

**University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
School of Government**

Inclusive business models in South Africa's land reform: great expectations and ambiguous outcomes in the Moletele land claim, Limpopo.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
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Declaration

I declare that *Inclusive business models in South Africa's land reform: great expectations and ambiguous outcomes in the Moletete land claim, Limpopo* is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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Key words

Inclusive business models, Land reform, Land restitution, Moletele, Livelihoods, Partnerships, Citrus value chain, Arenas of struggle, Theory of Access, Realist approach



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on strategic partnership initiatives or ‘inclusive business model’ arrangements initiated between land restitution beneficiaries and private sector interests. It explores to what extent the introduction of strategic partnerships since 2005 reflects a dominant underlying land reform policy narrative premised on the superiority of large-scale commercial farming that contradicts other policy statements emphasizing support for small-scale farming. The effects of a hegemonic notion of “viability” – framed in terms of the large-scale commercial farm model - on partnership initiatives in the large Moletele claim in the Hoedspruit area of Limpopo Province is the primary concern of the study. I adopt a political economy perspective to examine both processes and the range of outcomes of the commercial partnerships established on Moletele land. Informed by this perspective, I explore the strategies pursued by, and the alliances formed between differently positioned actors that are engaged in contestations and negotiations over access to resources within these partnerships, which I conceptualize as “arenas of struggle”. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed (mixed method approach), by means of a small sample of claimant households and in relation to joint ventures established between claimants and different private sector partners.

More specifically, the study examines the nature of the interests, motivations and expectations of different social actors involved in the dynamics of the multi-actor landscape of the Moletele land claim. I consider why these initiatives have been introduced in the case of the Moletele claim, as well as more broadly in the South African context, and the outcomes are conceptualised in relation to whose interests are being either met or side-lined. The dissertation argues that these strategic partnerships (or inclusive business models) are designed to ensure the transfer of ownership of the land back to African communities while existing production regimes on the land acquired are retained. Given the magnitude of rural restitution claims, in terms of the number of beneficiaries and the size of the landholdings involved, this policy could end up being fairly successful in ‘blackening’ land ownership in rural South Africa, but without fundamentally altering the lives of the claimants. The combination of “ownership without effective access” (to land and resources) and the structural character of the value chains into which these communities are being inserted, could culminate in the reproduction of the existing agrarian structure. The dissertation concludes that the manner in which strategic partnership initiatives are designed in

the context of South African land reform, results in: (1) contradictory articulations of the terms and conditions of access to and ownership of the means of production, influenced by the wide range of interests, motives and expectations involved; (2) a range of uneasy alliances, compromises and contestations amongst different interest groups in an ever-shifting multi-actor landscape; and (3) a 'detached' version of capital accumulation in which agricultural corporate interests are able to capture most of the benefits of the partnership, and thus of land restitution.



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Chapter 1:

Introduction, background and rationale for the research

1.1 Introduction

Henry Bernstein (2011:1) observes that since its inception in 1994, South African land reform policy has been pervaded by profound tensions between the objective of redistributing land to provide redress for past dispossession, on the one hand, and the need for land redistribution to promote economic and social development, on the other. Bernstein also identifies a tension between the goal of promoting black commercial farming and attempts to resolve the crisis of social reproduction of the rural dispossessed (i.e. land reform as ‘poverty alleviation’ - Aliber, 2009, cited in Bernstein, 2011). In strategic partnership initiatives within the South African land restitution sub-programme, this tension manifests in competing imperatives for social reproduction and capital accumulation. This terrain tends to be dominated by actors promoting the benefits of export-driven large scale commercial farming, with less influential voices calling for ‘restorative justice’ conceptualized in terms of access to land, the disjuncture between these discourses leading to contradictory and messy outcomes, as is evident in the case of joint venture arrangements in the Moletele restitution case in Limpopo Province, the subject of this study.

This dissertation focuses on the introduction of strategic partnership initiatives, a form of joint venture or ‘inclusive business model’ arrangement between land reform beneficiaries and private sector interests. The dissertation explores whether or not the introduction of strategic partnerships since 2005 reflects a dominant underlying policy narrative premised on the supremacy of large-scale commercial farming as the normative model of ‘viability’ in agriculture, in spite of policy-related statements to the contrary (Cousins & Scoones, 2010, Aliber & Cousins, 2013). Joint venture arrangements are often promoted as viable avenues for the insertion of the rural poor into profitable global value chains, but these arrangements also seem to fit perfectly within a hegemonic, neoliberal ideology.

Focusing on the land restitution claim of the Moletele community in the Hoedspruit area of Limpopo Province, and the strategic partnerships which are being implemented in this claim, this study aims to analyse the nature of the interests, motivations and expectations of the various social actors involved, the influence of these within key processes of the partnerships, and the outcomes that can be observed. The study also explores the policy implications of these types of joint ventures in the context of the broader political economy of land and agriculture in post-apartheid South Africa, with a particular focus on land restitution.

To anticipate some key conclusions, the dissertation argues that these strategic partnerships i.e. inclusive business models are designed to ensure the transfer of ownership of the land back to African communities, whilst existing production regimes on the land acquired are retained. Given the magnitude of rural restitution claims, in terms of the number of beneficiaries and the size of the landholdings involved, this policy could end up being fairly successful in merely ‘blackening’ land ownership, but without fundamentally altering the lives of the claimants. The combination of a narrative of ownership without ‘access’ or benefit (Ribot and Peluso, 2003) and structural and regulatory shifts in the value chains into which these communities are being inserted, could culminate in the “reproduction of some version of the existing agrarian structure” (Cliffe, 2007: 2). The dissertation argues that the way that partnership initiatives are designed in the context of South African land reform, results in: (1) contradictory articulations of the terms and conditions of access to and ownership of the means of production (influenced by the wide range of interests, motives and expectations involved); (2) uneasy alliances, compromises and contestations amongst different interest groups in an ever-shifting multi-actor landscape; and (3) a ‘*detached*’ version of capital accumulation, with agricultural corporate interests being able to capture most of the benefits of the partnership.

1.2 Setting the scene: The South African land reform programme

According to Hall (2004a) land reform was conceived as a means by which the South African state would provide redress for past injustices and promote development. These

stated aims were to be achieved by restoring land rights to those dispossessed by segregation and apartheid through a **land restitution programme**, securing and upgrading the rights of those with insecure rights to land through a **land tenure reform** programme, and changing the racially skewed land ownership patterns through a **redistribution** programme (DLA, 1997). This part of the chapter provides a short overview of the South African land reform programme.

1.2.1 Redistribution

The specific objectives and approach of the redistribution policy are set out in the 1997

White Paper on South African Land Policy:

The purpose of the land redistribution programme is to provide the poor with access to land for residential and productive uses, in order to improve their income and quality of life. The programme aims to assist the poor, labour tenants, farm workers, women, as well as emergent farmers. Redistributive land reform will be largely based on willing-buyer willing-seller arrangements. Government will assist in the purchase of land, but will in general not be the buyer or owner. Rather, it will make land acquisition grants available and will support and finance the required planning process. In many cases, communities are expected to pool their resources to negotiate, buy and jointly hold land under a formal title deed. Opportunities are also offered for individuals to access the grant for land acquisition (DLA 1997b:38).

In addition to the constitutional imperative for land reform as provided in Section 25 (5) of the South African Constitution, further legal basis for redistribution is provided by the Provision of Certain Land for Settlement Act 126 of 1993, amended in 1998 and now entitled the Provision of Land and Assistance Act 126 of 1993 (known as Act 126). Whereas the original Act allowed for the granting of an advance or subsidy 'to any person', the 1998 amendment specified the categories of persons that could be assisted. These included 'persons who have no land or who have limited access to land, and who wish to gain access to land or to additional land', persons wishing to upgrade their land tenure, or persons who have been dispossessed of their right in land but do not have a right to restitution under the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994.

The government's redistribution policy has undergone a number of shifts since 1994. From 1995 to 1999, it was implemented largely by means of the Settlement/Land Acquisition

Grant (SLAG), which provided a modest grant (R16 000) to poor households, usually in groups, to purchase land on the open market. An income ceiling (a monthly household income of R1 500) was intended to ensure that only the poorest people benefited. Redistribution by means of the SLAG was not as successful as the government had hoped, and according to Zimmerman (2000) it was because too few potential beneficiaries overcame barriers to participation, such as the up-front costs of applying, and perceived difficulties in knowing how to apply (Zimmerman, 2000). On the other hand, Hall (2007) maintains that the settlement land acquisition grants were too small and ended up forcing groups of poor households who qualified for the grants, to pool their grants together in order to buy farms on offer on the market. Hall (2007:89) labels this as the 'rent-a-crowd' syndrome which in many cases resulted in overcrowding and unsustainable land use. Bradstock (2011:12) adds that "the relatively small size of the government SLAG often forced a core group of individuals to recruit additional members to raise the required price for the farm" and that "these new members often had different reasons for joining the group and were not necessarily interested in farming per se." In this regard, Kepe and Cousins (2001) concluded that for a variety of reasons which include different economic goals of the land reform beneficiaries, poor planning and lack of government support, most of the land on these purchased group farms remained underutilised.

