic, also reflects the primacy of the male workers in the hierarchies and structures of decision-making by farm-working families in the decisions to relocate. The women partners of the Jacobs brothers moved to Bontebok Private Nature Reserve because of the employment their partners were offered there.

Abraham Summers stayed on the farm for a number of reasons; he had employment there and he could live there while taking care of his retired parents and his family. In other words, he had very limited choice in terms of leaving since Grootvlei was the only home and employment which enabled him to take care of his family and parents. He felt it was significant that he had seen the farm through various phases, even though others had left:

Then he [the farmer] began with this game business. He said he would sell the sheep because he wants to farm game. So I thought to myself: "So, you want to reduce the number of men because game was not a lot of work." But he did not have to reduce the number, the men did not like the words he spoke to them, so the men left. I was left alone, I stayed. At the time one of my brothers, now in Jeffrey's Bay, was still here; it was just me and him on the farm; lucerne cutting, lucerne hanging, lucerne pressing, loading out the bales. My brother and I would load the lucerne alone. But after all that, we have nothing. Then he got a new foreman, a white foreman, of his own race.<sup>121</sup>

Life after the conversion of the farm grew harder. It is notable that if, as Smith and Wilson (2002) contend, labour reduction was one of the key reasons why farmers turned to hunting in the Karoo, then it can be argued that the larger the hunting farm the more likely work demands will intensify for labour. Between 1990 and 2001, the entire 30 000 hectare area of the Bontebok Private Game Reserve, which is larger than the Mountain Zebra National Park, was maintained by a core permanent staff of three men (Abraham Summers, and Jan and Piet Jacobs) and two women (Bella Summers and Mary). In the main there are four areas of work which the core staff had to fulfil – (i) fence and other infrastructure maintenance (men); (ii) tracking of game, skinning and meat production (men); (iii) cooking, cleaning, serving and servicing of rooms (women); and (iv) general farm work including crop production and grounds maintenance (both men and women). On some farms, biltong and meat production may be done by women, while cooking and servicing of rooms may be given over to foreign staff. As Abraham's quote above indicates, there

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<sup>121</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

remains some element of crop cultivation on some hunting farms as farmers may want to continue with lucerne production either for their own game, for income or for domestic livestock they may retain on the farm. It was observed that, at Grootvlei, lucerne cultivation (which requires irrigation), was an important aspect of game business because certain breeds of game were penned in the lucerne fields for feeding purposes. In this sense, the typical hunting farm remains very similar in nature to the average agricultural enterprise; tourism is incorporated into the production processes of the farm. In their capacity as trackers, male farm workers are regularly expected to travel off-farm with the clients and the professional hunters. This was a new dimension of farm work which was associated with a kind of “aspirationalism” as it exposed farm workers to new forms of work. Jan noted:

When I worked for [the owner of Grootvlei], I helped with hunting. I went to Jansenville, Port Elizabeth, Kenton, Port Alfred – I went there to those places with clients to hunt. I would have liked to become a professional hunter but how do you approach your boss for that kind of thing?<sup>122</sup>

The discourse of farm-worker self-improvement was strong in Abraham’s views, he disagreed with the view that workers’ illiteracy was a professional drawback:

The person who says farm workers cannot improve does not know what he is talking about. We are the ones that the professional hunters ask.<sup>123</sup>

As far as new tasks were concerned, the workers adapted already-existing skills to meet the operational and production requirements of Bontebok Private Nature Reserve. The workload increased, and the conditions became harsher, both when the new white foreman was brought in and under the farmer himself. The very arrangement between the consortium of mainly absentee corporate landlords and the owner of Grootvlei, that he manage the private nature reserve as part of the business arrangement, opened up the potential for intensified exploitation of workers. The absentee landlords, by and large, did not see the running of the nature reserve as their business; they hunted on occasion and brought in casual domestic labourers to serve them in their houses, which remain scattered on the portions of the game reserve. Since they did not create Bontebok for commercial purposes, the burden of labour provision fell on the Grootvlei owner who lives there.

This dramatically increased workload did not come with an equivalent rise in pay; the farm restructuring and new management design did not compensate for lost labour. Abraham’s

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<sup>122</sup> Interview, Jan Jacobs, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>123</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

monthly salary remained at R700 although he was now covering the equivalent of ten farms in the new work routine. Summers described the labour:

Just when I am finished with the game, I have to go on with the sheep and goats. The foreman would now check the fences. That foreman didn't fix the fences; he would come and stand here and say to you, "Close tightly. Close tightly". He rides in the lorry... you must walk on foot and check the fences. You have a huge roll [of] wire over your shoulder, [inaudible], you must walk till you are sweating wet in the mountains. He sits on the other side of the mountain waiting for you. You come... "Why do you take so long?" "No, Baas, I had to close it up, it was full of holes." "I've been waiting more two hours for you here." And I say, "But, Baas, I have to close the fences, because Baas wouldn't want the game to escape". "Oh come, climb, I'm going to drop you off further on" ... you only return home in the evening. The next morning it's the same.<sup>124</sup>

Fence checking is a particularly onerous task which requires workers to walk the perimeter of the fence to ensure that there is no string damage or loosening that can result in game escaping. Game have a far greater propensity to damage fences more regularly, and with a greater possibility of escaping, than do sheep. Thus, the practice of fence checking is a core task on game farms. On occasion, casual labour would be brought in for more labour-intensive tasks such as fence fixing, which is a specialised task normally outsourced to an external contractor.

Bella Summers (Abraham's wife) and Mary (his sister) worked as domestic servants in the farmer's home as well as at the client camps. They worked long hours, starting at six in the morning at the hunters' lodge, then returned to the main farm house to complete household tasks there, returning to the camps for the rest of the evening with the day ending as late as 11 pm.<sup>125</sup> All the workers stated that the unpredictability of the work routine, the long working hours, the lack of overtime pay and the low wages made for poor working conditions. Bella recalled that, after the conversion,

It was harder because there were longer hours... you couldn't know what time you would be home; there was no overtime. The day begins at 6 [am]; we go to make breakfast, at 6 pm we make supper, serve at 8 [pm], wash the dishes, the clients sit at the bar; then wait again for them to finish.<sup>126</sup>

Because they lived on Grootvlei, and had a longstanding relationship with the owner, workers were expected to simply double up duties for both the hunting operation as well as regular work on the farm. There were no formal contracts or work descriptions; a distinction was not made between the labour needs of the hunting business and other aspects of the

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<sup>124</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>125</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>126</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

farming operations. It is common practice on farms that farm workers are expected to fulfil a wide range of tasks. Farmers commonly reported that, within the new hunting operations, farm workers were sufficiently compensated for their overtime work with tips paid by the clients. Conventionally, these tips are paid to the farmer who distributes them to workers either at the end of the month or year as bonuses. Workers reported that tips at Grootvlei were received monthly, although they reported dissatisfaction with the amounts relative to the labour put in. Bella reported that with tips her salary rose from R420 to R500 per month in the late 1990s; the tips could be higher if they received them straight from the client, which happened occasionally.<sup>127</sup>

However, contradictory sentiments were sometimes expressed when the forms of work were compared by the male farm workers specifically. The game farming presented harder work for Abraham because of the *size* of the farm. However, there was agreement that the *nature* of handling game itself was easier and lighter in management than the more intense physical labour of sheep farming. All three men were in agreement that “game was easier”.<sup>128</sup> Jan stated:

With sheep you look and look for them in the bushes, and they are gone over into someone else’s camps so you don’t get the right count, they hide in the bushes. And for farmers, if there is a sheep gone they say “You must have eaten it” and they call the police and they hit you and you must say “Yes, I did” and then you go to change. They don’t always find the actual perpetrators.<sup>129</sup>

Abraham stated: “It was a lightening of the load [*verligting*] when the sheep farming stopped. I did not really enjoy working with the sheep,”<sup>130</sup> and game was “ten times easier”.<sup>131</sup>

Although he was a difficult employer, the owner of Grootvlei has made some improvements to housing over the years. When Abraham was growing up as a child on the farm, the family lived in a typical one-roomed farm-labourer’s house “packed like sardines” with his eight siblings and parents, who divided the house with a curtain for their privacy.<sup>132</sup> When he and Bella married, they also lived in a one-roomed stone house on the farm for several years.<sup>133</sup> During these years, the farm workers had no toilets at all. When Abraham married Bella, he

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<sup>127</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>128</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, Jan Jacobs and Piet Jacobs, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>129</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, Jan Jacobs and Piet Jacobs, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>130</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>131</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, Jan Jacobs and Piet Jacobs, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>132</sup> Interview, Abraham and Bella Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>133</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

was entitled to his own house. Bella recalled the relative improvement in housing provision over time and the eventual construction of new housing stock in 1985:

After my first child, we stayed [in our own stone house]. At the second child, he [the farmer] started to build... his father had died, and he had taken over. First, we lived in the old school; we had a sitting room, a bedroom and a kitchen. After that he began to build. The [school] was no longer functioning ... it had been a boarding school...<sup>134</sup>

The houses built in 1985 are still used as worker houses today at Grootvlei. They have four rooms but have no indoor plumbing (water is drawn from an outside tap). There was no electricity until 2005 when solar panels were installed; however the current they generate is only sufficient for lighting. This meant that the farm workers could not use televisions or other appliances; but, in any case, as Bella said, “there was no money” to buy these commodities because of low wages.<sup>135</sup> Pit toilets were provided but never improved upon; Piet Jacobs stated that “The toilets are broken, you must be careful not to fall in”.<sup>136</sup> It is worth noting, as stated in Chapter Four, that at Grootvlei, the farm workers’ houses remained where they had been for years. The quality of housing for farm workers was not considered an aesthetic concern on hunting farms in Cradock. The notion that clients require a complete fiction of untainted wilderness in order to buy into the idea of the hunting farm does not reflect reality. The continued presence of production and housing infrastructure, including workers’ houses (of varying quality), seen in contradistinction to the farmer’s house and lodges, is reminder enough of agricultural history and inequality inherent to farms.

## **FRICION AND ENDINGS**

Though the power relations on Grootvlei remained as they have always been through the sheep-farming era, there were signs from around 1998 that the old order was coming to an end, as relations between the Summers family and the farmer deteriorated. Political change in South Africa resulted in changes in labour rights as exemplified by the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997, and then later the Extension of Security of Tenure Act of 1997. Research has noted that this period was a particularly fraught one for relations on farms; “minimum wage laws have brought a ‘separation between the farmers and workers’ and induced tensions into the work

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<sup>134</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>135</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>136</sup> Interview, Piet Jacobs, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

relationship” (Atkinson, 2007:96). Farm workers describe farmers frequently telling them to “take their problems to Mandela”.

Abraham Summers’ long service to the owner of Grootvlei was a cause of pain and anger as he felt he had endured difficulty and exploitation his whole life at the farm. This pain cut deeper because the owner of Grootvlei was his childhood playmate and peer. However, in the end, one was destined to become master and the other servant; the racial hierarchy was enforced when the two became teenagers. Abraham recalled this:

It was very difficult for me, because I was used to addressing him [by name], but then all of a sudden I must change, but he didn’t change for me. He still called me by my name, but when I called him I had to say “Baas”. It was painful because we had grown up together, we know each other’s names, but his father said: “Now we must change and call him ‘*Kleinbaas*’”...<sup>137</sup>

Abraham would spend the next 30 years of his life working for the man who used to be his childhood friend. This farmer was described by respondents as a difficult and harsh boss who underpaid and showed little concern for their welfare. The thrust of Abraham’s narrative was that he had nothing to show for his time on the farm. The contradictions of paternalism marked his life; apparent social bonds between him and the farmer never transcended the social distance firmly entrenched by the system of racism and inequality (Atkinson, 2007:92). Thus, Abraham stated of the owner of Grootvlei that:

He was like a brother to me, in my mother’s house... the old stone house. He ate bread with me, drank coffee together with me... [but when I went to his house] I got my food outside.<sup>138</sup>

Abraham expressed pain at being exploited and oppressed by someone he had grown up very closely with in his childhood years:

If he could have seen that I am also a person, one that grew up with him, then he should have thought, “Here is a something for you”, or “Here’s a better life for you”, or “Let me also make a person of you”. If I had not worked for him, he wouldn’t be here where he is... I worked for him, but I sit today with nothing. When I think about these things, that time of life, I wasted it on that farm.<sup>139</sup>

On Grootvlei, Abraham’s and Henry’s sons had been allowed to undergo traditional circumcision on Grootvlei in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the owner was emphatic that they would be the last. Worse still, conflict between the foreman and Abraham’s son, who had just started working on the hunting farm after completing high school, dealt a final

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<sup>137</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>138</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>139</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

blow to the family's life on the farm. Their son was fired by the farm owner for what Abraham felt was a petty issue (arriving at work "five minutes late") and banned from the farm, leaving him with no choice but to live with relatives in town. This put the Summers family in a predicament because a child was barred from visiting his parents' home. Abraham felt he had reached his limit, stating:

The children could not come here... I worked for little money, so I decided to go. He had that foreman there and he saw the foreman as better than me who had worked for him for years.