In August 2001 the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) launched a revised programme, Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD). The broad aim of the programme was to provide support to black South Africans over the age of 18 years who wish to farm on any scale, though statements from the DLA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs have made it clear that LRAD was primarily intended to create a class of black commercial farmers, the so-called 'emerging black farmers' (Jacobs *et al.* 2003). The redesign of the grant formula in terms of the LRAD programme involved the provision of grants on an individual rather than household basis, and the possibility of leveraging higher grants with own contributions and loans. Despite this, group-based projects – sometimes with a smaller membership than before – have continued to be the dominant model under LRAD since its inception in 2001 (Jacobs, *et al.* 2003). The availability of grants on an individual basis has limited the need for the pooling of grants, and has enabled smaller

project sizes, but this trend has been offset by the failure to align the grant to an inflationary index. While land prices have increased, the level of grants remained the same and, thus, in real terms, has declined over time (MALA 2003:20–21). Group projects therefore remained the norm within the LRAD programme, producing similarly problematic outcomes to those it was intended to offer an alternative to.

According to Lahiff (2011) the months preceding and following the National Land Summit of 2005 unleashed a flurry of policy reviews and proposals which attempted to address some of the widely acknowledged weaknesses in the land reform programme. New initiatives included Area-Based Planning, the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), the Micro-Agricultural Finance Initiative of South Africa (Mafisa), the Settlement and Implementation Support Strategy (particularly within restitution), the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), the Land and Agrarian Reform Programme (LARP), the *Ilema/Letsima* campaign (aimed at increasing the productive use of available land) and finally the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). Despite this plethora of new initiatives, Lahiff (2011:62) argues that the limited evidence available suggests that “while these new strategies are being implemented, the fundamental and widely acknowledged question besetting land reform, i.e. how to provide appropriate parcels of land and support services that significantly enhances livelihoods of the rural poor and landless is yet to be answered” (ibid.: 62).

1.2.2 Tenure Reform

Tenure reform aims to secure the land rights of farm workers and labour tenants living on privately-owned large-scale commercial farms, and of residents in the ‘communal areas’, or former reserves, which constitute around 13 per cent of the land area of the country, but are inhabited by perhaps 17 million of South Africa (Cousins, 2007). The South African tenure reform programme seek to address the consequences of widespread overcrowding and forced overlapping of rights in the former reserves as a result of a history of forced removals and evictions of black South Africans from white-owned land, and uncertainty as to the legal status, content and strength of these rights (Cousins, 2007:281). Tenure reform

in South Africa is seen as a constitutional imperative and Section 25 (6) of the Bill of Rights in the 1996 Constitution asserts that:

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

The South African *White Paper on Land Policy* (DLA 1997: 57–8) sets out an approach that seeks to give effect to this constitutional right. In this regard, it is asserted that land tenure policies must ‘move towards rights and away from permits’ and aim to build a ‘unitary non-racial system of land rights for all South Africans’. It must ‘allow people to choose the tenure system which is appropriate to their circumstances’ (including both group and individual ownership), but these ‘must be consistent with the Constitution’s commitment to basic human rights and equality’ (Cousins, 2007).

Two laws have been passed to secure the tenure rights of farm dwellers: The Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997 (ESTA) and the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act 2 of 1996 (LTA). Both acts aim to regulate tenure relations between owners and occupiers of farms and determine when and how occupiers may be evicted so as to prevent people from being arbitrarily evicted and left with no alternative place to go (Hall, 2007:95). Edward Lahiff (2001:2) highlights the failure of ESTA to prevent illegal evictions on farms, and he attributes this to the incapacity of the Department of Land Affairs to enforce legislation, as well as the complicity of magistrates and police who are based in farming areas. According to Wegerif *et al* (2005) nearly 1,7 million people were evicted from farms between 1984 and 2004; and he observes that after 1994, nearly one million people were evicted up until 2004. Yates (2011) is also very concerned about this trend. She reports that only 1 per cent of all evictions followed a legal process and that “the eviction of farm workers has continued unabated in the post-liberation period” (ibid.: 165). She warns that the continuation of this trend is inconsistent with the new constitution, the stated policies of the ruling party and the ideals of the liberation struggle that brought this new democratic dispensation into existence (Yates, 2011:185). Despite new laws and policies, it is therefore generally agreed that tenure reform in South Africa has progressed slowly and the programme has been criticized at length for leading to hundreds of thousands of evictions

of black workers from white-owned farms by farmers concerned about having to provide security of tenure to their workers

In relation to communal tenure reform, the White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997) states that individual titling was accepted as one possible option in terms of ensuring secure tenure arrangements, but the greatest emphasis was to be placed on a democratic reform of collective systems, within which members will 'have the power to choose the structure which represents them in decisions pertaining to the day to day management of the land and all issues relating to member's access to the land asset' (DLA 1997, 63 cited in Cousins, 2007). To achieve this stated aim, a Land Rights Bill was drafted, in terms of which people had the right to choose which local institution would manage and administer land rights on their behalf, but this draft Land Rights Bill, "never saw the light of day" Cousins (2007). In June 1999 a new Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs took office, and the Land Rights Bill (LRB) was set aside. According to Cousins, the Minister viewed the approach adopted in the LRB as too complex and costly to implement and she favoured a law that transferred title of state land to 'tribes' (or 'traditional communities'), allowing traditional leaders to administer land, which would ultimately not require high levels of institutional support to rights holders. Following several false starts, a Communal Lands Rights Bill was drafted between 2001 and 2003 and eventually enacted in early 2004 as the Communal Land Rights Act, 2004 (CLRA). The CLRA was an attempt to consolidate the various forms of communal land holding prevalent in South Africa and to formalize communal relations with regard to land. CLRA also had the stated intention of accommodating traditional leaders as registered owners of communal land, while allowing for a range of other landowning arrangements. The CLRA was promulgated in keeping with the views expressed in 2000 by Minister Didiza, who maintained that the disposing of state-owned land in the communal areas, should be facilitated by the state and aimed at building on 'existing local institutions and structures', both to keep costs down and to ensure 'local commitment and popular support' (Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs 2000:11).

The approach adopted in the CLRA has been widely criticized and was debated at length in parliamentary consultations before the law was enacted, with the powers of traditional councils over land being one of the most controversial issues (Cousins and Claassens, 2004). Concerns were expressed regarding the manner in which 'community' was defined, the nature of the decision-making powers that would be assigned to the land administration committees, and the gender equity aspects. The most influential critiques of the CLRA are to be found in an edited collection of papers, *Land, Power and Custom* (Claassens and Cousins, 2008), many chapters of which are drawn from affidavits drawn up for a court challenge to the constitutionality of the Act. The central argument of the book is that traditional tenure systems were always contested, flexible arrangements, but key provisions of the CLRA would in fact entrench particular versions of 'customary' land tenure that resulted from colonial and apartheid policies, and thus the CLRA could have the effect of undermining, rather than securing land rights (Claassens and Cousins, 2008). Cousins (2007:283) suggests that the most appropriate approach to tenure reform in South Africa is to make 'socially legitimate occupation and use rights', as they are currently held and practised, the point of departure for both their recognition in law and for the design of institutional frameworks for mediating competing claims and administering land. A more bottom-up approach rooted in current rural realities, and one in which the primary accountability of land representatives would be downwards to right holders and not upwards to the state, is the alternative (Cousins, 2008:133). The implementation of the CLRA has been pending due to a constitutional challenge, which succeeded in May 2010.

Recent developments in communal tenure reform initiatives are captured in the stated aims of the Communal Land Tenure Policy (CLTP) document (DRDLR, 2013). The National Development Plan (2012, chapter 6) describes the land tenure system in communal areas as inadequate for the security of credit and investment and, hence it considers this form of tenure a major obstacle to land development and agriculture within the former homelands. In line with this assertion, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform introduced a Communal Land Tenure Policy (CLTP) document with the stated aim to reform communal tenure by ensuring the security of land rights and production relations for people residing in South Africa's communal areas (DRDLR, 2013:12). To achieve this, the

central proposals in this Communal Land Tenure Policy seek to establish institutionalised use rights, particularly for households, and other users, which shall be administered either by traditional councils in areas that observe customary law, or communal property institutions outside these areas (DRDLR, 2013:13). Crucial to realising its primary objective, this policy intends to engender transformation of formal authority relations, specifically, the role of traditional authorities and other land governance bodies in relation to that of households and the state. The newly proposed CLTP is therefore closely aligned with the 2011 Green Paper's stated objective of securing rights to land for all South Africans (and particularly those living in rural areas) through an envisioned four-tier system of land tenure. Walker (2013:10) however cautions that the four-tier land tenure system being proposed in the Green Paper requires further justification – it is not clear if it is driven by pragmatic or principled considerations, and in what way this constitutes a single land tenure system. The Communal Land Tenure Policy states that the “registration of new CPAs on traditional communal tenure areas should be *carefully considered and principally discouraged*” (emphasis added, DRDLR, 2013: 14). Even more worrying is fact that the new CLTP would no longer allow CPAs to own restitution land in communal areas, thus opening the door for traditional leaders to now both claim and hold ownership of restitution land on behalf of ‘tribes’ (Mogale & Thipe, 2014).

1.2.3 Restitution

Hall (2008:17) asserts that “land restitution is intended to right the wrongs of the past: to redress unjust dispossession and to heal”. To achieve this stated aim, the land restitution process enables former landholders to reclaim spaces and territories which formed the basis of earlier identities and livelihoods (Fay and James, 2009). Land restitution also aims to set right the injustices and violations associated with the process of land dispossession. Restitution thus promotes the principles of restoration and justice in confronting the difficulties of determining ownership, defining legitimate claimants and establishing evidence for claims (Fay and James, 2009:1). As restitution sets out to provide redress for loss, it needs to draw on the memories and histories of a past loss, and in this regard Fay and James (2009:1) contend that restitution has ended up “bringing the past into the

present”. Hall (2008:20) agrees that restitution was conceived as a form of restorative justice, but points out that “as the programme progressed, questions emerged about whether it was possible to ‘turn back the clock’ and re-establish scattered communities”. She also argues that the current needs for development and improvement of the livelihoods of impoverished communities do not necessarily align with restitution imperatives, in spite of the strong political resonance of historical claims to land (Hall, 2008:21). As a result, the land claims process has highlighted tensions between addressing historical claims and responding to current priorities (Walker, 2005, Walker, 2008). It has also brought into question the state’s ability to respond effectively to claims and to link land restitution to a wider programme of economic development (Hall, 2008).

The right to restitution is enshrined in section 25(7) of the 1996 Constitution, which provides that “A person or community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress.” The Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 was the first law passed by the ANC-led Government of National Unity that set out to redress the legacy of apartheid rule. It affirmed the right to restitution and defined the process by which those who were deemed eligible could lodge their claims (sec. 10[1]). Restitution is a rights-based program in that the dispossessed or their descendants have an enforceable right, confirmed in the Constitution, to restoration of, or compensation for, property that was unfairly taken (sec. 25[7]). In terms of the act, two institutions were established to drive the process: a Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) and a Land Claims Court (LCC). Hall (2008) states that the CRLR, established in 1995, was tasked with driving the process: assisting claimants, investigating the validity of claims, and preparing them for settlement or adjudication. Post-settlement or ‘after-care’ (in World Bank terminology) for successful claimants was, initially, the responsibility of the Department of Land Affairs (DLA). The time frame for restitution set out in the 1997 *White Paper* was eighteen years in total from 1995. Initially three years were allowed for claims to be lodged; later the final deadline was extended to 31 December 1998. Five years were envisaged for the settlement of claims and

a further ten years for the implementation of all court orders and settlement agreements (DLA 1997: 49).

Establishing the precise number of claims lodged with the agency entrusted with the primary responsibility for processing claims, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR, also known as the Land Claims Commission) proved to be a difficult research task for Hall in 2008 but ‘officially’, in April 2005, the acting Director General of the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) reported to Parliament that the final count stood at 79,696 (DLA 2005), of which approximately 80 per cent were urban claims, with the balance being rural claims. In March 2007 the commission claimed that over 90 per cent of all lodged claims—74,417— had been settled (Walker, 2008). Since 2007, with virtually all urban restitution claims apparently settled, the focus of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) has been on the outstanding rural land claims, many of them on high-value (and privately owned) agricultural land, with the potential to dramatically increase the area of *productive* land delivered under this programme. Hall (2008) asserts that because colonial intrusion and dispossession started from Cape Town, heading eastward and northward during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most black South Africans had lost independent access to land by 1913. For many observers, this explains why there are very few rural claims in the Western Cape and why large portions of Limpopo and Mpumalanga—estimated at between 50 and 70 per cent of the farmland in those provinces—are subject to claims (Hall (2008), *This Day*, “Up to 70 Per cent of Farmland Being Claimed,” 7 January 2004). These figures support the notion that restitution in these provinces could, potentially, make a substantial contribution toward the state’s target of redistributing 30 per cent of commercial farmland through land reform (see Walker 2008, 215–16).

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) has recently been under pressure to re-open the claims lodgement process to include those who missed the opportunity to file their claims before the deadline of 1998 (due to lack of information and also some distrust of the process) and to those claimants whose ancestors were dispossessed before 1913, and thus to accommodate historical landmarks, heritage sites and descendants

of the Khoi and San who lost their land long before 1913. In addition to the logistical headaches this initiative would cause, Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersen (Minister of Agriculture) added that government was also considering a "use-it or lose-it" policy in relation to agricultural land that was not in production and that land that had already been restituted to communities "could also be lost" (*Mail and Guardian*, ANC introduces new policy on land restitution 30 June 2012). At the end of May 2013 The Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Bill was finally gazetted for public comment. Erasmus (2012) observed that the promulgation of the Restitution Amendment Bill will re-open the land claims window that was closed in 1998 and give new claimants until 31 December 2018 to lodge claims, as the period between 1994 and 1998 is now considered to have been 'too brief'.

The Restitution of Land Right Amendment Act (2014) has been promulgated into law during July 2014 and the implications of the passage of this Act for the Moletete claim are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9 of the dissertation¹. It is important here to mention that some trepidations have already been raised in terms of these amendments regarding: (1) the feasibility of extending the cut-off date to include land dispossession in terms of post-Union segregationist policies, (2) renewed expectations that will surface as a result of these amendments and (3) exacerbating existing human and financial capacity constraints, as acknowledged by the Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti in 2011, when he admitted that 90% of all of the government's land-reform efforts had failed, and blamed fraud, corruption and capacity problems in the department.

The South African land restitution programme, has been criticized for the slow pace of restitution delivery, inconsistency regarding the number of outstanding claims, and the poor productivity of newly resettled restitution beneficiaries (Hall 2004b). What could be regarded as 'successful restitution cases' seems the exception to the rule and in many instances restitution beneficiaries have not been able to make productive use of the land. A study conducted by the Community Agency for Social Equity (CASE) between 2005-2006 concluded that "the most striking outcome of restitution has been beneficiaries who have

¹ The research for this thesis was conducted between April 2010 and November 2012, with a final follow-up during 2013. The signing of the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act (2014) into law occurred July 2014 after the fieldwork and write up for the thesis was concluded.

received no material benefit whatsoever from restitution in the form of cash income or even access to land”. Lahiff (2008:1) contends that “there seems to be the widespread perception that the [little] land that has been redistributed has not translated into improvement of agricultural productivity.”

In response to concerns regarding the decline in agricultural productivity on land handed back to claimant communities, the South African government has promoted private sector involvement in the form of the strategic partnership model. This joint venture model has been encouraged especially in the Limpopo province where many of the land claims involve high value agricultural land. The recent collapse of a number of these strategic partnerships however, raises concern regarding the usefulness of these partnership initiatives in settling large restitution land claims, and highlights the need to fully interrogate the expectations, interests and motivations of the actors involved in these partnerships as it will ultimately influence the strategic objectives and outcomes of such venture. This is the focus of this study.

1.3 Great expectations of the South African land reform programme.

The post-apartheid South African land reform programme was formulated as a response to the highly unequal distribution of land along racial lines inherited by the democratic government, and was also aimed at redressing the injustices of forced removals and other forms of dispossession in the past (Fraser, 2006:1). Land reform in South Africa is thus seen as crucial to undoing the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, not least because the state used land as a pillar for its policies of racial segregation and the pseudo-independence of the former Bantustans (Ramutsindela, 2007:45). For many observers, the primary objective of South African land reform is addressing the gross imbalance of the landholding patterns of the past, wherein more than a third of the population occupied land but without tenure security, in contrast to a small ‘white’ minority who occupied and held vast tracts of land in a secure, freehold tenure regime (Cliffe, 2000:274).

The extent and scope of poverty in the country, with black rural people accounting for more than 70% of the poorest households in South Africa in the mid-1990s, also highlighted the unquestionable need for an anti-poverty land reform programme specifically targeted at the rural poor (Zimmerman, 2000:1439). In this regard, Walker (2008, 2012) asserts that land has become a potent symbol of the promise of post-apartheid redress and transformation precisely because of the very high levels of unemployment and profound poverty evident in both urban and rural areas. The redistribution of productive assets is therefore regarded as a key political issue in this country with one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Schirmer (2009:475) surmises that land reform has to tackle two prominent legacies of the apartheid system: it must eradicate the racial divisions created by the discriminatory tenure systems of the past, and it must give economic hope to those who have become trapped in the rural dumping grounds, the former 'homelands'.

From 1994 the ANC-led Government of National Unity embarked on a land reform programme that has been viewed by many as ambitious, far reaching, and fuelled by *great expectations* (Levin & Weiner, 1997; Hall 2008; Ramutsindela, 2007; Walker 2007). The Reconstruction and Development Plan proclaimed a goal of redistributing 30% of white owned agricultural land within the first five years of democracy². During the transition period of 1990-1994 the ANC had already begun to popularise its vision of a land restitution process, to restore land to those from whom it was taken. The ambitious goals and objectives that emerged from policy making at this time was thus fuelled by high expectations amongst rural people that their land would be returned to them, and that the advent of democracy would mean that opportunities to own and use land would be opened up across the country (CLC, 1994). Politicians, policy makers, academics and land activists had their own sets of desired outcomes, motivations, interests and discourses, which fed into and influenced the design of the South African land reform programme.