Abandonment of the farmer by workers is seen as a just retribution and consequence for poor conditions and unfair practices. These workers described themselves as valuable to Grootvlei's enterprise, in particular, more reliable and trustworthy than casual workers since they are willing to stick with the boss in spite of his difficult ways. Jan stated:

He was struggling when we left... these casual workers, they steal from him... they steal meat, they steal everything there. They work with meat there, so they take, they will take a whole leg; and [inaudible], they leave just the bone. "Where is that meat?", "Where is that leg?" [he will ask], and they all keep quiet.<sup>140</sup>

Thus, when the opportunity arose in 2001, the Summers family moved to work at Bossieskloof ranch. The businessman who owned Bossieskloof Ranch fell out with his partners and the owner at Grootvlei because he felt they did not share his conservationist vision, he wanted to turn his Bossieskloof portion into a model game ranch according to his own principles and scientific land management techniques. The owner of Grootvlei was described by Bella Summers as "*woedend kwaad*" [furiously angry] after he discovered that they had moved to work for the businessman who had ceded from the private nature reserve area.<sup>141</sup> In 2009, the Jacobs brothers were fired from Grootvlei for questioning the authority of the farmer. Soon after being fired from Grootvlei the Jacobs brothers also found employment on Bossieskloof through their connection with Abraham.

## HOPE AT BOSSIESKLOOF GAME RANCH

In 2001, the Summers family moved from Grootvlei to Bossieskloof Game Ranch, including the children and elderly parents. Once Bella and Abraham Summers were employed on Bossieskloof, their living and working conditions improved dramatically. The quality of housing and nature of lifestyle was markedly different from that of most farms

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<sup>140</sup> Interview, Jan Jacobs, 16 November 2009. Cradock.

<sup>141</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

that had been visited by the researcher in the Cradock area and surrounds. At the time of research, the businessman did not live on his game ranch. The people who spent all their time there were the Summers and Jacobs families, as well as a ranch manager who met them once a week for management purposes.

Management differed starkly from Grootvlei next door. It was premised on contractually formalised hierarchies and inclusive planning. The ranch manager oversaw all the operational aspects of the farm and dealt with all labour issues. Abraham was appointed as the foreman to oversee the general implementation of tasks during the course of the week when the workers were on the farm alone. The businessman felt that he brought with him a new managerial culture:

I think that they [the workers] have benefited enormously in a number of different ways. Firstly, those of us who come from the outside haven't come with a farming mentality. We've come with a business mentality, and we understand that if you want your staff to perform well they need to be trained, they need to be motivated, they need to be managed properly, and they need to be remunerated accordingly.<sup>142</sup>

Predictability of working hours and recognition of overtime were mentioned by workers as one of the greatest improvements in work conditions. Abraham recalled:

Everything brings smiles to us... there is "*inval tyd*" [clock in], we have sick days, and there is "*tshayela tyd*" [knock off], breakfast and dinner time. *Nou weet ons wat is vakansie* [Now we know what a holiday is]. Those old years we didn't know what a vacation was when we worked with sheep [on Grootvlei]. We had to work on and on. You worked straight through. Now, with the game farming [on Bossieskloof Ranch], if you work overtime you must get paid for it.<sup>143</sup>

The farm workers understood fairness and the observance of basic labour laws as being the correct management approach.

Notwithstanding the progressiveness of the approach, of necessity, because the landowner did not live on the ranch, he needed to devise a system of management that would satisfy him in his absence. This means that there was a greater need for responsibility to be devolved to workers; his employees thus had to be involved in the management structures as the businessman indicated:

I believe that no organisation, and I don't care whether it is a church or a club or a company, can be successful unless it has four things – it's got to have leadership and preferably, strong, decent and visionary leadership. And I supply that. It has to have a plan, call it the "strategic plan" that says, "We are here now and we want to be there in one, two, three years' time" and that plan has to be broken down into an action

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<sup>142</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>143</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 12 October 2009. Cradock.

plan and that plan must be developed by the management team which will be called upon to implement it... and the management team was myself, the farm manager and Abraham. Then you need a committed, coherent and motivated team to implement the plan... and that team was Abraham, Piet, Mary and Bella, and now there is Jan as well, but Jan was not my idea. And the way that was achieved is that the farm manager sits down with them every Tuesday [and says], "This is what we are going to do..." We want to have a model game ranch. So, to do that we need to be sure that the soil is right, that's the first thing, and the plants that grow there, and the animals that feed there. And then to service that you need roads and windmills and fences and so the task was devolved and designed accordingly. But, they were involved in the planning.<sup>144</sup>

Because the owner did not live there, the workers at Bossieskloof were relatively autonomous. By noting that Jan Jacobs' employment was not his idea, he was indicating that he went along with Abraham's choice, given his role as foreman of the staff. It is notable, too, that on one occasion, the researcher was invited by the workers to have tea and cake on the porch of the owner's lodge to conduct an interview. This broke the social distance as described at the outset, where the farm-owner's house is the hallowed domain of the white family, from which the servants are socially excluded. There was no sense of insecurity or fear at the presence of the white farm manager who arrived to find the workers on the lodge porch. The white manager regularly visited Rosie Summers in her house on Bossieskloof, indicating that although there were formalised working arrangements, there was no sense in which personal relations were adversely affected by contractual formality. Furthermore, when Abraham's father died soon after the move to Bossieskloof, he was buried in the graveyard on Bossieskloof next to the parents of the businessman.

Was this benign paternalism or simply good relations? There are limits to the understanding of relations on farms through the lens of paternalism. In the researcher's observations, it was a combination of factors that made the farm a generally harmonious place for the workers. The first observation was that the owner and ranch manager generally had liberal political views. The ranch manager had a keen interest in South African liberation politics. The second is that the formalisation of the working relationship and adherence to labour laws means that farm workers can view themselves in a professional light. The third observation is that autonomy matters to farm workers and –dwellers. This autonomy was largely derived from the fact that the landowner was not in permanent residence on the ranch. From the farm workers' perspective, such autonomy broke the "gaze of the master", the insecurity emanating from constant scrutiny and surveillance within unequal farm relations; it allowed

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<sup>144</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

them to complete their duties as professionals rather than as servants attempting to win the master's favour (Du Toit, 1993:15).

Improving working and living conditions paid off for the owner. He felt that the presence of the Summers family on the farm had “revolutionised” his life:

I don't know, but I visit lots and lots of game ranches, and I don't think [our hunting farm] has to be shy about the way it's being managed and run and that's due to them. Nobody sees them for a whole week, but I know, and I have done it in the past... I can go there at any time if I like, day or night... it's spotlessly clean, it's organised, it's running, it's well done and I think [they] will only do that in a certain environment.<sup>145</sup>

Furthermore, the quality of housing provision and quality of life of the farm workers on the farm were markedly higher than those which the researcher had observed on farms in Cradock. Houses were brick, all with two bedrooms, a lounge, a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilet, and larger than the average “RDP house” [Reconstruction and Development Programme house]. The houses had Eskom-generated electricity and indoor plumbing with hot-water geysers. For the farm workers, it was the first time they had lived in houses with indoor plumbing, toilets, and hot water. These amenities, coupled with better wages, meant that there was an opportunity for the farm workers to start purchasing appliances such as washing machines, microwaves, electric stoves, kettles and a satellite dish, as well as household furniture, which they had not had before. Some of these appliances were received as gifts from the businessman as a form of Christmas bonus. They were permitted to run some chickens and grow a vegetable garden in the old sheep paddocks on the ranch (Figure 7).

However, good relations did not erase the perception that the farm was still the domain of the white employer. On one of the walkabouts with the researcher, Abraham pointed out that the workers were without protection on the farms; they could not keep guns and their houses were not prioritised in security matters, whereas white landowners, including on Bossieskloof, fenced off the immediate perimeter of their houses as a precaution. Abraham felt that the farm workers' houses on Bossieskloof were more vulnerable to potential criminality and that there was little they could do about it.

For the businessman, good relations did not preclude anxieties. He explained that having people live on the farm was not necessarily a straightforward decision and he characterised it as a gamble:

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<sup>145</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

I think it was a calculated risk because I am also nervous, I don't want to wake up one day and find that there is a land claim on my own farm. If I've got a radical bunch of people there I've got a problem with, that are drinking, selling drugs, rustling my game, poaching my game. But, on the other hand, I think my assessment was that they were basically decent people.<sup>146</sup>

Potential expropriation through land reform was a source of uncertainty for the owner, although he did not entirely feel threatened in the Karoo:

In general, the answer is "Yes" [is concerned about land reform], but in particular to Bossieskloof Game Ranch, "No". I mean, there's a whole industry that's grown up, lawyers, accountants, black people trying to claim land whether they have rights or no rights. But I've never been worried about Bossieskloof because it's just too darn hard to make a living there. Nobody wants that land... It's far from any town, its semi-arid, it's hot in summer, it's freezing cold in winter. The rain is problematic. You have locusts and worms, it's difficult to farm, so I thought it was very unlikely. But I was unsure in my mind. You think you know people but, as you get older and people let you down...

The owner attempted to protect himself by setting up a contractual arrangement that positioned the farm manager as a type of broker:

I have used the law, such as it is, to provide me with a measure of protection, because I don't employ them, the farm manager employs them, I employ the farm manager and he leases those properties from me and he provides accommodation to them.<sup>147</sup>

Abraham, however, seemed to be under the impression that he and his family were welcome to live on the farm indefinitely because the owner had said to them that the houses were their homes. Because the relationship between the Summers family and the owner of the Bossieskloof ranch was generally harmonious, it seemed that the question of long-term permanent residency for the Summers family had not been entirely made an issue. In terms of ESTA, only Rosie Summers had long-term occupier status. Thus, the workers' terms of residency arose out of their personal relationship with their employer rather than any formal agreement. The Summers family remained dependent on the owner's goodwill and were in the dark about the nature of the landowner's legal positioning of them as externally-contracted labour. Abraham genuinely believed the house on the farm would be theirs permanently.

The overall management framework on Bossieskloof was equitable and fair insofar as the general conditions of workers were concerned. Although each individual worker had a formalised contractual relationship with their employer, it was not clear that the women

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<sup>146</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>147</sup> Interview, Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner, 10 December 2009. Cape Town.

were employed in their own right; their employment was derived from their being on the farm as part of Abraham's family unit. This remains an ambiguous and grey area, for the formalisation of contracts implies recognition for individual employees, but it is men's labour which is primarily sought; women's domestic service is an adjunct. This is directly related to housing provision on farms; farmers need houses primarily to house male workers whose labour they require. The three men (Abraham Summers and Piet and Jan Jacobs) were clearly positioned as the primary workers and heads of their households, their dependants (working and non-working) were the women. The familial and patriarchal basis of employment on the farm where the women are had not been transcended by the formalisation of working relations on Bossieskloof.

## DISCUSSION

The differences in the living and working conditions on Grootvlei and Bossieskloof can be entirely accounted for by the management and social philosophies of the different owners. It is the history of the relationship between the landowner and the worker which will determine the quality of life that the workers will enjoy on the farm. While Nyama's (2008:89, 91) research found positively for an eco-tourism reserve studied in the Grahamstown area, stating that:

Mtshelazi PGR has made considerable progress in meeting its immediate social responsibility obligations *to its own labour force*. Starting from a particularly low base in respect of the benefits that were enjoyed by its employees under the previous agricultural regime, the benefits appear impressive and have resulted in a noted improvement in the quality of life of the employees at Mtshelazi,

the study also concluded that this was "wholly dependent on the goodwill of a particular land owner/employer".

Thus, structurally, game farms have not improved the lot of farm workers as a class although individuals and their families may have benefited in some cases. The terms of residence on the farm are set by the landowner. This challenges Langholz and Kerley's (2006) proposition that implies a universal progressivism in the way private conservation initiatives can impact the quality of living and employment terms for farm workers. On Grootvlei, exploitation of workers by the white owner continued even after the farm joined the high-end world of international hunting sports. As Du Toit and Ewert (2002:91) state:

even "modern", commercially oriented farmers are often still motivated and influenced by the values of mastery, independence and identification with the family

farm that are held to be characteristic of traditional farms. Above all, the insistence on the sovereignty and centrality of the 'master' – the idea that the purpose of farming is the benefit of the farmer and his family, that the enjoyment of the farm as an asset is their right to the exclusion of all others, and that their right to the labour and loyalty of workers and services is linked to their largesse and generosity as benevolent landowners – is easily “transported” into modernity.

This is further illustrated by reports from two young Zimbabwean citizens who abandoned their employment on another well-respected hunting farm in Cradock. One of the Zimbabwean workers expressed his shock and disappointment at the living conditions on the established hunting farm where he had worked in the kitchen:

We are thinking, “Ah, safari life”. I’m like “Cool, let’s go”. I didn’t really know the place, I had been there once, with the owner who wanted to show us the safari. They promised us a lot of stuff: “We’re going to get you a bed, we’re going to get you linen, we’re going to get you [inaudible].” So I’m like, “Fine, we’re game”... We go... [But, on arrival] the house is like when it blows, [if] a gust of wind comes, it would just tumble down. This other day I took a taxi there on my off day... I go with this man, he says: “I once worked there; those houses have been like this for God knows how long and nothing has been done to them.”<sup>148</sup>

His Zimbabwean colleague also complained, describing the housing provided on the hunting farm as

awful... our accommodation in the location was good. Staying in Diepsloot is good [in comparison]. Accommodation [on the ranch] was awful...<sup>149</sup>

These two workers shared with another worker a three-room, mud-structured house with a “weak” electric current and one tap outside. The only available flushing toilet was broken and the owner refused to fix it. They were thus forced either to go outside or secretly to use the toilet in the guest house. Two hundred rands was deducted from the monthly salary of R1 300 as a levy for amenities.

This particular hunting establishment was also run along the paternalist ideology where employment was not formalised, but where the working relationship between the white owners and workers was personalised (Du Toit, 1993). This was a system which the young Zimbabwean found quite frustrating:

It was unprofessional... one moment they treat you as part of the family; *like family*. The next moment they treat you like dirt, and the next moment like you are foreign. There wasn’t a system or a line of work. I mean, as an employee there should be

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<sup>148</sup> Interview, Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker B, 6 November 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>149</sup> Interview, Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker A, 24 July 2009. Cradock.

certain grounds that I follow... I go on them; it's more like anybody can do what they please with an employee.<sup>150</sup>

They felt that the ideology of the ranch was “colonial”, relying on racist and master–servant social relations; this they rejected by calling their bosses by name rather than the term “*Baas*” used by the South African workers. This caused friction and perceptions of favouritism amongst other workers. Because they spoke English, and had higher levels of education, the South African workers reacted negatively towards them because, as Du Toit (1993:16) argues,

paternalism creates a culture of favouritism and insecurity. One of the central facts of life on the farm is what workers call “*die afguns*” [envy]... It is an inescapable product of a culture centrally concerned with the notion of being in or out of the farmer's favour.

The Zimbabweans eventually left; one of them had been stabbed on the farm and his attacker not dismissed:

I guess he was too valuable to the safari; he was a tracker. And that was my point of no return and I was like, “I'm leaving.”<sup>151</sup>

Lack of contracts and payslips, and subjection to unfair labour practices, is a reality on Cradock hunting farms; Bossieskloof was an exception. On another international hunting farm, six workers who were unfairly dismissed and evicted (simultaneously) had neither contracts or salary slips from their employer which they could use to lay a substantive complaint when they sought help from the Cradock Advice Office.<sup>152</sup> The case report stated that:

The workers never received pay slips and they reported that they receive around R700 wages a month. None of the workers has signed a contract or has paper evidence of their employment. There is no adequate accommodation for the workers on the farm. Their houses on the farm have electricity but no water inside. There are no toilet facilities for the farm workers. All six workers, and six children, have now left the farm and are staying with relatives.<sup>153</sup>

The employer threatened to hire Zimbabweans in their stead. There appeared to be a growing perception in Cradock that immigrant Africans were likely to be better educated and less difficult to manage. The case of the Zimbabweans cited above, however, shows that

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<sup>150</sup> Interview, Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker B, 6 November 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>151</sup> Interview, Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker B, 6 November 2009. Cape Town.

<sup>152</sup> Their ages ranged from 17 to 43; the youngest having been born on the hunting farm and the oldest having lived there for 20 years. Case of six dismissed workers, 18 February 2011. Cradock Advice Office.

<sup>153</sup> This report was compiled by a member of our research team on behalf of the Cradock Advice Office.

some immigrants are indeed more “worldly” in their outlook. This, however, did not translate into being pliable and acquiescent towards exploitation.

As the experience of the Summers on Grootvlei revealed, by living and working on the farm in one capacity, it led to the assumption that workers will be available for other duties. It can deepen the inequality working women experience on hunting farms because they are subjected by multiple overlapping hierarchies (class, race, gender) and competing duties (workers, mothers, wives). The experience of a woman worker who worked full time in an agri-business on a farm, and was then expected to render domestic services to the hunting lodge reveals this:

I was on my way to work, then Mrs [xxxxx], the farm manager, called me: “Come here.” Then I went... “Come, come, help us quickly, make the beds quickly in the lodge. You do that, and you do that”. It happened just like that. Then I went to make the beds. At the time my husband was the one who was the foreman of the agri-business. When I got there, he says: “Go back to where you come from”... I say: “No, the farm manager said...” He then says: “You must go back and tell the farm manager I say she must give you work there... I haven’t got work for you here”, and he was strict.<sup>154</sup>

Balancing mothering pressures when living and working on a farm is difficult for women. In the absence of contracts and formal working relations on this hunting enterprise, workers were expected to be ever-present on the farm at the “beck and call” of their employers. Family duties took second place, or they created tensions with employers, as the woman indicated:

Like, say, my baby is sick, my mother ’phones me maybe at night [and tells the farm manager] that I have to come in the next morning because the child is sick. They won’t give me the message. Until my mom will ’phone, say, maybe at 1 o’clock and say: “Why didn’t I [sic] come?... The child is sick.”<sup>155</sup>

The Department of Labour in Cradock stated that it conducted regular inspections of farms to check for compliance amongst farmers. However, it was evident that the Cradock Department of Labour office was ill-equipped to do this. Farm inspections proved especially difficult because of geographic extremity, and farmers are not always available when officials arrive, neither do they always agree to have the officials on their property.<sup>156</sup> When queried about labour on game farms in Cradock, it was evident that the district officials knew virtually nothing of the sector.

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<sup>154</sup> Interview, Casual Game Farm Worker, 11 August 2009. Cradock.

<sup>155</sup> Interview, Casual Game Farm Worker, 11 August 2009. Cradock.

<sup>156</sup> Field notes, Group Interview, Department of Labour officials, 18 January 2010. Cradock.

Moreover, the officials themselves are inhibited by the unequal power and class relations within the area, often being unable to challenge powerful farmers; the officials tended to be young black and coloured civil servants, some of them having come through the departmental ranks through learnerships and internships.<sup>157</sup> Thus, when Jan Jacobs went to report to the Department when he had been unfairly dismissed from Grootvlei, the Labour official was dismissive of him. Jan stated:

I went to the Department of Labour; they said: "Take your papers and go back to work." That man [owner of Grootvlei] had just come from there; that is why I say they [the Department of Labour] work for white people... they work for the whites, they don't understand us. We encounter a lot of hardship.<sup>158</sup>

Ongoing encounters with farm workers revealed that this was a general perception amongst farm workers in Cradock in general. The woman cited above was asked how she felt about having rights, and she responded:

If you make use of it then it can work, but here in Cradock, no... because, if you go to the unemployment office [the Department of Labour], they 'phone your boss... they tell him to come in, then they give you a time to come... they talk and talk... when you come you get nothing from your case.<sup>159</sup>

Department of Labour officials appear unaware, or unwilling to recognise the power differences between farm workers and land owners. For example, an official stated that they usually will ask workers in front of their employers if they want to be interviewed separately, an offer which workers regularly decline.<sup>160</sup> They do not consider that workers may be too intimidated to ask for their own meeting lest the farmer consider this a threat.

According to the Department of Labour, the minimum monthly wage for game farms is R1 840, higher than the R1 230 of conventional agriculture because of the long working hours involved.<sup>161</sup> Sectoral Determination 14 stipulates a higher minimum payment for game farms than does Sectoral Determination 13 for conventional agricultural farms. Labour officials reported that once when they confronted a well-known and powerful local hunting outfitter on whether his business complied with this stipulation, he replied that he was doing agriculture. Given the local power of this hunting establishment, it was apparent that the Department of Labour official had no real power to go and conduct an inspection on that farm; the conversation ended on the telephone.

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<sup>157</sup> Field notes, Group Interview, Department of Labour officials, 18 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>158</sup> Interview, Jan Jacobs, 16 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>159</sup> Interview, Casual Game Farm Worker, 11 August 2009. Cradock.

<sup>160</sup> Field notes, Group Interview, Department of Labour officials, 18 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>161</sup> Field notes, Group Interview, Department of Labour officials, 18 January 2010. Cradock.

Furthermore, the Department regularly referred cases to the unfunded and poorly resourced Cradock Advice Office in Lingelihle if matters did not fall within their mandate. However, months of observation revealed that the Department, in many cases, simply did not have the desire or the knowledge to help farm workers deal with intimidating employers. Farm workers sought the assistance of the Advice Office for issues relating to unemployment insurance, evictions and pensions which the Department could have easily expedited. Data by the Department on the conditions on farms were sparse and poorly organised. Given this abysmal performance by the local Department of Labour, the opportunity exists for the wildlife sector to promote its own norms and standards to counteract exploitation and poor employee living conditions in the form of “responsible tourism ratings” (Nyama, 2008:91).

## CONCLUSION

The discussion above highlighted experiences of farm workers and –dwellers within the boundaries of the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve, which were compared with reports by farm workers from four additional game farms which the researcher did not personally visit. These reports were verified by numerous informal conversations and social gossip that the researcher became party to during her field work. The crux is that there is nothing particularly different about hunting farms, they are a continuation of the traditional farm model in the semi-arid districts. Hunting farms, usually being further away from the town, and because of their service needs, require that workers live on farms. However, these terms of residence tend to follow historical patterns within the agricultural sector. Farm workers and –dwellers remained embedded in old-style relations, and although these relations were in some cases deteriorating, this mirrors experiences on conventional agriculture farms in any case. Owners made the biggest difference to farm workers and –dwellers, not the macro-level expansion of the private wildlife sector. Micro-level tenure relations on farms continue to be determined by gender, class and racial hierarchies.

Thus, semi-arid area hunting farms fit into the historical agriculture milieu. The land-use changes have not transformed the matrix of social relations that govern the terms of residence and employment on Cradock farms, only in rare exceptions. Notwithstanding the spatial transformation of a converted farm, there is in fact a great deal of continuity when traditional agriculture farms have converted to hunting farms. Where there are discontinuities; they are by and large *not* as a result of the land use itself as Langholz and Kerley (2006) posit, but as a result of the individual owners, as Nyama (2008) found. In the

context of the broader restructuring of South Africa's agricultural sector, Du Toit and Ewert (2002) and Orton et al (2001) argue that globalisation has not entirely dismantled the traditional forms of paternalist management on farms. Instead, paternalism as an ideology and practice of farm management has remained resilient although not untransformed; change has been more erratic than progressive, producing hybrids of the old and new relations and practices regulating labour on farms. This argument can be made of hunting farms in Cradock. Labour management and terms of living and working are tied to a farm's specific history, in particular to the disposition of the landowner.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### **‘A Boer’s House is not a Home’ – Urbanisation and its Implications for Tenure Reform**

The objective of this chapter is to critically examine farm workers’ and –dwellers’ demand for urban housing and the implications that this demand has for tenure reform, particularly in light of the land question in South Africa. In Chapter Five it was shown that the ever-present dilemmas caused by tenure insecurity result in many farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas not considering farms as permanent homes. As such, the single greatest aspiration expressed by farm workers interviewed, as far as their tenure security is concerned, was to have a house in town that they can call their own and pass on to their children.

Using Cradock’s urbanisation explosion of the 1980s as a point of departure, the chapter demonstrates that urban housing has been a pressing need in Cradock over the past three decades as greater numbers of farm workers move off the farms. The chapter argues that, in many instances, the permanent move to town is considered the best way to resolve perpetual insecurity. This sentiment is articulated consistently by farm workers and –dwellers, including those at the Bontebok reserve, who express the view that farms are sites of disenfranchisement because of the overwhelming power held by land owners.

In view of this reality, post-apartheid housing provision for farm workers and –dwellers is brought into focus and is argued to be woefully inadequate. It challenges the modernisation approach to tenure reform by demonstrating that the demand for *urban housing* arises because of structural constraints limiting farm workers’ choices rather than being solely a matter of lifestyle preference.

It is suggested that provision of urban housing does not address the overall economic challenges faced by agricultural rural towns. It is in this context that the question of whether tenure insecurity is to be understood as primarily a problem of housing or landlessness emerges. The multiple dilemmas facing farm workers and –dwellers are discussed in light of current land-tenure reform proposals and the potential efficacy of these in the broader land and agrarian contexts.

## LEAVING THE FARM FOR GOOD: PERMANENT URBANISATION BY FARM WORKERS AND –DWELLERS

Monica Wilson (1977:192) identifies the significance of off-farm worker villages, stating that:

the chief advantage to the worker is greater independence. During his time off he is free of his employer, just as a factory worker is. If he changes his job, he does not necessarily lose his house.

As Manona (1988:427) observed:

Landless farm migrants have no tenure security or ‘right of return’, hence they usually seek their ultimate security outside the farms.