Finding a particular resonance in this instance therefore is Lindblom's (1959) call for "a compilation of the anthropology of policy, dealing with the specific and contingent nature

² As a result of painfully slow progress, the inability to achieve this stated goal quickly became evident, and in 2007 at the ANC's National Conference in Polokwane the party recommitted itself to transfer 30% by 2014.

of a configuration of interests, actors and discourses that may come together in the contested and changeable - even messy - process of policy making” (Lindblom 1959, cited in Hall, 2010). Taking it a step further, it is important to bear in mind that the nature of conflicting or converging interests and expectations of different social actors transcends the policy making arena and unfolds during the implementation phase of policy too. Here new configurations of interest groups can surface (with converging or conflicting interests) and contestation over access to resources can take various forms. This perspective on policy informs this study of the Moletele restitution claim.

1.3.1 Disappointments and debates in the South African Land Reform Programme

“Land reform, perhaps more than other policies in the new South Africa, has provided fertile grounds for the forming of such expectations. Failing to nourish these adequately has made the subsequent disappointment inevitable. Land reform has been a social experiment ambitious in its breadth of scope, but ultimately unrealistic given the limited material and human resources on which it had to rely” (James, 2007:2).

“The available evidence suggests that the expectations of what can be achieved and the significance of restoring ownership of land on its own have been greatly overestimated”. (Hall, 2008:36).

Lahiff and Cousins (2004:38) observe that land and agrarian reform to date has, for many, been both disappointing and very costly. Broadly, land reform is criticized both for its *pace* – about 8 per cent of commercial farmland redistributed over 18 years versus the 30 per cent over 5 years initially targeted – and its *performance*: the livelihoods (and production) outcomes on the 8 percent of redistributed land (Aliber & Cousins, 2013:140). Kepe (2009:640) in particular, is concerned with the implications of the failure to implement land reform effectively in terms of positive impacts on the livelihoods of many rural poor who rely on land-based sources for their livelihoods, and those rural dwellers who wish to engage in agriculture beyond subsistence. Nel and Davies (1998) warn that failed strategies or poor implementation of land reform strategies in their opinion, might replicate Zimbabwean-style land invasions in South Africa, while James (2007:2) sees the escalating incidence of black on white farm attacks and the rise of organisations such as the Landless People’s Movement as symptomatic of the over-ambitious and unrealistic nature of the land reform programme.

In the mid-1990s Levin, Solomon and Weiner (1997:109) warned that “the legacy of oppression and exploitation under apartheid has left Bantustan residents with high aspirations for post-apartheid reform, but that the way the land claims process is envisaged by policy makers may result in restitution falling short of people’s expectations”. Hall (2012:3) surmises that restitution has shown up the wider contradictions of land and agricultural policy in that poor communities are expected to emulate existing production systems in the capital-intensive farming sector and compete with established commercial farmers and the increasingly powerful and oligopolistic agribusiness sector. Du Toit (2000:75-76) concludes his analysis on narratives of loss and redemption in South African restitution by stating that “these narratives of loss and redemption inevitably construct assumptions and expectations that are difficult to engage with in light of the demands and limitations facing the democratic government” and that “these sentiments of loss and redemption lead to disappointment and an anti-climax when claimant communities realise that the return to their long lost land cannot live up to their expectations”.

Warning bells also rang fairly early on in the implementation phase of the land redistribution programme, with Adams, Sibanda and Thomas observing in 1999 that “the performance of the Redistribution programme has failed to match up to early expectations, either in terms of the number of people involved or in terms of [creating] sustainable livelihoods” (1999:3). Hall (2012) traces the progress of South African land redistribution and distinguishes three cycles of land reform policy with distinct shifts in policy goals since 1994, but concludes that the performance of all three cycles have been less than spectacular. Additionally, by 2009 it was estimated that approximately 29% of redistribution farms had already failed, with another 22% in serious decline (South African Press Association, 2009). Of far greater concern, during 2010 government officials have been quoted as saying that 90% of land reform farms have failed (Groenewald, 2010). The questionable nature of the 90% failure rate has been debated (Greenberg, 2011) but it is clear that the disappointing performance of the land reform programme to date is widely acknowledged.

The most extensive criticism has been reserved for the tenure reform programme, which has been branded as the most 'underperforming' leg of South African land reform. Walker (2012) ascribes the poor performance of the tenure reform leg to government's fixation on the "master narrative of loss and restoration" which has resulted in an emphasis on redistribution and restitution at the expense of tenure reform. Taking his cue from an earlier publication by Walker (2007), Schirmer also laments the neglect of the tenure reform leg of the programme, arguing that the way forward for South African land reform should involve de-emphasizing the delivery of land acreage and a focus on extending secure tenure to as many black South Africans as possible. He argues that "such tenure reforms would put assets into the hands of the poor and allow them to shift their energy away from defending their property against competing claims (Schirmer, 2009:475).

The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE, 2005:5-7) also identifies the expansive nature of expectations for South African land reform as problematic, observing that "land reform has become too a vague concept, an idea to which South Africans have attached to a large number of issues and challenges". Furthermore they maintain that "many participants in the debate on land reform expect it to compensate for much of the legacy of apartheid-induced land dispossession, to modernise the communal tenure system in the former homeland areas, strengthen the position of women living in traditional societies, rapidly create a new class of flourishing black commercial farmers and play a major role in relieving rural poverty."(CDE, 2005:6). Furthermore, the CDE (2005:7) asserts that loading 'land reform' with all these inflated expectations and handing its implementation over to one government department has placed the Department of Land Affairs (now the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform) in an extremely difficult position (CDE 2005:7) thus almost setting it up for imminent failure.

During the 1994 negotiations land became an issue for strategic compromise between the National Party and the ANC (Walker, 2005). The common liberation movement rhetoric at the time was that the state should nationalize productive resources like the mines and the land in order for any effective transformation to take place, but the leading liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC), came out of the negotiations with the

apartheid government with a much more neutral stance. While there was no wavering on the need to provide redress for historical injustices, and recognition that the majority of black South Africans expected no less from a democratic government, there were quite significant compromises made during the negotiation process (Ntsholo, 2010). For many commentators it is this 'cautious', 'minimalist', or 'negotiated' approach to land reform that has been at the core of its problems (CDE, 2005; James, 2007, Schirmer, 2009).

Of particular concern for many critics of the South African land reform programme is the inclusion of a Property Clause in the post-apartheid Constitution adopted in 1996. This resulted in the limiting of the power of government to expropriate land, the limiting of land restitution to those cases which occurred after 1913, and the adoption of a market-based programme of redistribution which some asserted "will fail to address the land needs of the poor and marginalised" (Levin and Weiner, 1997). Hall echoes these concerns, pointing out that "it is common wisdom that the parameters of policy to confront the legacy of apartheid were constrained by the terms of the negotiated transition and compromises made in the early 1990's as reflected in post-apartheid policy" (Hall, 2004b:225). Westaway (2007), however, contends that the ANC just simply lacked capacity and clear vision when it came down to formulating a land reform policy. In his opinion, the issue of the need to compromise during negotiations was used as a very convenient scapegoat for what finally transpired.

The market-based prescriptions of the World Bank, as captured in the 'willing-buyer-willing-seller' principle, has also increasingly been labeled as one of these problematic compromises (Lahiff, 2007a and Kepe, 2008). Debates regarding the follies of a market based, willing-buyer-willing-seller approach to South African land reform has dominated discussions about the disappointing performance of the programme (see Lahiff, 2007b, Hall, 2009, Schimer, 2009). Lahiff (2011:60) views the willing-buyer-willing-seller approach as the 'most prominent and controversial issue within the South African land policy debate since 1994' maintaining that "this approach came to denote the lack of compulsion amongst land owners to make land available for transformation". He blames this approach for enabling the beneficiaries of past injustices to cash in at the expense of

poor people by allowing land owners to sell land back to the government ‘at way above market value’ by exploiting the pressure on the government to speed up the redistribution of land (Lahiff, 2011). In response to mounting criticism of the willing-buyer-willing-seller approach, the South African government recently announced its intention to follow through on the constitutionally-enshrined expropriation clause, according to which the principle of ‘just and equitable compensation’ would be used to expropriate farms for land reform purposes when it is deemed to be in public interest (Pretoria News, *Land reform risk to food security*, 14 January 2013). Some political observers, however, warn that expropriation could end up aggravating food security concerns in the country or culminate into a Constitutional Court challenge if not implemented correctly. Opposition party representatives and commercial farmers warn that the scrapping of the willing-buyer-willing-seller approach will once again lead to disappointing consequences “as it had already led to active disinvestment in the agricultural sector” (Theo de Jager of AgriSa, cited in Pretoria News, *Land Reform risk to Food security*, 14 January 2013). The consequences of scrapping the willing-buyer-willing-seller approach to land reform remain to be seen, but this intended shift in policy does signal a crucial turning point in land reform policy.



The disappointing performance of the land reform programme has also been linked to poor policy interpretation by officials and the implementation capacity of the [then] Department of Land Affairs. There is also what Ruth Hall (2004a:219) calls ‘big policy and the shrinking state’, this ‘condition’ being the state’s own inability to implement the policies and programmes that have been developed, in addition to an inadequate budget allocation, weak institutional structures, as well as insufficient political will to effect reforms.

The performance of the South African land reform programme has therefore been linked to a number of policy, implementation, budget and planning related concerns (Hall, 2004 and 2008, Lahiff, 2007, Walker, 2008, Aliber *et al.* 2008, and Greenberg, 2010) which cannot be dealt with in more detail given the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that an underlying theme of expansive expectations versus disappointing outcomes does seem to

pervade a great deal of the discussions regarding the outcomes and progress in the South African land reform programme to date.

1.3.2. Realistic Expectations: The case for an effective land reform

Walkers' (2005, 2007, 2008) assessments of the performance of the South African land reform programme prove to be a telling account of the inflated and unrealistic nature of expectations for South African land reform. She makes a very strong argument for a cautious [re-] assessment of what can realistically be achieved; moving beyond a vague "wish list" of who should benefit, towards real-world prioritization. Schirmer (2009:477) suggests that "we need to shift the land reform discourse towards greater realism". Cousins (2013) cautions that current land reform related policies reveal a lack of a clear understanding of the realities faced by those living in the former "native reserves" and suggests that land reform policies "that could build on the positive aspects of current dynamics in terms of smallholder farming in communal areas would be much more effective than attempts to turn back the clock and "re-peasantise" the old reserves or transform communal area residents into commercial farmers".

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Calls such as these, for more realism in the South African land reform, thus raise the question of just what more realistic expectations of land reform might be. Linked to this notion of realism is also the idea of a 'viable' or 'effective' land reform programme. Walker (2012:1) posits that few commentators in 2012 doubt the need for *effective* land reform, but contends that "there is little consensus on what this actually means substantially, with the political debate driven more by powerful sentiment rather than sober analysis". She argues that "despite broad agreement that the South African land reform programme has failed, there is little agreement on why it has failed or what success would look like" (Walker, 2012:2). Cousins and Scoones (2010:51) are concerned with the South African government's fuzzy conceptualization of 'viability' in land reform. They argue that the ANC-led government makes general statements and commitments suggesting that land reform outcomes need to be assessed in terms of a wider set of criteria than those derived from large scale commercial farming, but "what [exactly] these might be, is not spelled

out” (ibid.: 51). The dominant technical framing evident in land reform business plans clearly reflects a commitment to a narrow business and target income criteria of viability, while a broader focus on agrarian restructuring, livelihoods and welfare issues is clearly lacking (ibid.: 51).

Walker (2012:12-13) highlights the following considerations that she deems important for a land reform programme aimed at significantly reducing poverty and inequality by 2030. In the first instance, she maintains that rural development is not sufficiently integrated into mainstream economic policy; land reform has to be designed to complement general economic strategies and not function in its own policy and implementation silo (ibid.: 12). Secondly, she contends that the state’s capacity to implement land reform is weak. In this instance, she highlights the need for a political leadership to “inject into public debates a more sober assessment of what redistributive land reform offers as a route out of poverty, along with a more pragmatic assessment of the role of commercial agriculture and its contribution to the national economy, including jobs and to national food security” (ibid.: 13). Thirdly, she argues that the inability of the state to reach the national targets for land reform is a concern, but this concern should not crowd out the more important debates about what “good enough land reform should be” (ibid.: 13). Fourthly, she maintains that land reform and agricultural policy need to be responsive to ecological challenges facing the region.

Finally, Walker (2012:13) suggests that the scale of the unfinished task in the restitution programme could provide an “opportunity to rethink how best to address the demand for social justice in these claims in relation to broader poverty reduction and rural development programmes and in this instance ‘communities’ could be allowed a range of options that may include but should not be limited to the restoration of ancestral land”. Walker (2012) also points out that the depth of poverty since the 1990s have declined (taking the percentage of rural poor households into account), primarily because of social grants and other transfers despite a ‘failed’ land reform programme. She therefore calls for a careful re-consideration of the role of land reform as a poverty alleviation strategy in the context of other (perhaps more promising and more relevant) options or forms of transfers.

The National Development Plan (NDP), presented by Minister Trevor Manuel in parliament during 2012, was met with enthusiasm by some, but opposition parties have expressed concern over the ANC's ability and will to implement the suggestions made in the plan (Erasmus, 2012:18). In considering realistic expectations the considerations of the NDP would also need to be taken into account for future land reform initiatives. The authors of the plan (the National Planning Commission headed by Manuel), have put forward ambitious strategies for the various sectors in the country intended to reduce the unemployment rate from the current 24,9% to 14% by 2020, and to 6% by 2030, translating into the need to create an additional 11 million jobs by 2030 (Erasmus, 2012:18). The NDP states that "land reform is necessary to unlock the potential for a dynamic, growing employment-creating agricultural sector" and highlights the need to build an "inclusive and integrated rural economy" (NPC, 2012:34). The NDP sketches an ambitious set of objectives for creating up to one million rural jobs, through *inter alia* agricultural development and 'effective land reform' (NPC, 2012:44). Furthermore, the NDP proposes a land reform model based on ensuring "a more rapid transfer of agricultural land to black beneficiaries without distorting land markets or business confidence in the sector" (ibid.: 44). The recommended model envisions district level committees who will identify 20% of agricultural land available in the district from land already on offer to ensure that land can be found without distorting markets. Commercial farmers in the district will then be given the option of assisting in transferring the land to black farmers. The NDP further suggests that land be bought by the state at 50% of the market value as this is regarded as "closer to fair productive value of the land" and it is also envisaged that the 50% shortfall experienced by the current owner will be made up by "cash or in kind" contributions from commercial farmers who volunteer to participate.

1.4 Rationale for the study: strategic partnerships in question

The move towards promoting private sector involvement in land reform clearly reflects 'dominant development thinking' not only in Southern Africa, but also globally (Brinkerhoff 2002, SLSA team 2003). The central pillar of the dominant paradigm is the belief that market-oriented strategies and private sector involvement should be regarded as

the primary basis for future economic growth (SLSA team, 2003:1). Private sector involvement in projects is thus increasingly seen as a way of meeting social justice requirements while at the same time maintaining productivity or profit levels (Brinkerhoff, 2002:19). In this instance, the CDE (2005:15-16) provides a detailed account of 'viable' private sector land redistributive initiatives in South Africa and argues that "small, local private sector and civil society initiatives throughout South Africa are working to make the agricultural sector more equitable, stable and profitable for everyone involved." Furthermore, the CDE (2005:16 & 2008) asserts that these private sector initiatives "could be doing at least as much for land reform as government programmes", but their success is often (perhaps unintentionally) hampered or limited by government policies or bureaucratic delays. Private sector involvement, in the form of joint ventures, was a fairly common phenomenon in the redistribution leg of the South African land reform programme (CDE, 2005:17). In the second half of 2004, Minister Thoko Didiza mentioned the need for 'creative partnerships' also between land claim beneficiaries and private sector investors in order to enhance the economic impact of the land reform programme (CDE, 2005:17).

In South Africa, strategic partnerships are thus becoming increasingly prominent in the case of large restitution settlements of high value land, and in Limpopo province in particular (Lahiff, 2008), where most claims are rural and involve highly commercialized farms (Land Claims Commission 2007:22). The establishment of strategic partnerships in restitution signals an important policy shift in emphasis from land *access* by claimants, allowing them to use land for productive and other purposes, towards the *maintenance of agricultural productivity* through retention of existing farming systems and enterprises (Derman, Lahiff & Sjaastad, 2006). In terms of the strategic partnership model, successful claimant communities organized as Communal Property Associations or trusts form a joint venture with a private entrepreneur who invests working capital in an operating company that takes control of farm management decisions for ten years or more, with the option of renewal for a further period. The South African government, rather than promoting the direct return of land to claimants, has therefore opted for a joint venture model whereby farm management companies are entrusted with post-restitution responsibilities in terms of building skills,

competencies and institutional capacity (Hellum & Derman, 2008:63) in addition to ensuring continuity in production and employment.

For some scholars, “joint partnerships could provide land reform beneficiaries with access to land and capital, as well as the expertise of white commercial farmers and or/ companies” (Mayson, 2003). Additionally, the potential benefits to the claimant communities include rental for use of their land, a share of profits, preferential employment, training opportunities and the promise that they will receive profitable and functioning farms at the termination of the lease agreements (Hellum & Derman, 2008). It is also envisaged that the strategic partners benefit through the payment of the management fee, a share in the profits of the company, as well as exclusive or near exclusive control of the upstream and downstream activities, whose potential benefits may well exceed that of the operating company (Lahiff, 2007b).

On the other hand, researchers caution that these ventures may just lead to new forms of exploitation given differential access to resources, authorities and unequal power relations between the partners in these joint ventures (Spierenburg *et al.* 2006). Oya (2008:4), in a review of contract farming arrangements more broadly, raises concerns and asserts that partnership arrangements are “often regarded as politically correct but it also allows for greater labour exploitation without incurring the political and economic costs”. According to Derman, *et al.* (2007) this model raises many questions about the direction of the restitution programme, the realisation of benefits among claimants and the extent to which the original objectives of the South African land reform programme are being achieved. In agreement with concerns regarding benefits, Fraser (2007:299) warns that “even though the approach is being promoted by government as a way to protect the viability of the land and ensure the transfer of skills to the beneficiaries, the approach may turn out to be less favourable for the beneficiaries.” Also in question is the capacity of the state to plan and implement complex commercial deals on such a scale, as well as provide the necessary support to claimants and their commercial partners and, over the longer term, safeguard the interests of communities and their individual members.