A former farmer from the neighbouring town of Middelburg felt that generally workers in the Eastern Cape midlands have preferred to have a home in town:

They go to town. [My employees would say] “*indawo yami iseMiddel, edrophini*” [*my home is in Middelburg, in town*]... not on the farm, I don’t know why... when I went to KwaZulu-Natal, I thought these farmers were backward, I always thought in our place we put up nice houses but these guys, they live in their *umuzi*, it’s a *kraal*, you know the old thing; and then possibly I realised that maybe these farmers were ahead of us, there was much more “*ndikhula apha, ndizakufa apha*” [*I will live here and die here*]. Whereas here, when I arrived on the farm [near the Karoo town of Middelburg], I was trying to figure out a way so that my staff could feel like they could be on the farm, whereas I got the sense they didn’t want to be on the farm.<sup>162</sup>

Farm workers’ and –dwellers’ choices to escape poor conditions and adverse terms of tenure on farms have reshaped the landscapes of Karoo towns. Attempts to prevent farm workers from going into town were relatively successful in the early apartheid era into the 1970s as the phenomenon of *izikhululo* described in Chapter Five showed. Apartheid was stringently applied in Cradock town when hundreds of families were removed from the Old Location in town and relocated to the new black township of Lingelihle in 1964, and the coloured township, Michaulsdal in 1972. However, in the 1980s, the local balance of power shifted as the Cradock urban anti-apartheid struggle intensified and apartheid urban influx and housing controls disintegrated.

Organised mass resistance effectively “liberated” the township from the control of the State’s Bantu Administration Board and black local authorities (known as *izibonda* – headmen), which had policed influx control stringently.<sup>163</sup> The proverbial dam waters broke,

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<sup>162</sup> Interview, Middelburg farmers, 11 August 2009. Middelburg.

<sup>163</sup> Interview, Sphiwo Ngalo, 30 November 2010. Cradock.

and there was influx from the farms into town by scores of farm workers and –dwellers. An anti-apartheid activist recalled:

As the struggle increased it [the influx of people into township] got out of hand. The shacks began to mushroom. The police couldn't control it... The struggle opened doors for people because they could stay without permission, and it was by force; they did not do it in an orderly fashion. There were no streets between the shacks.<sup>164</sup>

The first informal settlements emerged in the 1980s and were christened “Zimbabwe” in celebration of that country’s independence; from then on it snowballed. The extensive kin networks between town and township meant that farm workers caught wind of what was happening, and many moved into town. In an ironic twist of history, as the shack settlements spread, they reclaimed the site of the Old Location from which Cradock residents had been evicted in the 1960s. It was not just farm workers and –dwellers that needed a place to live; a chronic housing shortage in the township meant that people living in backyard dwellings and young people wanting to start afresh moved to the settlements.<sup>165</sup> In the 1990s, Tetelman (1997:219) observed that Cradock faced serious socio-economic challenges, noting that “poverty is endemic, especially in the mushrooming squatter camps that ring the township”.

#### **FROM BONTEBOK PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE TO TOWN**

One of the people who moved into the new shack settlements in 1990 was Maxwell Ngqika. Ngqika’s employer’s farm had been incorporated into the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve. Ngqika states that his then employer gave him the option to stay and work on the new hunting reserve, promising him that she would speak to the new owners on his behalf. However, for a number of reasons Ngqika decided that he had to leave. The first was that he was not quite certain about what the change in ownership really meant for his family and his residence on the farm. Secondly, having lived in the area and hearing that the new manager of the ranch would be Abraham Summers’ difficult boss from Grootvlei, he decided that he could not bear his form of management:

We were happy on the farm but we had no choice but to leave. [My employer] said the house was mine but she had sold the farms so I don't know how that could work. There was a difficult Boer who was meant to take care of the new game farm, his

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<sup>164</sup> Interview, Sphiwo Ngalo, 30 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>165</sup> Interview, Sphiwo Ngalo, 30 November 2010. Cradock.

partners lived in Gauteng. I couldn't stand that Boer because he hit people. So I decided to leave [the farm].<sup>166</sup>

With assistance from family members in Cradock, he was able to organise a move off the farm and erect his new home in a day:

Before I got here, I organised building materials like corrugated iron sheets, and my brother helped me to transport my things with his bakkie. Then I left the farm early that day and built my shack in a day ... the shack was one room and the whole family went into it.<sup>167</sup>

He spoke about the difficulties of transitioning into town, but also stated that it was well worth the effort:

It was a bit better but there were difficulties because it was just vacant land [at the informal settlement]. We were coming off a farm, I had the wire to fence off the yard and make a gate. But what was going to be difficult was building. But then again, black people know how to live on nothing. So we decided to erect a shack until that time when they made the “*vezinyawo*” [literally meaning “shows the feet”, referring to the first tiny ‘RDP houses’ in Cradock]. Those *vezinyawo* were very helpful then. Then when we had come right we put together a few cents and extended the ‘RDP’ and it became a little house.<sup>168</sup>

When queried as to how it felt to leave their home on the farm for a shack, he stated:

You just had to get used to being in a new home. Maybe it was hard on the children but they saw by observing the neighbours, that this was the life here. Sometimes in the town there are days of hunger, you go to bed with no food. That's when the kids would remember the farm; but, on good days, no.<sup>169</sup>

Initially Ngqika kept up seasonal work as a shearer, but it became unviable as he lived in town and he went for months without work. He thus called on his ex-employer who assisted him to obtain employment in Graaff-Reinet. She went so far as to build him a house in the local township and had it transferred to his name. However, because of crime in that town and dissatisfaction with his employment, he returned to Cradock. His ex-employer took back the house in Graaff-Reinet and assisted him with extending his new “RDP house” back in Cradock.<sup>170</sup>

A number of key issues arise in terms of tenure security. The first is that Ngqika chose to leave the farm because he felt that working for the new Bontebok boss was not an option.

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<sup>166</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 1 December 2010. Cradock.

<sup>167</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 1 December 2010. Cradock.

<sup>168</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>169</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 1 December 2010. Cradock.

<sup>170</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 24 November 2009. Cradock.

Secondly, he was able to call on his ex-employer when he needed assistance. Some sort of continuation of relationships between workers and their employers outside of the farm seems to be common; Rosie Summers' life indicated this. If this phenomenon is viewed in the context of tenure security debates, where farm workers and –dwellers are seen to fight for a foothold on land, it is probably more accurate to say that some farm workers in the Cradock area appeared to be more attached to their relationship with the individual farmer rather than to the farms that they had lived on. Since the move to town is in any case viewed as inevitable, it is relationships that mitigate against the difficulties of transition to town rather than resistance to the transition itself.

Cathleen Summers is one of Abraham's sisters, and she lived and worked as a domestic worker on Bossieskloof with her husband and children when it was still a sheep farm belonging to the brother of the owner of Grootvlei. They were the only family on Bossieskloof when the owner sold it to the private nature reserve and moved on to try other ventures in the towns. She recalled that:

He just said: "The farm is sold" and he would not just leave my husband like that and have difficulties. So he said we must come with him, and that is how we came to live here.

When questioned as to whether they knew what the farm was being sold for, Cathleen stated that she did not. She explained that:

He was an impatient Boer. Hy's *kwaai* [He was hard]. We were scared of him; we were scared to mix with them. He did not hit; he didn't do anything like that, he did nothing, but it's just that we respected him.<sup>171</sup>

For Cathleen, the farmer's decisions were his to make.

Cathleen's employer also happened to have a piece of land on the outskirts of the Cradock town in a light-industrial area, which he put them up on. There are no other residents in the area. When asked why they were not living in the township, Cathleen explains that they were initially happy to live where the farmer put them up; his opinion on where they should live carried weight; the paternalistic relationship continued into life off-farm:

**Cathleen:** I did apply for a house. But it never came out. Anyway it was [our ex-employer] who didn't want us to live in the township... He said our children would grow up "wild". Even though I wanted to. He didn't want us at all there [sic].

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<sup>171</sup> Interview, Cathleen Summers, 7 January 2010. Cradock.

- Researcher:** You agreed?
- Cathleen:** We agreed. Also because we grew up on a farm, we wanted to live here because this place was “farmlike”.
- Researcher:** So it was he [your ex-employer] who said he did not want you to live there [in the township]?
- Cathleen:** He did not want us to at all.
- Researcher:** What was he saying?
- Cathleen:** That the children would be wild, become “*tsotsis*”; so we stayed here.

This “farmlike” site where the family has lived since leaving Bossieskloof is situated on a small piece of barren ground, enclosed by thorn bushes between factories on the edge of town. Their home consisted of two buildings – one of corrugated iron and the other a brick structure. These were one-roomed structures, which acted as a lounge, bedroom, and kitchen. This residence was not “farmlike” given its industrial location warehouse and old factories. Upon visiting the site with the researcher, municipal officials stated that an old dumping site had been located in the nearby area. They could not determine where the electricity was being drawn from and who was responsible for utilities. The erf was not represented on the municipal area and the general area was zoned generally as “industrial/-agricultural”.

Cathleen reported that the farmer paid all the water and electricity bills for the site; that they have never had to be responsible for utilities. Thus, staying where their ex-employer suggested, instead of looking for a home in town, had been a rational decision at the time because he took care of basic services and allowed them to maintain a relationship with him. (Although he lives 300 km away, he has called on Cathleen and her husband to work for him on several occasions.)

However, the benefits provided by the farmer were outweighed by the negative consequences of living on the edge of town outside of a community. Poverty, ill-health and general malaise afflicted members of Cathleen’s family. Isolation from community rendered the children (under the age of eight) particularly vulnerable when left alone to look after each other and a bed-ridden family member. In conversations with Cathleen, she stated that the farmer had told them that the place was theirs but that she and her husband were uncertain about their security of tenure on that site. They had requested some kind of

paperwork or proof indicating that they owned it but all they were given was verbal reassurance by the farmer that they would never be removed from the property.

### **‘A BOER’S HOUSE IS NOT A HOME’**

One of the main themes emerging from the respondents and other farm workers encountered was the feeling that the farm is not a permanent place of abode. This is expressed in the sentiment that the “boer’s house is not a home”. Time and again, the phrase used was “’n boer kan jou weg 166ro” – “a farmer can chase you away”. While they lay claim to their rural roots, and their place generally, within farm landscapes, farm workers and –dwellers also describe the farms as a space of instability and non-attachment.

A woman worker at a hunting lodge linked on-farm residence directly with exploitation:

On the farms they are pushing down at the workers. So, “Because you stay on this farm, you work for us” and “You work on this farm, so you’re going to do just want I want you to do, whether you like it or not,” lest you lose your job.<sup>172</sup>

Family life on the farm was highly constrained and abnormal. Being subjected to the farmer’s whims or schedules was a problem for Ngqika:

... that was a problem; sometimes the white person isn’t there and then you have to wait until they are back. You can’t just go to the farm-worker houses, you’re going to be asked, “Who did ask?” when the white person comes back. And he will tell you, “Ek is die baas van die plek” [I am the boss of this place]; “I am the white person here.”<sup>173</sup>

Being free from the farmer’s power allows one to explore new opportunities without fear that the family would be put out, and precarious favour with the farmer jeopardised, Ngqika noted:

Well, that thing really helped us a lot because even if you want to go somewhere, you don’t have to worry that maybe you will come back and they have been kicked out of the place. There’s no one to remove them and say, “Hey, your husband isn’t here; I’ll have to put someone else in here who can work for me”. Those things aren’t there. Even me, as a man, even if I can just go off travelling and staying far off else without my wife struggling. And then on that day when life has pushed me down, I can still go back home.<sup>174</sup>

Having experienced unfair dismissal at Grootvlei (before moving to the Bossieskloof ranch), Piet Jacobs felt housing in town was imperative:

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<sup>172</sup> Interview, Casual Game Farm Worker, 11 August 2009. Cradock.

<sup>173</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>174</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

I have been struggling for a long time because when I left Grootvlei I went to town but I didn't have a house. So, this way I would know that I have a house in town, and then I work on the farms and then go back. But I don't have a house in town... On the farm, the farmer does as [my ex-employer] did to me, he just puts your things out and you no longer have a place. Now, if you live in town, there's no-one who can put you out because you pay for everything related to the house... it is your house.<sup>175</sup>

Ngqika, and other respondents, had no problem with farm work in and of itself, but the fact of having his own house had become a key factor in decision making about future employment:

I would never go back to a farm because what would hold me back is that I have a house here. What would send me back to the farms is the scarcity of work. There are people who have jobs here in the town, who work with fencing and shearing; they do go on the farms and work. There are some jobs that we do without being on the farm. But I wouldn't just go back, if I had to sell my house, no. But I do know farm work, working with the pumps. But it's better that I live here.<sup>176</sup>

Autonomy is prized:

And what's nice now is that your family doesn't have to start by the farmer's house to get permission. There, if they get denied, they have to turn back right there. You'd be waiting at the house for them but they've been turned back. Here [in town] there's no-one to ask.<sup>177</sup>

Fundamentally, having a house in town is about family stability and the capacity to provide for children, as the hunting-lodge worker explained:

At least I have something I own, because I won't live every day [forever]. One day my children are going to grow up... we are not all of us lucky to have a husband and get married. Some of us are struggling like me, while the others are better off. At least then I know my children can have a place to stay.<sup>178</sup>

## **‘RIGHTS ARE IN TOWN, NOT ON FARMS’: TENURE ANXIETIES AT BOSSIESKLOOF GAME RANCH**

Abraham Summers and his family spent close to ten years working at Bossieskloof Game Ranch for the businessman, but he recently sold the ranch and recommended that the staff be kept on; the new owners agreed. However, there were notable changes on the farm, again underscoring the centrality of the owner's role in determining farm conditions.