The collapse of strategic partnerships in Mpumalanga and in Limpopo (*The Citizen* 12 February 2009 & *Rapport* 15 February 2009) with the company South African Farm Management (SAFM) being declared insolvent, suggests that this shift in policy should not be seen as the panacea for the problems experienced in South Africa's land restitution programme to date. By June 2005, South African Farm Management (SAFM) was confirmed as the strategic partner for five of the seven claimant communities (Ravele, Tshakhuma, Masakona, Tshitwani and Tshivazwaulu communities), and Mavu as the partner for the remaining two communities at Levubu. Formal agreements were not signed until late 2007, however, and the impact of prolonged negotiations on productivity and the physical condition of the properties has been a major source of contention. All of the partnerships at Levubu collapsed within less than three years since its inception with very little benefits materialising for the beneficiaries (Lahiff, *et al.* 2012) and a strong suspicion that strategic partners might merely have been interested in the Restitution Discretionary Grant of the beneficiaries (Spierenburg *et al.* 2012). The insolvency and collapse of the strategic partnership venture at Levubu has resulted in questions being asked about the very intentions of strategic partners and the extent of benefits reaching beneficiaries. The collapse of a number of strategic partnerships in different parts of the country and the outcome of the strategic partnership at Levubu thus suggested that attention should be given to the motivations, interests and expectations of the different actors involved in these strategic partnership initiatives.

Also, the collapse of a number of these strategic partnership initiatives has resulted in a shift towards what some communities call "community private partnerships" in the case of the Moletele, or "management contracts", in the case of Levubu (Lahiff *et al.* 2012). These arrangements are slightly different in terms of their decision-making and shareholder agreements, and suggest that communities want to remove themselves from the risks associated with being shareholders in operating companies. New joint venture arrangements are mushrooming all over the South African countryside and although they might be diverse in terms of the specifics of their lease and shareholding agreements, they all entail a type of partnership arrangement (Aliber *et al.* 2008). Greenberg (2009) uses the Levubu case study to launch a thought-provoking critique of these types of models. He asks

“in what way are these models a success?” and argues that “not only are beneficiaries prohibited from returning to their land to live, but the commercial production which the [very] model was meant to protect is also under threat”. Greenberg (2009) cites Eddie Mohoebi in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) communications unit, who stated that only nine out of 88 farm equity scheme projects implemented nationally between 1996 and 2008 have declared dividends. Greenberg (2009) concludes that former owners and their management companies continue to make profits while controlling information on income and expenditure from beneficiaries (i.e. no meaningful skills transfer is taking place), while the so-called beneficiaries’ lives remain much as they were: evicted from their land, with meagre income from seasonal or temporary sources.

Moreover, given the continued commitment of the South African government to a notion of viability defined in terms of the large-scale commercial farming model (Aliber & Cousins 2013), partnership arrangements also need to be understood in the context of the value chains of the commodity to be produced on the newly restituted land. Ironically, partnerships are often seen as an appropriate vehicle for the insertion of rural/marginalised communities into existing value chains (UNDP, 2008). Cotula and Vermeulen (2010), however, reviewing inclusive business models more broadly, caution that the nature of the value chain has a significant bearing on the level of ‘success’ experienced in terms of the partnership arrangements. The deregulated nature of fresh fruit value chains, for example, the dominance of UK based retailers in these chains, trade liberalisation initiatives which have left South African producers to compete against far better subsidized competitors on international markets as well as persistent farm labour related challenges, have left South African producers in a disadvantaged position. “Newcomers” to these value chains require substantial support to position themselves for success. The introduction of strategic partnership arrangements in the context of the South African restitution programme thus clearly also requires in-depth investigation of the relevant value-chains and their dynamics and power relations.

A number of key questions thus arise in relation to strategic partnership initiatives in the land restitution context: what are the diverse and potentially conflicting or convergent

interests, motivations and expectations of the different social actors entering into such partnerships? How do these interests, motivations and expectations influence relationships and processes within these joint ventures? How do these variables (actors, relationships, processes) in turn influence the perceived and actual outcomes of partnership initiatives, and in particular the degree to which they meet the expectations of different social actors? Are partnership initiatives a useful model for settling large rural restitution claims, and what are inherent difficulties that make it problematic as a model?

1.5 The case study: the Moletele land claim and strategic partnership in Hoedspruit, Limpopo

To address the key questions outlined above, a case study-based approach was adopted. One of the biggest and apparently ‘successful’ claims in Limpopo, the Moletele claim in Hoedspruit (Location indicated in Figure 1.1), is the case analysed. The Moletele claim represents 1 615 land claimant families and 11 367 beneficiaries who lodged a claim for roughly 72 000 hectares of land surrounding the rural town of Hoedspruit. The claim involves families who were forcefully removed from their land between the 1920s and 1971 (CRLR, 2004 Acceptance Report). The Moletele community lodged their land claim before the cut-off date of 31 December 1998 and the claim was gazetted in October 2004.

In the Moletele land claim, 28 farms were claimed in the Hoedspruit area (under the jurisdiction of Maruleng district municipality), but some of the properties claimed had been subdivided and consolidated into other farms. This brought the total number of farms under claim to 42, with approximately 516 individual portions. The farms claimed currently produce high-value export crops, with a combined turnover estimated at R 152 000 000 per annum (CRLR, 2013 Annual Report). Products on these farms include mangoes, citrus, sweet corn, maize and vegetables produced under intensive shade-netting.

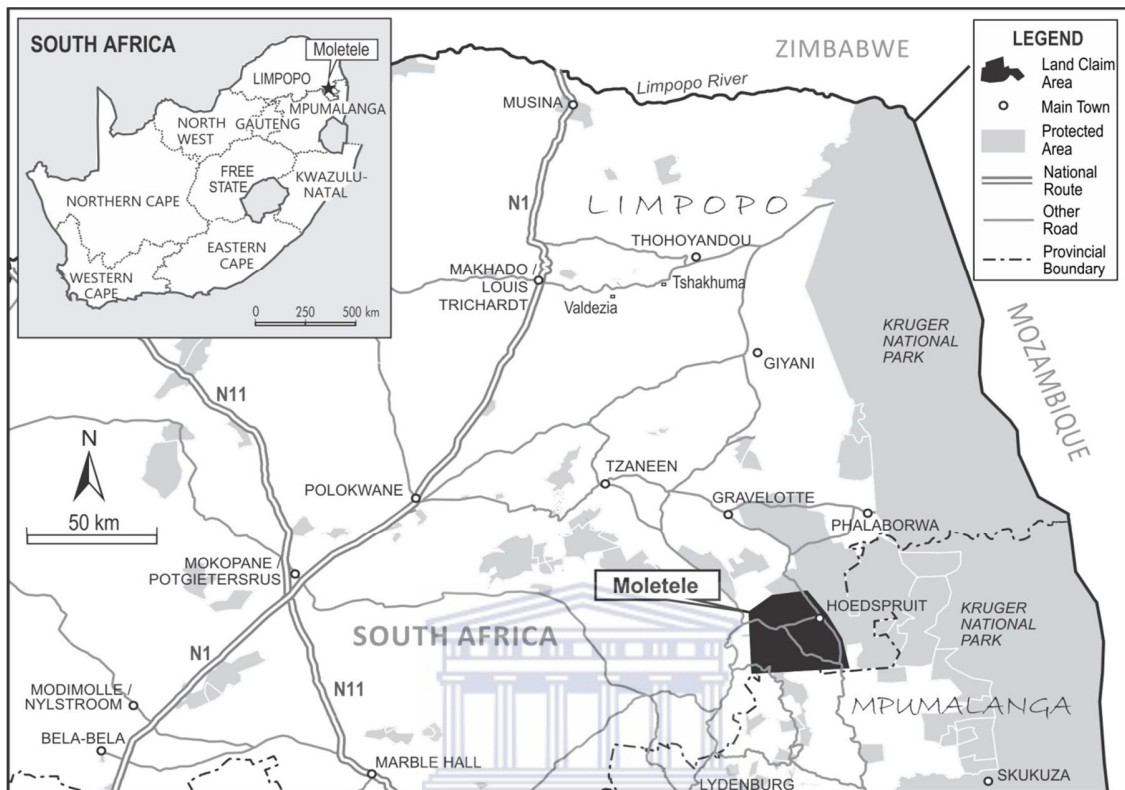
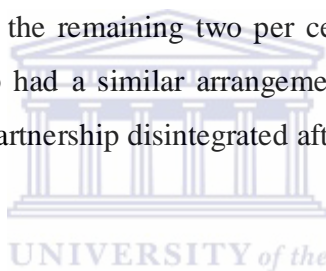


FIGURE 1.1: ORIENTATION MAP MOLETELE LAND CLAIM. Map produced by Ingrid Booyesen, Cartographic Unit, University of Pretoria.

Based on the perceived need to maintain productivity on restored land, the Limpopo government divided some of the farms into clusters and issued tenders to identify experienced strategic partners for the Moletele community. In July 2007, the Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture handed over 3 453 hectares (26 portions of farmland) to the community, which had organised itself into the Moletele Communal Property Association, with elected elder Thandos Mashile as chairperson, to preside over the implementation of the claim. At the land handover celebration the Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture, Ms Lulu Xingwala enthused that the successful conclusion of the claim will make the Moletele community one of the “biggest owners of agricultural and ecotourism land in the area, and the first phase transfers valued at the cost of about R76 million indicated that they were well on the way” (Minister’s speech at the land handover ceremony, 15 July 2007). She also stated that the transfer of these properties should be regarded as only the “tip of the iceberg’ with a lot more to follow (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008:3).