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<sup>175</sup> Interview, Piet Jacobs, 13 October 2009. Cradock.

<sup>176</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>177</sup> Interview, Maxwell Ngqika, 20 January 2010. Cradock.

<sup>178</sup> Interview, Casual Game Farm Worker, 11 August 2009. Cradock.

A new manager was brought in to live on the game farm. His presence and management practices eroded the autonomy the farm workers had enjoyed under the previous owner. There was a sense of disquiet and discomfort amongst workers when the researcher returned for follow-up interviews; the mood shift was palpable. Workers were no longer allowed to leave the farm without permission, even for essentials. Since they were not free any longer to leave the farm on the basis of their need, the workers found themselves without money at the end of the month and were unable to make loans with the new manager to obtain urgent provisions.

Making things worse for the workers is the friendship between the new owner of Bossieskloof and their former employer at Grootvlei. Not only has the new Bossieskloof management restricted the frequency of unaccompanied travel from Bossieskloof; the owner of Grootvlei has effectively placed a curfew of 8 pm, and refuses to entertain farm workers and their guests coming through the main gate later than that hour. Without solidarity between the workers and their new boss, these restrictions have gone unchallenged although it violates the workers' and dwellers' freedom of movement and association. The very nature of the game fences makes the sense of being hemmed in more acute. The social affinity between the two landowners has made life on Bossieskloof uncomfortable for the workers and their families. The manual farm gate was replaced with digital control which requires access codes which the landowners change regularly; the farm workers did not always get given this access code. The game fence – as a form of infrastructure – increases the farmer's ability to control access on to the farm; thus preventing farm workers' and dwellers' freedom of movement on- and off-farm. The high game fence thus represents a greater securitisation of the semi-arid area farm landscape; farm workers no longer traverse boundaries between farms freely, nor can they receive guests as easily. In that sense, the game fence can be seen as a second “enclosures movement” in the semi-arid areas, which sees the intensification of land owners' power over the stringently demarcated space, paralleling the enclosures process of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Van Sittert, 2002). There was a keen awareness of the unequal property relations; Abraham contended that “It is hard for us. ‘The Man’ is stronger than us because he has lots of land. He is rich”.

The farm workers interpreted the curtailment of their autonomy as “distrust” by the new owners. The lack of autonomy also eroded their sense of professional improvement in their workplace duties; Bella commented that they had learnt a lot about the ranch's operations with the previous owner because they were allowed to be a part of the farm management

vision.<sup>179</sup> Abraham missed the autonomy he had experienced when he was considered part of the management team of Bossieskloof; he found it frustrating that he was no longer trusted to run errands in town on his own when he felt the need arise; he stated that: “When you go out alone, it means that you can be trusted”. Mary supported this view; she found the new management’s approach patronising and belittling and stated that being allowed to go out of the farm alone

shows trust. Now [if it’s assumed] that you don’t know things, the white madam must hold your hand. We don’t want to have to go out with the madam!<sup>180</sup>

Powerlessness is accompanied by disillusionment (Du Toit, 1993:19). Abraham compared himself to friends that he grew up with who left the farms for town, saying:

My friends who live in town are better off than me. There are rights in town, there are no rights on the farms. In the town people can strike and *toyi-toyi*. This friend of mine, he lives in a huge house in town – we grew up together.<sup>181</sup>

He felt dejected and no longer thought of the Bossieskloof ranch as a home. Like many other farm workers who endured workplace instability and unhappiness, Abraham no longer wants his children to return to the game ranch; he stated: “They may come for a visit, but not to stay” (Atkinson, 2007:116).

The changes in management have disillusioned and deflated the spirits of the workers at Bossieskloof. In light of these management and ownership changes they have expressed an urgency for finding houses off-farm. All the workers agreed that it was better to have a house in town when one worked on a farm. Jan Jacobs stated:

You have no choice. He can chase you off. You need a place if you don’t have one. You must have somewhere to go.<sup>182</sup>

Rosie, who had enjoyed a cordial relationship with the previous owners, also expressed her dissatisfaction with the new owners. She missed the previous farm manager and described him as approachable and socially attuned; he “knew how to talk to brown people. You could call him at any time.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>180</sup> Interview, Mary Summers, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>181</sup> Field note, Summers group discussion, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>182</sup> Field notes, Summers group discussion, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>183</sup> Interview, Bella Summers, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

She expressed uncertainty at their position with the new owners:

I am not sure about these new white people. What's bothering us now is to not having a house. You really cannot know with these people. My son has been working for white people for a long time; he works very hard but today he has nothing to show for it.<sup>184</sup>

Clearly the need for farm workers to have homes they own is urgent. The experiences of farm workers and –dwellers at Bossieskloof indicate that this need is pressing. Remaining on the farm is not feasible for them because they would have to endure unpleasant relations with the owner. Changes in the land use have not caused their tenure insecurity, it is embedded in inherently unequal relationships with land owners. Having a house off-farm solves a number of interrelated problems. First, it eliminates that ever-present dark cloud of being rendered homeless and vulnerable due to eviction. Secondly, it weakens the hold of the farmer over the workers' time; which relates directly to quality of life. Thirdly, it secures the family a home base, giving farm workers and –dwellers household stability and peace of mind.

Abraham and Bella Summers applied for an “RDP house” in Cradock in 1997 but, after it had been built, they were told that it had collapsed, and they had to wait for another housing project. He felt the situation was unfair stating that:

I was told my house fell. I have to wait while children live in houses there [reference to township houses with young people]. I don't want to live in someone's yard.<sup>185</sup>

Mary believed it was wrong for residents to sell their “RDP houses” to foreign shopkeepers when there was a desperate housing need.

Housing projects rolled out under the Reconstruction and Development Programme in Cradock began in 1997 and had two main phases.<sup>186</sup> In the first phase, a housing development project called Vision 2000 was started by the National Department of Housing, in partnership with the local municipality (Figure 8). In this project 2 837 houses were built in the two stages.<sup>187</sup> The houses built are much smaller than the original “matchbox” houses of the apartheid regime; they are rectangular in shape and have only two rooms. This project was completed in 2002. Part of this project included the removal of people from some of the shacks in the squatter camps and their relocation to a new township named Atlanta. Some of

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<sup>184</sup> Interview, Rosie Summers, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>185</sup> Field notes, Summers group discussion, 26 November 2010. Cradock.

<sup>186</sup> White Paper for Housing, 1994 (RSA 1994).

<sup>187</sup> Interview, housing official Cradock Municipality, 25 November 2009. Cradock.

the houses were upgraded in situ. After 2002, a second housing project was started under the People's Housing Process. This was completed in 2004 and a further one is being built in the coloured area to form a new township called Hillside. These houses were much bigger with two bedrooms and a combined lounge/kitchen area.



**Figure 8: First phase of “RDP housing” in Cradock township**

There remains, however, a huge housing backlog. According to the housing office at the municipality, some of the people on the list have been on it from 1995.<sup>188</sup> Currently 378 farm workers are on the list awaiting houses. In addition to the farm workers, there are 2 954 people already in town also waiting for houses. When queried as to when the new housing project will begin, the official stated that he was not sure as it appeared that the national department would be doing housing development projects in other small towns at this juncture.<sup>189</sup> The government appears to be unable to meet the housing needs of these towns simultaneously.

A land activist working in the Karoo was concerned that the State's housing lists contributed to farm workers' and –dwellers' vulnerability because they have to wait so long.

<sup>188</sup> Interview, housing official Cradock Municipality, 25 November 2009. Cradock.

<sup>189</sup> Interview, housing official Cradock Municipality, 25 November 2009. Cradock.

The Cradock waiting list shows that farm workers and –dwellers are by far outnumbered by the people in town, yet, their immediate tenure on farms is far more precarious than those who already have a footing in town. The land activist felt that some kind of special arrangement between the State and organised agriculture needs to emerge to address the specific problems of farm workers and –dwellers because of their historical (and present) homelessness:

Yes, I know that farmers don't always have the financial means to buy people houses, but then there must be some sort of structure in government in place for that, that makes provision specifically for people on farms. Then, maybe, say you don't have to buy the house but then contribute an x percentage of your profit towards housing for your farm workers or something like that. Because I know if you've got ten people working on your farm you cannot really have all ten stay there forever if they can't work any more because you need people to work there and you can't go and build and build and build more houses and you can't afford to buy ten houses for ten different people. But there must be something so at least they wouldn't be out on the streets; living with their sister, living with this one, living with that one because they don't have any housing. Or maybe sitting here in town being on a waiting list for an 'RDP house', sitting with someone and waiting forever.<sup>190</sup>

## THE DILEMMAS OF SMALL RURAL TOWNS

There is no doubt that there has been an urbanisation explosion in Cradock town because of the massive farm-worker efflux of the 1980s from farms. However, the economies of rural towns acting as service centres cannot readily absorb increasing permanently-settled populations, particularly as the surrounding farms shrink in number while expanding in size; the economies of these towns face precariousness (Pio, 2009:36). Since 2008 there has been a slow down in the conversion trend because of high land prices and the global economic recession. Estate Agent Greg Rippon told the *Eastern Province Herald* that the economic recession of 2008 had resulted in farms being put on the market. Revenue in the industry has been estimated to have dropped 55% between 2008 and 2009 (Gillham, 2010). In Cradock, there was local talk of the high-end outfitters attaining only 50% of their usual bookings. An estate agent dealing in game properties in the Karoo stated that:

the whole thing has changed, fundamentals have changed. It is a buyer's market. It is quiet because of economics. Now people are looking for business sense, the days of capital growth are gone. It's either you stop buying now, or you buy right. Now people are looking for value.<sup>191</sup>

The Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture and Rural Development reported that:

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<sup>190</sup> Interview, Semi-arid area land activist, 29 April 2009. Graaff-Reinet.

<sup>191</sup> Telephonic interview, Karoo estate agent, 1 December 2010.

the game-farming industry was experiencing declining bookings as animals in the province were dying because there was insufficient grazing land. People in the industry were buying animals from areas where there had been rains (Biyase, 2010).

Indeed, the game sector's economic vulnerability does not differ from other agricultural and tourism enterprises. Under these circumstances, farm workers and –dwellers continue to remain vulnerable and farm efflux will continue. While Herod (1997:17) argues that workers' choices can reshape space in a way that “augments their own social power and undercuts that of capital”, saying by leaving the farms to escape poor working conditions, the move to town by workers actually incorporates farm workers into new dimensions of economic marginalisation (Atkinson, 2007). Due to lack of skills, lack of education and the very nature of decline being experienced by the rural service centres, many farm workers have become redundant to the economy (Atkinson, 2007).

At the outset of this thesis, it was posited that the central problematic of tenure insecurity is posed as being either a housing need or a land need. The foregoing discussion has shown that the empirical reality is that there is a housing shortage. Thus, modernisation advocates are partly accurate in the view that realistic rural development strategy is one which embraces urbanisation as one of its key components and

that, for many poor people in the rural areas, development therefore needs to be focused on portable assets that can be used in a variety of modern urban contexts (Bernstein, 2005).

However, this conception of “urbanisation” need not adopt models of the global North. Anne Bernstein (2005) and Atkinson (2007) proceed from teleological models of modernisation that presume a First World notion of metropolitan expansion. Since jobs are the primary pursuit of rural South Africans leaving for urban areas, Anne Bernstein argues (2005):

SA is well over 60% urbanised and this movement to the cities will grow. Most blacks want a secure place to stay in urban South Africa as close to jobs as possible. This means that the most intense pressures for land will increasingly come in metropolitan and other urban centres.

Yet, by all indications, there are no jobs within the urban areas; State re-formulation of economic policy and job-creation strategies bear little fruit (Netshifhefhe, 2010).<sup>192</sup> Full

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<sup>192</sup> Attempts at job creation were dealt a further blow by the global economic downturn of 2008; the State's job-creation attempts are overwhelmed by ongoing retrenchments; see: Patel's (2010) *Budget Vote Speech*. [<http://www.polity.org.za/article/sa-patel-budget-vote-speech-by-the-minister-of-economic-development-parliament-23032010>].

Western-style urbanisation is an unrealistic goal for South Africa, and the African continent more broadly, given the context of global restructuring and fragmentation of labour laid out by Henry Bernstein (2003), and the diminishing prospects for reliable employment; this compounded by colonially entrenched class and racial inequalities. A re-imagination of the spatial and social landscapes is necessary. Moyo (2005:2) argues that:

increasing urbanisation in Africa... is partially a reflection of the complexity of [the] emergent land question, rather than an indication of its irrelevance, as has often been argued.

Moyo (2008:32) goes on to say that:

demand for farming land in South Africa in terms of people seeking full- or part-time farming and peri-urban residential land is growing. Of these people, most require land for their full- or part-time (semi-proletarianised) agricultural livelihood practices.

Land is thus necessary for both housing and livelihood purposes, particularly as agricultural employment is in decline.

Organised farm workers from the Graaff-Reinet area stated that there was a desire by farm workers in their areas to own some land and become small-scale producers. A land activist stated: "Farm workers do want land, they want that little piece of land."<sup>193</sup> Game farms were seen as a blockage to the re-imagination of the landscape, because land was consolidated in fewer hands making it harder for farm workers to obtain smaller pieces of land. Cradock farm workers also expressed similar sentiments. Abraham cited land-reform programmes in the Graaff-Reinet area as evidence that opportunities given could be taken, stating: "we also want land to farm". Piet Jacobs concurred; he felt that he could use land for subsistence purposes. Cathleen Summers also felt that:

a person can do a lot with their own place... I could say: "Give them ground."... It must be your own ground.<sup>194</sup>

She tied her desire for subsistence farming to her own upbringing on the farms:

It is enjoyable to live on the farm, your children can grow up there. It is not good to go to when you have lived on a farm. We can live alongside the [white] farmers. There is no more of that white and black apartheid anymore.<sup>195</sup>

Land ownership was associated with social transformation and equality:

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<sup>193</sup> Farm workers farm committee workshop, 12 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>194</sup> Interview, Cathleen Summers, 15 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>195</sup> Interview, Cathleen Summers, 15 February 2011. Cradock.

I have my own rights. I can live next to him on my own land. If you have the *plaasmanier* [farm way] you will be able to stay on a farm. I would want it to be my own farm, not someone else's.<sup>196</sup>

The demand for land is there, although farm workers in Cradock are unlikely to articulate this readily given the prevailing conditions within which they live. However, there were differences indicating that some farm workers do not want to continue with a rural life. Mary Summers associated the farm life with too much hardship; she stated:

I want to go away from the farms. I don't want to stay here... It's ups, it's downs... I've had enough.<sup>197</sup>

She further stated that even if they got land there was the likelihood of failure, because they "don't have implements".<sup>198</sup> For Rose Summers, the "thing is houses".<sup>199</sup> For Abraham Summers, the move to town and non-agricultural employment was a permanent transition into urbanity. Urban-based housing was seen as a far greater form of independence and housing security.

The problem of tenure insecurity is thus one of both landlessness and housing need. The two are inter-linked rather than contradictory. Farm workers' expressed desire for their own land is consistent with what has been found in other studies (Atkinson, 2007). However, Atkinson (2007) views this desire with scepticism land, asking "is land reform what people really want, or would they prefer another form of social redress or security?" The question posed by Atkinson specifically relates to whether farm workers want to become participants in the commercial agricultural sector as farm owners. Abraham Summers identified skewed land ownership as the cause of inequality; he argued that: "The white man bought the farms. But the problem is that the brown people do not own them".<sup>200</sup> However, as a keen observer of trends in land reform in the semi-arid areas and nationally, he was fully aware of the difficulties of commercial farming, stating that it would be counter-productive if farm workers were given land without the means of production, stating:

It can be difficult if the black man cannot manage the farm and then loses it again to a white man.<sup>201</sup>

Instead, he seemed more inclined towards smaller-scale livelihoods with State support.

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<sup>196</sup> Interview, Cathleen Summers, 15 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>197</sup> Interview, Mary Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>198</sup> Interview, Mary Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>199</sup> Interview, Rose Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>200</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

<sup>201</sup> Interview, Abraham Summers, 17 February 2011. Cradock.

## **TENURE AND LIVELIHOODS: THE PROPOSED TENURE SECURITY BILL, 2010**

In its study on game-farm-related evictions, the Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project argued that the problems facing farm workers' and –dwellers' tenure security were linked to the

disjuncture between various land policies and legislation. ESTA, in other words, is not linked clearly to land redistribution ... implementing mechanisms that secure livelihoods and positive land rights for people (Naidoo, 2005:2).

In view of criticism against ESTA (RSA, 1997), and the general socio-economic vulnerability still faced by farm workers, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has attempted an overhaul of security of tenure legislation through the Land Tenure Security Reform Bill published on 24 December 2010 (RSA, 2010). Owing its draft nature, discussing the Bill remains beyond the scope of this thesis but will be commented on briefly below. The Department premised the Bill on creating a separation between farm workers' residence and work:

We cannot claim to have dealt with the issue of evictions, paternalism and violence on farms until the power relationships in rural areas and on farms are changed significantly. This requires a reduction in farm workers' and labour tenants' dependency on large-scale commercial farmers. This will only be achieved if land and housing access (and related social services) is de-linked from employment contracts. Farm workers need independent access to land, while the conditions of labour tenancy contracts need to be regulated (Draft Tenure Security Policy in Land Tenure Security Bill (RSA, 2010:10)).

Public views informing the Bill reiterated existing criticisms of ESTA (RSA, 1997) from various perspectives, including comments that:

- ESTA “unfairly strengthens the hand of labour and prejudices employers during protracted labour disputes”, and Section 8 of ESTA has made farmers apprehensive about employing permanent workers and about providing accommodation for workers on their farms;
- the legislation “has not been effective in stemming the tide of evictions”;
- ESTA “lacks an effective implementation framework (including limited State enforcement capacity) [sic]”
- farmers have the ability to circumvent ESTA and can “exploit loopholes”; and
- Government “failed to publicise the legislation” to those affected (Draft Tenure Security Policy in Land Tenure Security Bill (RSA, 2010:1)).<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Draft Land Tenure Security Bill, 2010 (RSA, 2010).

The Bill explicitly states that it applies to agricultural land, whereas section 2(1) of ESTA (RSA, 1997) is broader in its reach.<sup>203</sup> With a more-defined focus on agriculture, the Bill attempts to address the needs of farm workers and –dwellers as a special group with unique development challenges. This moves away from policy approaches which tend to lump farm workers under a generic redistribution framework which sees them “tagged onto mainstream government land-reform programmes within a framework of extending smallholder farming” (Moyo et al, 2000:188).

The Bill’s key objectives provide for a livelihood’s basis for addressing tenure security:

To provide for the continued protection of rights of persons who live and work on farms; to provide support framework for sustainable livelihoods of persons who live and work on farms; to provide for State assistance in the settlement of interested and affected persons on alternative land; to provide measures aimed at security of tenure, sustainable livelihoods and production discipline; to establish a land rights management board; to provide for acquisition of rights in land for resettlement.<sup>204</sup>

This broader paradigm goes beyond ESTA (RSA, 1997), which was more narrowly aimed at preventing unfair eviction, that is, keeping farm workers on the land. In remedying tenure insecurity, the Bill (RSA, 2010) addresses related socio-economic problems farm workers face. The most significant proposal in terms of housing provision is the establishment of agri-villages and other resettlement schemes to be managed through a Land Rights Management Board. The resettlement approach has two dimensions – (i) housing, and (ii) agricultural livelihoods.

Section 28 of the Bill (RSA, 2010) proposes that the Minister use the Expropriation Act of 1975 if necessary; the draft policy states that this is because, thus far, the acquisition of land has been difficult:

... the “willing buyer, willing seller” policies have meant that would-be beneficiaries of land reform are themselves responsible for identifying land, and depend on the willingness of current owners to transact with them. In commercial agriculture, for both social and economic reasons, farm dwellers do face severe difficulties in acquiring suitable land: farm dwellers are unlikely to be able to afford to buy land without subdivision of large commercial units (to which current policy, and landowners themselves, are strongly antagonistic), and many owners will undoubtedly be reluctant to sell land for the settlement of workers and former workers adjacent to their property. This makes a strong argument for more forcible intervention by the State, using its power of expropriation, in order to acquire land on behalf of farm dwellers.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Extension of Security Tenure Act, Act No. 62 of 1997 (RSA, 1997:6).

<sup>204</sup> Draft Land Tenure Security Bill, 2010 (RSA, 2010:2).

<sup>205</sup> Draft Land Tenure Security Bill, 2010 (RSA, 2010:2).

The enhancement of farm workers' and –dwellers' tenure security in off-farm settlement schemes requires a multi-sectoral approach (Atkinson, 2007). There is the danger of resettlement schemes collapsing if they are not adequately planned and well resourced (Sachikonye, 2003). Furthermore, there are more vulnerable groups of people (the sick, aged, youth) within farm-worker communities that can find their circumstances worsening due to the challenges of readjustment (Sachikonye, 2003:47). Furthermore, in the semi-arid areas, resettlement will have to take into account the constraints of the ecology which have made these areas fragile in the first place. Accelerated proletarianisation and urbanisation have occurred historically because independent livelihoods on land are limited in low-rainfall regions.

Approaches to farm-worker resettlement and development must take on a “rural-urban mixed livelihoods” approach (Pienaar & Schalkwyk, 2003:8). Resettled workers and dwellers are likely to continue seeking out wage employment as the primary base to support their families. Moyo et al (2000:190) criticise the “workerist” approach to farm workers and –dwellers that sees them primarily as wage earners, but, as this thesis has shown, under capitalist agricultural and land relations, the semi-arid areas preclude the possibility of stable land-based livelihoods, not unless the State provides a holistic package of support services. Indeed, both the demand for land and for work must be recognised as problems confronting rural areas.

The extension of transport services to facilitate mobility between resettlement village areas and service towns is critical. Few farm workers can afford their own motor vehicles; the common practice is to rely on the farmer or hitchhike (Atkinson, 2007:224). The development of affordable rural transport infrastructure would probably be the single greatest improvement for farm workers as that would (a) break the need to remain on-farm longer than is necessary, and (b) give farm workers greater choice as to where they want to work (Atkinson, 2007:225).

The combined effect of transportation, off-farm housing and the enhancement of socio-economic opportunity would finally “free” farm workers from terms of residence which render them vulnerable. The oppositional tendencies between land/agrarian concerns and urbanisation processes fall away when the two can be addressed through infrastructure. In effect, the rural is “urbanising”, even though land/agrarian reform policy formulation must address the problems around landlessness and land-based livelihoods.

Where the wildlife sector is concerned specifically, sectoral standards specifying quality of on-farm housing provision and labour relations would give substance to its claims that it plays a role in improving farm workers' and –dwellers' relative socio-economic position. As things stand for farm workers and –dwellers on hunting farms in Cradock, and the semi-arid Eastern Cape generally, any improvements in their relative working and living conditions are due to the grace of their employers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The structural nature of tenure insecurity inevitably results in farm workers and –dwellers in semi-arid areas making the choice to migrate permanently to town. The consolidation of land and re-entrenchment of farmers' power on game farms perpetuates the inequality from which farm workers have sought to escape through urbanisation. Invariably, personalised relations between farmers and workers prove to be fraught and fundamentally unsustainable, and workers seek permanent security of tenure through off-farm housing. The Summers' perceptions of, and responses to, their tenure insecurity on the Bossieskloof ranch mirrored their generational experiences of household off-farm migration. However, urbanisation into rural town centres – such as Cradock – continues to present employment uncertainty. Bleak economic prospects, combined with a government housing policy that has not adequately addressed the problems of historic homelessness of farm workers and –dwellers, bring about questions around South Africa's land and agrarian policy as the spearhead for rural transformation. Though there were differing perceptions on whether land or urban housing was the solution to their long-term problems, the expression of a desire for land by some indicated that, although migration to the rural town centres exists, it is, at least for some, a choice forced by circumstance. This affirms the finding that, although largely proletarianised, farm workers and –dwellers on semi-arid farms do consider themselves a rural population, and the demand for land cannot be dismissed on account of their wage-earning character. This chapter, however, argues that an agrarian policy which addresses both land and pressing housing needs is necessary.

## CONCLUSION

What prompted this research was the ongoing debate on the role of game farms within the South African economy. The debate is significant within public discourse. From conservative political perspectives, anti-game-farm sentiment is only the prelude to some 'Zimbabwe-style' land-reform solutions. From the perspective of progressive human rights activists; the debate on game farms is necessary to highlight the continued violations of farm workers and –dwellers' basic human and socio-economic rights. From the point of view of politicians, game farming is seen as an impediment to land reform because it is seen to have escalated land conversions and created larger blocks of consolidated land with fewer people. From the point of the organised lobbyists in the sector, the debate reflects ill-informed and unwarranted criticisms that require vigorous rebuttal. It is important to state at this point that the research was conducted with no specific lobbying or other agenda but was framed by a reading of the literature which influenced the posing of the main question around tenure security.

The main research question in this thesis was: *Do the conversions of traditional agricultural farms to private game farms and private game reserves affect the tenure security of farm workers and –dwellers in Cradock and, if so, in what ways, and with what implications for South Africa's tenure reform policies?*

At the outset, the thesis posited that the land question of the semi-arid areas is at the heart of questions around farm workers and –dwellers' tenure insecurity arising from land-use change in the form of game farming.