The 26 portions were grouped into three clusters, with the intention of establishing strategic partnerships around each cluster. The reasoning behind this approach was that this would minimise the risk factor by not “putting all the eggs in one basket with one strategic partner for all of the 26 portions” (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008:3). Strategic partnership proposals were invited, and after consideration and presentations, Chestnet (Pty) Ltd and Strategic Farm Management Pty Ltd were selected as the preferred strategic partners, resulting in two joint venture companies, Batau Pty Ltd and New Dawn Pty Ltd, being formed. It was also agreed that the shareholder proportions of the companies would depend on the equity contributions of each of the shareholders. In the case of the New Dawn strategic partnership, the Moletele Communal Property Association, or MCPA (as the majority shareholder) owns 50% of the shares and Strategic Farm Management (the former farm owner) holds 48% and provides working capital, mentoring, skills transfer, management assistance and equipment, with the remaining two per cent of the shares assigned to the workers. The Batau partnership had a similar arrangement in terms of shareholding, but during the course of 2010 this partnership disintegrated after the strategic partners had their assets liquidated.



The MCPA currently has a caretaker arrangement in place on the Batau farms, with a company called BONOSAFE (comprising of Bono Holdings which is a management and empowerment company owned by SAFE Farm Ventures -South African Fruit Exporters- and a black South African entrepreneur). The intention was that the arrangement with BONOSAFE would be negotiated in the form of a “community - private partnership” arrangement and not according to the strategic partnership model (see below). On the 30th July 2008 the MCPA formed a third strategic partnership with the Boyes group, resulting in the Dinaledi farming enterprise, with a similar arrangement regarding shareholding to those found in New Dawn and Batau, where the MCPA holds the majority of the shares. A fourth partnership deal with the MCPA was signed in 2009, with initially Golden Frontier, and later Bosveld Citrus, as the private sector partner. This fourth partnership was not formulated as a strategic partnership, and instead the community opted to form a “community-private partnership”³. The reasoning behind the arrangement is that it will

³ Interview with Mr Thandios Mashile 26 June 2010

enable the private sector partners to make appropriate day-to-day financial management decisions as required in terms of running the farms. Nevin (2009) observes that Mr Mashile seemed pragmatic and business minded in terms of partnership arrangements with the private sector in stating:

I think this is the only route we can take because we cannot by ourselves say that we are going to run the business. This is the most important thing; we don't want to mess up the already viable businesses that are here. So our people need to acquire skills before we can do it by ourselves. As of now we are convinced that a partnership is the only route we should follow.

Despite the positive media coverage and excitement regarding the “inspiring performance” of the strategic partnerships at Moletele (Moletele Bulletin⁴ Jan-March 2010), there are also some concerns. Over a five year period (2007-2012), only 42 land portions of the 516 claimed properties have been handed back to the community, leaving the bulk of the claim still to be settled, with the claims to 40 000 ha of land being contested by existing land owners. A group of the original claimants has also expressed concerns regarding the transparency, representativeness and legitimacy of the MCPA as the land management vehicle representing the “Moletele community” in its entirety. Finally, the shift away from the strategic partnership model is signalling an important challenge regarding how appropriate and sustainable strategic partnerships in land reform really are. The complexity of the claim thus far, and the challenges this presents in terms of the way forward, is evident in the following quote from the Moletele Bulletin, (July, 2008:2) where a principal planner from the Department of Land Affairs concludes:

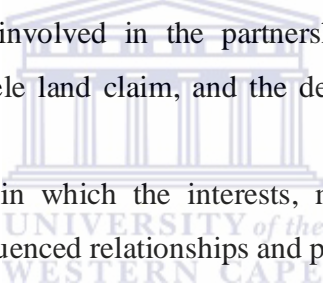
The process of resolving and processing the Moletele claim has never been an easy one due to various challenges, which includes the social dynamics within the claimant community, political pressure, land owners challenging the validity of the claim and putting together a sustainable management structure for the restored properties.

⁴ The Moletele Bulletin was a newsletter issued on a quarterly basis on behalf of the Moletele by MABEDI. The intention of this newsletter was to keep the Moletele people and other interested parties up to date with events on their land. To date, only three issues of the bulletin have been published, the last one published June 2010. The lack of funds is cited as the reason for discontinuing with the publication.

1.6 Research Objectives and Questions

As indicated above, this study aims to analyse the nature of the interests and expectations of the various social actors involved in the land restitution claim of the Moletete ‘community’ and in the strategic partnerships established in the settlement of the claim. The study is concerned with the influence of these variables in relation to key processes within the partnerships, and the outcomes observed to date. The study also explores the wider policy implications of these partnerships, in the context of the broader political economy of land and agriculture in post-apartheid South Africa, with a particular focus on land restitution.

The objectives of the study are fourfold:

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- (a) to describe the nature of the interests, motivations and expectations held by the range of social actors involved in the partnership initiatives arising from the settlement of the Moletete land claim, and the degree to which they converge or diverge;
 - (b) to analyse the manner in which the interests, motivations and expectations of different actors have influenced relationships and processes within the partnerships;
 - (c) to describe and assess the outcomes of the partnerships to date, with a particular focus on the degree to which expectations of the participants are being met;
 - (d) to explore the wider implications and policy lessons of the outcomes of these partnerships.

The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- (i) Why have partnership initiatives been adopted as a means to resolving large rural land restitution claims?
- (ii) Who are the key social actors involved in the Moletete land claim and the Hoedspruit partnerships?
- (iii) What is the nature of the interests and expectations of these key social actors?

- (iv) How have these interests, motivations and expectations influenced relationships between the different social actors and the nature of key processes within the partnerships?
- (v) What are the key outcomes of the partnership initiatives to date, and to what extent do they meet the expectations of the different social actors especially given some value chain related considerations?
- (vi) What are the wider implications and policy lessons that can be drawn from the Moletele/Hoedspruit case study?

1.7 The Research Process

The study adopted a political economy perspective on processes of agrarian change. My research was aimed at understanding joint venture and “strategic partnership” initiatives set up in the context of South African land restitution, with a particular focus on the diverse nature of the motives, expectations and interests of social actors involved in such claims. Taking my cue from Hall (2004b:227), who contends that a political economy approach “enables us to see both why land reform has been so limited and, in whose interests it has been remoulded”, it was anticipated that this approach would be useful in revealing the interplay between human agency and structural elements (i.e. the *causal mechanisms* involved) in these contexts.

The first phase of the research mostly involved desktop analysis and a literature review. Relevant academic literature, newspaper reports, minutes from meetings held by the Moletele traditional council and the Moletele Communal Property Association (MCPA) were consulted. The business proposals and tender documents submitted by the different strategic partners were also reviewed. This part of the research involved obtaining official memoranda and correspondence from the Land Claims Commission’s office and other sections in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Affidavits completed by the original claimants also provided important background information. Relevant data and documentation were gathered from various institutions and data sources to ensure a sound understanding of the historical and current context of the Moletele land claim.

The second phase of the research was aimed at gaining an understanding of the land claim itself. Important insights into the nature of the land being claimed were gained while spending a few days driving around with community members in the area. During this initial visit to the study site in July 2010 the vast distance between the land where Moletele community members previously resided and where they were relocated to after the dispossession became apparent. Most striking was the stark contrast between the lavish, irrigated, fruit-bearing orchards on the newly reclaimed land, compared to the desolate, dry, almost bleak areas in Buffelshoek where the majority of the Moletele community now reside. I was also fortunate enough to be introduced to an individual who was labelled as radically opposed to the MCPA. In fact, a number of the people I interviewed mentioned that a few months prior to my visit he had been locked up due to his violent protests against the MCPA. They also expressed their utmost surprise at his willingness to assist me with my research. After spending a few days with me, this person agreed to introduce me to the other leaders of the “dissident groups”. It turned out that using this individual as an entry point to the community was crucial, as the dissident groups would not have spoken to me without his approval. My association with him did, however, get me into a bit of trouble with the MCPA, and I had some explaining to do by the time I went to introduce myself to them. This second phase of the research involved spending three weeks in the area, interviewing the chairperson and other members of the MCPA (the secretary, the ex-officio representative on the committee for the tribal authority), the ward councillor for the Buffelshoek area, the strategic partners, and the leaders of the dissident groups. I also attended and conducted interviews at some of the meetings held by the dissident groups, and conducted focus group discussions with the women’s farming group and members from the Traditional Council at the council’s office (*mushate*).