By putting the land question at the centre, the thesis took a much longer historical view of farm workers and –dwellers' tenure insecurity in the semi-arid areas. The thesis demonstrated that there are regional specificities which must be taken into consideration when looking at the impact of, and responses to, farm conversion. With an extreme land question and an historical servant labour regime, Cradock differed from areas where resistance to game-farm-related conversions was open, and often conflictual.

To the extent that the thesis has critiqued the reports and research of NGOs reporting on devastating evictions, the political and moral significance of the work they undertake in the furtherance of farm workers' and –dwellers' rights cannot be downplayed.

Similarly, critiques of the sector in no way overlook the fact that the sector has been driven by risk-taking individuals who have, in their specific areas, established sound businesses and provide employment. However, there were rhetorical dimensions to their claims of the sector's 'progressivism' that required deconstruction and interrogation.

This study was grounded in the case study method and, as such, its analysis and conclusions are informed by its circumscribed approach. The case study method revealed that there are farm conversion scenarios which diverge from the patterns describe in existing literature. Further studies in other semi-arid towns would be useful for comparative purposes. Indeed, the limits to accessing farms restricted the study to one site, while supplementary data had to be obtained from people off-farm which in itself was a limited avenue because of the time that had passed since the conversions had taken place. Research into farm labour practices continues to be a politically sensitive matter in the eyes of many farmers.

In answering the main question, the thesis demonstrated that the relationship between farm conversions and farm workers' and –dwellers' tenure insecurity was *correlative rather than causative*.

The thesis presents three major findings with regard to consequences of farm conversions in the Cradock area:

- 1) Farm conversions in the Karoo semi-arid areas do not necessarily result in evictions or unusually massive displacements, however, as part of a greater restructuring process in South African agriculture, they can be said to be associated with rural depopulation that has been happening over a much longer period in the semi-arid areas.
- 2) Game farms in the Cradock area do not much differ from other farms in the area in terms of labour relations and power dynamics. They are distinguishable from other farms by way of what they produce and their spatial arrangement, but are virtually a continuation of the 'traditional white farm' in other respects. The fate of farm workers and –dwellers on hunting farms depends on the disposition of the individual landowner.
- 3) Continuing land consolidation has the effect of entrenching already racially exclusive and unequal rural land regimes. Under these conditions, farm workers

and –dwellers remain tenure insecure on farms. Prospects for land ownership are near zero unless State policy formulation is enacted in this regard.

These arguments are supported by three further findings in relation to the nature of the Eastern Cape semi-Karoo farm working and –dwelling population:

- 1) Eastern Cape Karoo on-farm labouring households are faced with intractable dilemmas. Workers and their families are always caught between a number of difficult options – primarily these revolve around how to retain adequate work on the farms whilst also securing their families a permanent home, usually in town. This is a tough dilemma since work and housing are usually tied together on farms; access to a home on a farm does not necessarily mean access to adequate work. Farm workers and –dwellers in the Karoo try to manage this dilemma through the strategy of maintaining off-farm links with kin in towns and migrating between farms in search of better conditions.
- 2) Farm workers and –dwellers interviewed did not express a deep, abiding identification with land in and of itself nor with specific farms, but rather with work and the general lived experience as ‘people of the farms’. In seeing themselves as ‘people of the farms’ farm workers and –dwellers in the Karoo lay claim to the agrarian landscape and their historical role within it even as they choose to find permanent homes in town.
- 3) Farm workers in the semi-arid areas are prepared to eventually make the transition into town and in many cases, prefer it to perpetual tenure insecurity, especially when the working conditions on the farms are unfavourable.

These findings make a significant contribution to debates not just on tenure security, but on the sociology of farm workers and –dwellers because the emphasis on regular migration as a strategy de-centred ‘the farmer’ and the paternalist relationship from researchers’ constructions of farm-workers’ lives. The analytical significance of migration as a strategy to counter dependence on farmers is beginning to surface in works such as Atkinson (2007).

The narrative of the Summers families’ on-and-off movements from Grootvlei spanning more than two generations painted a picture of farm workers and –dwellers who attempt to improve their lives outside of the farmer’s control. Indeed, it became apparent that the Summers family shrank over time on the farm as its members sought greener pastures elsewhere. Their lives at Grootvlei were marked by inter-generational poverty and hardship. It is telling that Rosie and her late husband (Kobus Summers) abandoned Grootvlei at one point in their tenure there because living and working conditions were unbearable but were forced to return because of difficulties in town. A few decades later, in the early 2000s, Abraham and Bella (his wife) took their family, including Rosie, off Grootvlei to live and

work on the neighbouring Bossieskloof ranch when the opportunity presented itself. The act of moving, of finding more suitable employment, was found to be deeply entrenched such that farm workers do not necessarily claim those farms on which they do not live to be a permanent home. Extreme inequality does not permit them to make such a choice.

For respondents such as Maxwell Ngqika who left the farms at conversion, the move to town, in the end, seemed to have provided a more-lasting solution and independence to his family. It was stated that when the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve was created, people such as Ngqika were amongst a handful of workers living across the farms which were consolidated. The farms in the area were financially precarious. Indeed, in the context of agricultural decline in the 1980s, the prospects for workers such as Ngqika was dim in any case. Younger men such as Aaron Matyumza had left the farms in that area in the mid-1980s because they refused to be subordinated to the racial hierarchies; they sought personal autonomy by living off-farm. When conversion uprooted Ngqika, there was in a sense an inevitability to this given the structural context at the time. In that sense, one cannot 'blame' the game farm for Ngqika's departure, but rather view his redundancy on the land along with the greater problems facing capitalist agriculture at the time. Thus, game-farm conversion can be said to be associated with displacement, although not necessarily its cause.

Relations on Cradock game farms proved to be no different from the traditional racialised and personalised relations that have been associated with South African agriculture. Life on the game farm, and one's security of tenure, was determined by the disposition of the owner. Methodologically, it is clear that access to Bossieskloof was possible because the owner had a fair labour-management system in place. The Summers and Jacobs families themselves reported their satisfaction with wages, management opportunities and relations with the farm manager and owner. In that sense, the study is limited because direct access could not be gained to farms where the opposite was reported.

Reports of difficulties on game farms came from workers who had left. The problems encountered in terms of poor working and living conditions were not necessarily associated with game ranching as a business model but with the farmers themselves. These reports indicated that the industry's promotion of itself as a progressive force in labour relations and socio-economic impact is over-stated – at least where hunting farms are concerned. There were clearly major differences between the private game reserves studied by Langholz and

Kerley (2006) and the hunting farms in Cradock which differed little from conventional farms.

A brief overview and concluding remarks on each chapter follow.

Chapter One introduced the study and situated it within broader questions and debates on game farms and their implications for farm workers' and –dwellers' tenure insecurity. The research methodology and the constraints under which the study was undertaken were described and it was shown that dilemmas around access are a common experience for certain forms of farm research. However, these very constraints to access and the challenges encountered in locating farm workers and –dwellers whose tenure security had been affected by farm conversion, compelled the researcher to interrogate assumptions made in the initial research proposal. This led to a reformulation of the key question such that it reflected realities in the field. It was argued that claims made on both sides of the debate on game-farm conversions needed greater contextualisation and nuance.

In providing this contextualisation, the chapter framed the study and the research area, Cradock, within the socio-historical and geographic setting of the Eastern Cape semi-arid areas, commonly referred to as 'the Karoo'. In framing the study thus, the questions around land and the nature of the agriculturally based economy provided the analytical basis for the main arguments presented in the thesis on the ways in which farm workers and –dwellers respond to tenure insecurity on the farms in the semi-arid region. This approach foregrounds the specificities of semi-arid area farm worker and –dweller experiences; indeed, the voices and perspectives of the region's farm labour population are given centrality in the thesis.

By placing these voices at the centre, the study fills in gaps in the research on farm workers and –dwellers in the Eastern Cape semi-arid areas and also presents a scholarly analysis of the region's sociology that deconstructs historical settler mythologising of 'the Karoo'. This semi-arid framing distinguishes the study from existing literature focusing on other parts of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal on the consequences of farm conversions for the farm labour population.

Chapter Two provided the conceptual context of the debate and defined "tenure reform". It was shown that farm workers and –dwellers are trapped in a matrix of social and economic relations which render them tenure insecure and vulnerable to eviction. The resilience of paternalism and the role it plays in structuring inequality and tenure insecurity on farms was a key theme identified in a number of studies on farm workers and –dwellers. The limits of

the literature were that, in highlighting paternalism, they placed the farm worker's relationship with the farmer analytically at the centre of the farm worker's life. Yet literature on the migratory tendencies of farm workers in South Africa and the relative agency it provides, highlighted in key studies by Hunter (1936), Roberts (1959) and Manona (1988), showed that farm workers and –dwellers are constantly trying to establish their independence outside of the farmer's control. This thesis viewed this pursuit of independence as being of sociological import in analysing responses concerning tenure insecurity on farms and, by extension, game farms.

The definitions of “farm dweller” and it being associated with dwellers who articulate deep attachment to land was also interrogated in the context of tenure insecurity and paternalism. It was argued that not all farm dwellers will express deep and abiding moral attachments to the farms of their birth. It was proposed that there are various kinds of claims made by farm workers and –dwellers in relation to their sense of entitlement and belonging to the farms and that these claims are refracted through inequality and tenure insecurity. This argument was used as a basis for interpreting findings in the field that showed that farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas move regularly over their lifetimes and that this explains why they do not associate their identities with specific farms or pieces of land.

In view of this context of migration, paternalism and agency it was argued for an agrarian approach to the understanding of tenure insecurity and farm conversions. The discussion revisited debates on the national question as a basis for discussing land and agrarian questions. Unresolved or seemingly intractable land questions in southern Africa, and South Africa specifically, have posed vexing challenges for scholars. This being particularly because it has been near impossible to divest the land question of its racial dimensions in South Africa.

Positions by Hendricks (1995), Bernstein (2003), and Moyo (2008) on the nature and extent of the land and agrarian questions in the context of late global capital were put forward. While these scholars differ on the nature of the agrarian question as it stands today and on which terminology ought to characterise (“peasants” or “workers” or “proletariat”) contemporary agrarian classes, this thesis dispensed with the terminology altogether and rather took a view shared by Moyo and Bernstein that workers and land users on the margins are under pressure to maintain their livelihoods in late capitalist globalisation.

With these crises of labour and the re-emerging agrarian question, Harvey's notion of the “spatial fix” was used to explore the circumstances in which game farming emerged. It was

argued that the game-farm sector needed to be viewed within the overall dynamics of late capitalism where neo-liberal restructuring of the agricultural sector – although rooted in national and local realities – reflected the global tendency at the time. It was thus suggested that the emergence of the wildlife sector needs to be seen both as a cause and a symptom of general trends towards land consolidation, and hence farm-worker displacements, in South Africa.

Seen in light of spatial fixes, the fate of farm workers and –dwellers displaced or evicted from game farms then appears more in line with the general problem of capital’s inability to absorb labour, that it creates conditions in which it expels labour. There is clearly nothing new about this.

The rhetorical dimensions of wildlife reconstruction were also explored. It was put forward that game farming produces a form of “hyperreal” wilderness for the sake of consumption. Literature has suggested that this wilding of the farms physically erases histories of agricultural dispossession and occupation with the pretence of a wild and natural environment. Re-wilded spaces are said to render farm workers and –dwellers invisible, whilst the ideological construction of nature constructs Africans as part of the primitive wildlife spectacle that tourists will enjoy. However, it was argued that farm workers and –dwellers are never entirely invisible on hunting farms, neither is the landscape completely re-wilded. In this sense the rhetorical uses of wildlife tropes are also understood to just be that – symbols and ideas for the purposes of marketing which do not account for the structural dimensions of what is happening to farm workers and –dwellers.

Chapter Three focused on the history of the semi-arid area farm working class and its specific place on the land and in the agrarian economy of the region. Given the absence of conflict or protest in Cradock, the puzzle of why contestation erupts in one place and not another had to be addressed. Comparisons were made with game-farm cases in KwaZulu-Natal and it was found that three key features drove the conflicts in those areas:

- 1) extensive land-based livelihoods,
- 2) an extended and kin-defined family presence on the farm,
- 3) a sense of historical permanency and family homestead resilience on that farm.

These three features were rooted in historical systems of labour tenancy in those areas. Following on this it was argued that the relative historical absence of black labour tenancy in the Cradock area, and in the Eastern Cape midlands, pointed to the almost total extent to

which farm workers had become proletarianised through conquest. Thus, farm workers and –dwellers in the area are primarily wage-earners and not autonomous land users. Work by Dubow (1982) revealed that in the mid-1800s, Crown land squatters were defeated by progressive farmers who successfully lobbied the colonial state to privatise its land. It was also notable that many Xhosas who came into the semi-arid areas to work did so on a temporary basis to accumulate cattle and return to the independent areas. The permanent servant class was incorporated into the Colony into master-servant relations of domination. The character of the farm working class in the area was said to be predominantly wage-based.

Chapter Four introduced the Bontebok Private Nature Reserve as a model around which to understand the complexity of processes relating to conversion in the Cradock district. The chapter situated Bontebok within broader processes of 20<sup>th</sup> century rural depopulation, arguing that conversion collided with an already shrinking population on the farms. This means that people are not only less likely to contest changes in their way of life collectively, but also that they may not want to. Bontebok Private Nature Reserve followed the historical pattern of labour rationalisation already occurring on semi-arid area farms. To this extent, it presented no novel scenarios to farm workers and –dwellers. It was concluded that the displacements caused by conversion could not be characterised as “dispossession”.

Chapter Five posits that farm workers and –dwellers face a number of dilemmas through the course of their lives. These dilemmas force farm workers and their families to choose between various unsatisfactory options. The central dilemma affecting them, however, is whether to stay on the farm or move to the towns. The centrality of this dilemma defines the responses that farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid districts have towards tenure insecurity; they accept it as a fact of life and find ways to mitigate its effects. This central dilemma, however, has also led to a propensity to migrate towards town for those who can. This accounts for why farm workers and –dwellers are prepared to move without contest when game farms convert in the semi-arid areas. This does not mean that all evictions are uncontested in these areas, but accounts for why evictions or displacement happen with little protestation at times.

The fact that farm workers and –dwellers find themselves moving around a number of times over their lifetimes means that they do not articulate an atavistic attachment to farms of their birth. However, this does not mean they do not have any attachments to the farms. In this regard, farm workers and –dwellers in the area laid claim to the agrarian landscape as

‘people of the farms’, they are always prepared to migrate either away from farms, or circulate within their home districts seeking better opportunities on other farms.

Chapter Six returned to Bontebok Private Nature Reserve and showed that hunting farms in Cradock are not fundamentally different from conventional agricultural farms insofar as labour and social relations are concerned. It argued the game sector’s claims of itself as a progressive socio-economic force are belied by harsh working conditions and exploitation observed and reported on Cradock hunting farms. Life on hunting farms in Cradock remains rooted in unequal racialised relations, fate of farm workers depends on the goodwill of the owner. Under these conditions, tenure security depends on good relations with farmers rather than contractual agreements. Moreover, farm workers and –dwellers remain trapped within the intractable dilemma of whether to stick with the inequality on the hunting farm for the sake of employment, or to move to town and risk worse prospects. To the extent that hunting farms do not minimise that central dilemma in farm workers’ and –dwellers’ lives, then they only perpetuate the status quo in terms of tenure insecurity for farm workers and –dwellers.

Chapter Seven proposed that for farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas, finding a house off-farm is the only guarantee of tenure security for farm workers and –dwellers. Urbanisation is a fact of life for semi-arid small towns. However, these towns are also economically precarious, unable to absorb redundant farm workers in their economies. The game sector itself, being in decline due to market forces and the global recession, is likely to shed labour. Ultimately, farm workers and –dwellers expressed both the need for their own off-farm housing and access to land or land-reform projects that could secure them an alternative livelihood. It is evident that the demand for housing and the demand for land are *not in conflict* but are indicative of the precariousness which farm workers and –dwellers find themselves in, as well as their attachment to the rural lifestyle. In that sense, the Moyo view of a type of nascent ‘peasant’ was evident in the manner in which demand for land was articulated in terms of social equity and attachments to a rural lifestyle by farm workers and –dwellers. These articulations cannot be reduced to the mere demand for survival, but were about a much deeper demand for independence.

## **LIMITS TO THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

There are obvious limits to this study where access is concerned. This has already been discussed. Further limits to the study relate to the fact that it could not provide a more

comprehensive view on the economics of the private wildlife industry. This is in large part due to the fact that the study was focused almost exclusively on documenting the life histories of farm workers and –dwellers in the semi-arid areas and constructing these narratives around their agency where tenure security was concerned.

Limited access to farmers and owners meant that a deep view from their perspective on the business aspects could not be obtained. When research was being conducted, the global recession of 2008 was taking its toll on bookings in Cradock’s hunting sector with a reported decline in bookings. There are indications and rumours in the Eastern Cape that the sector is struggling to maintain prior revenues which depended on American and European clientèle and a weak exchange rate. The game land market may have reached its saturation point; high land prices accrued to individuals who came in at the peak of the land market overcapitalisation. In addition to the economic downturn, there was a persistent drought in the Eastern Cape in 2009 and 2010 (when the research was undertaken); game farmers either lost game or had to incur costs feeding them pellets.<sup>206</sup> In this environment, it appears that game farms are attempting to diversify through selling or leasing portions of their ranches as ‘eco-wildlife’ residential estates. The researcher’s deductions around the reasons for these sales are speculative, however, there is scope for research to be conducted on the financial viability of the game-farming sector. Clearly, in the absence of State-driven land reform, land markets are on offer to the highest bidder. This again points to the structural problems facing South Africa’s agrarian sector, the problems lie in the absence of a comprehensive agrarian framework to transform inherited land inequality.

However, there is a tension. The strength of paternalism is such that farm workers and –dwellers were more likely to maintain relationships with their employers after farms had converted, receiving from them various forms of settlement support and assistance. It could be argued thus the relationship with the farmer is a relatively stronger livelihood relation for Cradock farm workers and –dwellers than the specific piece of land on which they reside. That is to say, farm workers and –dwellers have to attach more significance to the relationship with the farmer than to the farms on which they live and work because their footing on those is insecure in any case. This is indicative of the extent to which farm

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<sup>206</sup> See: Unknown author (2010). *Drought Might Call for Desperate Measures in EC Tourism Industry*, 26 October 2010, [<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/NewsDetails.aspx?newsId=22725>]; Pambili Gumenge (2010). *Eastern Cape Reels as Drought Persists*, 19 January 2010, [<http://www.grocotts.co.za/content/eastern-cape-reels-drought-persists-19-01-2010>].

workers and –dwellers lack autonomy on farms. Final authority is always vested in the landowner.

## **FINAL ANALYSIS**

The final question is: “How do game farms reshape or reconfigure the land question and what are the implications for tenure security and tenure reform?” Game farms may be new from the aesthetic and production point of view, but not as a landed capital in the semi-arid areas. These farm conversions do not constitute ‘dispossession’, but displacement which sharpens the already existing land question in these areas. Indeed, the consolidation of land into fewer hands and the greater securitisation of the countryside is a reality associated with game farming. Until the underlying structural relations around land are transformed, the trend towards land consolidation may continue in various guises.

At the very outset the thesis posed the question of whether tenure security and reform are essentially about a housing or a land need. Findings show that it is both. Paradigms that eschew one for the other present a false dichotomy. Housing is an urgent short-term need; land access is needed in the long term for not just livelihood purposes, but for the promotion of social equity. Policy relating to tenure security reform in the semi-arid areas has to take a number of factors into account when dealing with this question – the precarious economy, the tough ecology, and the fact that permanent housing is paramount for farm workers and –dwellers.

Tenure reform must respond to the land demands articulated by farm workers, even though these articulations are vague. Terminological debates on the contemporary agrarian question are a “red herring”. Broadly speaking, scholars should assume that there are ‘land users’ and ‘land seekers’. These two categories can then be further differentiated in terms of urgency of the need, frequency of use, purpose and scale of the requirements. With a capitalism that can no longer absorb its own labour, the re-emergence of land as a central dimension to social and political issues cannot be disputed.

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## ARCHIVAL SOURCES

### CORY LIBRARY, GRAHAMSTOWN

No.	Article number	Description
1	MS 14 680	'Narrative of a visit to South Africa', James Backhouse, May 29 1839

### SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHIVES, PRETORIA

No.	Article number	Volume	Description
1	SAB, NTS, 58/336 – 69/336	Vol. 7853	Correspondence Cradock Magistrate to Secretary of Native Affairs, September 1933
2	SAB, NTS, 175/313	Vol. 3	Report of the Native Affairs Commission on An Inspection of Conditions at Graaff-Reinet and Cradock on the 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> of December 1938
3	SAB, NTS, 309/208	Vol. 2201	Cradock Magistrate to Secretary of Native Affairs, 13 February 1942
4	SAB, NTS, 309/208	Vol. 2201	General Manager of Native Recruiting Corp. Letter to Director of Native Labour Johannesburg, 13 April 1948
5	SAB, NTS, 309/208	Vol. 2201	Secretary of Native Affairs to Cradock Magistrate, 18 March 1942
6	SAB, NTS, 309/208	Vol. 2201	Secretary of Native Affairs to Cradock Magistrate, 18 March 1942
7	SAB, NTS, 309/208	Vol. 2201	Cradock Magistrate to Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 10 August 1948

### CAPE ARCHIVES, CAPE TOWN

No.	Article number	Volume	Description
1	CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/82		Report by R. Wonsky, Inspector of Urban Locations, 6 April 1940 on meeting held 28 March 1940, Council Chambers Cradock, with regard to complaints by Central Farmers' Association
2	CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83		Correspondence from Cradock Magistrate to Town Clerk requesting a meeting with Native Labour Advisory Board, 2 March 1942
3	CA, 3/ CDK/4/1/83		Minutes of Special Meeting of Council and Native Labour Advisory Board, 13 March 1942
4	CA, 3/CDK/4/1/83		List of Country Children Attending School at Cradock Location Schools, G.P. Wilken, 1942
5	CA, 3/CDK/4/1/83		Correspondence from B. Murray to Town Clerk, 23 July 1948
6	CA, 3/CDK/4/1/83		Correspondence from Cradock Town Clerk to Secretary of Native Affairs, 27 August 1948
7	CA, 3/CDK/25/LLB/2	Vol. 18	Correspondence Location Superintendent to Town Clerk, 22 March 1954

## CITED INTERVIEWS

No.	Type of discussion	Interviewee(s)	Date	Place
1	Farm workers farm committee workshop		12 February 2011	Cradock
2	Field notes			
3	Group discussion	Summers	26 November 2010	Cradock
4	Field notes Group interview	Department of Labour officials	18 January 2010	
5	Field notes Informal conversation	Abraham Summers	16 November 2009	Cradock
6	Field notes interview	Mixed farmer	2 June 2009	Cradock
7	Field notes Interview	Cradock sable breeder	26 November 2009	
8	Interview	Abraham Summers	12 October 2009	Cradock
9	Interview	Jan Jacobs	12 October 2009	Cradock
10	Interview	Mary Summers	13 October 2009	Cradock
11	Interview	Aaron Matyumza	11 January 2010	Cradock
12	Interview	Abraham and Bella Summers	12 October 2009	Cradock
13	Interview	Abraham Summers	12 October 2009	Cradock
14	Interview	Abraham Summers	1 December 2010	Cradock
15	Interview	Abraham Summers	17 February 2011	Cradock
16	Interview	Abraham, Jan, and Piet	13 October 2009	Cradock
17	Interview	Bella Summers	13 October 2009	Cradock
18	Interview,	Bella Summers	26 November 2010	Cradock
19	Interview	Bossieskloof Game Ranch Owner	10 December 2009	Cape Town
20	Interview	Casual Game Farm Worker	11 August 2009	Cradock
21	Interview	Cathleen Summers	15 February 2011	Cradock
22	Interview	Cathleen Summers	7 January 2010	Cradock
23	Interview	Cradock Hunting Lodge Owner, M. Spierenburg and L. Ntsebeza	27 May 2007	Cradock

No.	Type of discussion	Interviewee(s)	Date	Place
24	Interview	Jan Jacobs	16 November 2009	Cradock
25	Interview	Game Farm Manager	29 November 2009	
26	Interview	Piet Jacobs	13 October 2009	Cradock
27	Interview	Housing official Cradock Municipality	25 November 2009	Cradock
28	Interview	Mary Summers	12 October 2009	Cradock
29	Interview	Mary Summers	17 February 2011	Cradock
30	Interview	Mary Summers	26 November 2010	Cradock
31	Interview	Maxwell Ngqika	20 January 2010	Cradock
32	Interview	Maxwell Ngqika	1 December 2010	Cradock
33	Interview	Maxwell Ngqika	2 December 2010	Cradock
34	Interview	Maxwell Ngqika	23 November 2009	Cradock
35	Interview	Maxwell Ngqika	24 November 2009	Cradock
36	Interview,	Maxwell Nqika	1 Dec 2010	Cradock
37	Interview	Middelburg farmers	11 August 2009	Middelburg
38	Interview	Rose Summers	17 February 2011	Cradock
39	Interview	Rosie Summers	12 October 2009	Cradock
40	Interview	Semi-arid area land activist	29 April 2009	Graaff-Reinet
41	Interview	Somerset East Game Farmer	10 June 2009	Somerset East
42	Interview	Sphiwo Ngalo	30 November 2010	Cradock
43	Interview	Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker A	24 July 2009	Cradock
44	Interview	Zimbabwean Game Farm ex-Worker B	6 November 2009	Cape Town
45	Telephonic interview	Karoo estate agent	1 December 2010	
46	Interview	Game farm fencer	15 September 2009	Graaff-Reinet

## PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

No.	Nature of correspondence	With whom	Date
1	Email	Cradock Hunting Outfitter	24 May 2010
2	Email	Ex-Middelburg Farmer	20 January 2011
3	Email	Cradock mixed farmer	18 July 2009

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