The third phase of the research involved in-depth fieldwork. In order to better contextualize and understand the nature of the diverse interests, motivations and expectations of the social actors, firsthand narratives of the experience of land dispossession were acquired. For this purpose a targeted sampling method was used, aimed at finding older people (men and women) in the Buffelshoek, Green Valley and Brooklyn areas of Buffelshoek where Moletele community members now live and asking them about the process of

dispossession. The community was dispossessed from their land between 1913 and 1972, which meant that the majority of my respondents were able to give first-hand accounts of the sequence of events. This part of the research involved going to the homesteads and conducting interviews based on open-ended questions, and prompting respondents to relate their accounts of the process of dispossession. The contrast between the anger and resentment they had felt during the dispossession, and their excitement and elation at the prospect of having their land returned to them, became very evident during this phase of the research. Ultimately, though, the majority of the eighty respondents interviewed by means of these open-ended questions indicated that they felt mostly disillusioned and disappointed with the outcomes to date of the restitution claim. Their awareness and knowledge of the MCPA, the land they were reclaiming and their understanding of the partnership initiatives were also probed. These respondents were asked about the nature of the “benefits” they had received by that time (2010), compared to what they would have wanted to receive, and about their willingness to move back onto the restored land. During this part of the research I also realised that I would need to tread carefully and debunk any misconceptions. Some of the respondents (n=5) asked whether speaking to me would improve their chances of acquiring benefits from the claimed land. I realised that my mere presence as a researcher in the area, asking questions about the outcome of the claim could be heightening the sense of expectations and even bias the type of responses provided. I therefore tried to explain my intentions and affiliation before the interviews and also used every opportunity to clarify misconceptions. I reflect more on these and other ethical considerations in chapter 2 of the thesis.

The next phase of the research involved understanding what I would label ‘the official/governmental perspective’ on the strategic partnerships. Interviews were conducted with officials from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and also with two officials from the Land Restitution Commission’s office. The intention of the interviews was to gain insight into their initial intentions, motives and expectations in relation to the Moletele claim. Interviews were also conducted with representatives from the Business Trust’s Maruleng and Bushbuckridge Economic Development Initiative (MABEDI), who assisted with the

facilitation and structuring of the strategic partnerships, and with an official from an NGO, Nkuzi Development Association, to gain insights into the 'non-governmental perspective'. An attempt was also made to ascertain the view of those opposing the Moletele land claim. In this regard, the views held by the group of white commercial farmers resisting the claim were captured during an open-ended interview conducted with the chairperson representing this group. Additionally, a focus group interview was conducted with members of the Sehlare Traditional Council, which has also registered a claim for the same land on behalf of some Moletele people who were incorporated/assimilated into their jurisdictional areas. Phase 5 of the research was aimed at gaining insight into the diversified nature of the livelihood strategies of the Moletele people. For this purpose a livelihood survey was conducted involving 50 Moletele homesteads. I decided to use a structured questionnaire as the main research tool and collected data from the homesteads regarding livelihood sources. The extent to which social grants played a role in ensuring homestead survival and the level of engagement in land/agriculture-based strategies were also of concern.

The next phase of the research involved gaining a basic understanding of value chain-related considerations for citrus produced by the partnerships in the Hoedspruit area. Based on (1) trends identified from an extensive literature review of the South African citrus structure and value chain and (2) the interpretation of secondary and some limited empirical data, the opportunities and challenges presented for the insertion of the Moletele community into the export-driven, deregulated and UK retail-dominated citrus value chain were considered. Finally, the research process concluded with a few life history interviews conducted with the chairperson of the MCPA, one of the strategic partners, one of the ex-officio members on the CPA committee representing the interest of the tribal leader (who also happened to be the brother of the Moletele chief) and with one of the dissident group leaders. The life history interviews were profoundly useful in terms of providing insights into *who* these key actors are, as people. I conducted several interviews with these same individuals over the course of four years, but it was only when I went back in 2011 to conduct these life history interviews, that I really got a sense of what motivated them, and what they identified as defining moments in their lives which ultimately influenced their decisions, motives, expectations and strategies in the present.

1.8 Chapter Outline

The first chapter of the dissertation provides essential background and a rationale for my research aims and objectives. In this chapter I consider shifts, challenges and achievements in the three legs of the South African land reform programmes: land redistribution, tenure reform and land restitution. I go on to discuss the theme of inflated expectations versus disappointing outcomes to date in South African land reform. I also briefly explore what a realistic land reform might entail, especially in the context of the new policy recommendations contained in the National Development Plan. Key issues discussed in this chapter included a critical consideration of the market based, willing-buyer-willing seller imperatives of South African land reform, challenges in terms of the property clause accepted in the Constitution and the nature of the *negotiated* route in the South African land reform is considered. I also briefly discuss the research process, touching on some of the research methods I made use of.

The second chapter provides a somewhat more detailed account of the research design for the study. The choice of approach, the broad assumptions that informed the research, as well as more practical decisions about how the data was to be collected and analysed are discussed in this chapter. The approach used for this study I would describe as a mixed methods research design with the Moletele claim as the case study, approached from the critical realist perspective. The central tenets and contentions of a critical realist approach, in combination with a political economy perspective are discussed and their influence on my research design is highlighted. The final part of this chapter also very briefly details some of the ethical considerations and the role of my fieldwork assistant.

The third chapter contains a selective literature review which informed the selection of key conceptual tools for analysis of the Moletele strategic partnership initiatives. In this regard, aspects of land reform and agrarian change in the post-apartheid South African context are considered. The analytical strength of an “access” approach as informed by Ribot and Peluso’s “Theory of Access” is discussed and I briefly interrogate the notions of “arenas of struggle” as a conceptual lens to understanding Moletele partnership arrangements.

In chapter four I discuss the historical background to the Moletele land claim, which provided me with a useful contextual understanding of both the timeline of dispossession and the nature of the impacts of successive legal instruments used to dispossess the community. I summarize key aspects of the Moletele land claim, and highlight contentions over leadership that emerged at the very inception of the claim. I provide a summary of the claim's progress to date (e.g. hectares of land transferred) and a description of how different parcels of land were 'clustered' to form consolidated farming units. I conclude the chapter by briefly outlining the management structures and the types of partnership arrangements that have been introduced as the basis for the transfer of land back to the Moletele community.

In chapter five claimants' experiences and narratives of dispossession are assessed, and the claim is contextualised by describing the land that is being claimed. Data collected by means of open-ended interviews, as well as the homestead livelihood survey, are used to gain an understanding of the present economic and livelihood status of the community and how this may affect community members' expectations of the claim. The data reveals that people still do farm, even if it is against the odds and on a small scale. More importantly, a few individuals produce enough to sell a small surplus, although the majority of the people still residing in the Bushbuckridge area tend to use farming only to supplement their meagre income.

In chapter six I discuss the nature of the strategic partnerships established between the Moletele community and private sector interests. I explore how these partnerships have been set up, the character of the contractual agreements, and the nature of different actors' expectations of the partnerships. The framework suggested by Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) for the assessment of the feasibility of inclusive business models is applied to the case material, and used to critically consider risk, voice, cost and rewards within the Moletele partnerships.

Chapter seven provides a contextual literature review supplemented with limited empirical data to consider some of the prospects and challenges for Moletele inclusive business model arrangements in the context of the South African citrus value chain(s). The first part

of the chapter provides a detailed account of the deregulated, export-oriented and buyer-driven nature of the South African citrus industry. I conclude this chapter with a brief reflection on some of the key characteristics of the citrus value-chain (gleaned from the literature review) in relation to the benefit streams identified at the inception of the Moletele partnership arrangements.

In Chapter eight the different sub-groupings and institutions within the claimant group are identified and their interests, motivations and expectations in terms of the strategic partnership and restitution are discussed. The chapter aims to map the multiple actor landscape and show how different variables (actors, relationships, processes) have influenced the perceived and actual outcomes (such as benefits and strategic alliances). In particular, the degree to which interests, motivations and expectations of the different social actors have converged or come into conflict, and how conflicts have been resolved, are discussed in relation to specific (diagnostic) events. Contradictory articulations of the terms and conditions of access to and ownership of the means of production (influenced by the range of interests, motives and expectations at play in the strategic partnerships) are described and the nature of the uneasy alliances, compromises and contestations in this ever-shifting, multi-actor landscape is discussed.

Chapter nine concludes the thesis with a summary of the most important research findings of the study, and considers the findings in terms of the Moletele partnership initiatives in the context of the broader agrarian reform debate in South Africa.

Chapter 2: Research design and methods

2.1 Introduction

Preliminary steps in designing a research project involve assessing the knowledge claims brought to the study (philosophical assumptions), considering the strategy of inquiry (research procedures) that will be used, and identifying specific methods for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003: 5). The interrelated levels of decisions that go into the process of designing the research would therefore inform the choice of approach, the broad assumptions that are brought to the research, as well as the more practical decisions about how to collect and analyse the data (Creswell, 2003:5). The first section of the chapter briefly describes the approach and research methods used in the course of the study (Figure 2.1), followed by a discussion of some methodological issues encountered and wrestled with over the last four years while conducting the study. This chapter details the central tenets of the philosophical approach I have adopted and provides a brief overview of some of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

When thinking about “method”, Sayer (2010:3) maintains that it refers to “a carefully considered way of approaching the world so that we may understand it better”. Bernstein (2013a:72) observes that the “*what*” and “*why*” questions of social science research should influence “*how*” the object of the research and the methods are framed in terms of our scientific inquiry. In agreement with this contention, Sayer suggests that method should be appropriate to “the nature of the object we study and the purpose and expectations of our inquiry” (Sayer, 2010:4). As already outlined in the previous chapter, the intention of my study is really to *understand* the nature of the partnership initiatives introduced in the context of land restitution in South Africa.

- Questions to be considered include: Why have these initiatives been introduced in the case of the Moletele land claim and also more broadly in the South African context?

- What are the outcomes evident in terms of these initiatives regarding *whose* interests, motives and expectations are being met or side-lined?
- What are the consequences of these initiatives in the broader agrarian context in South Africa?

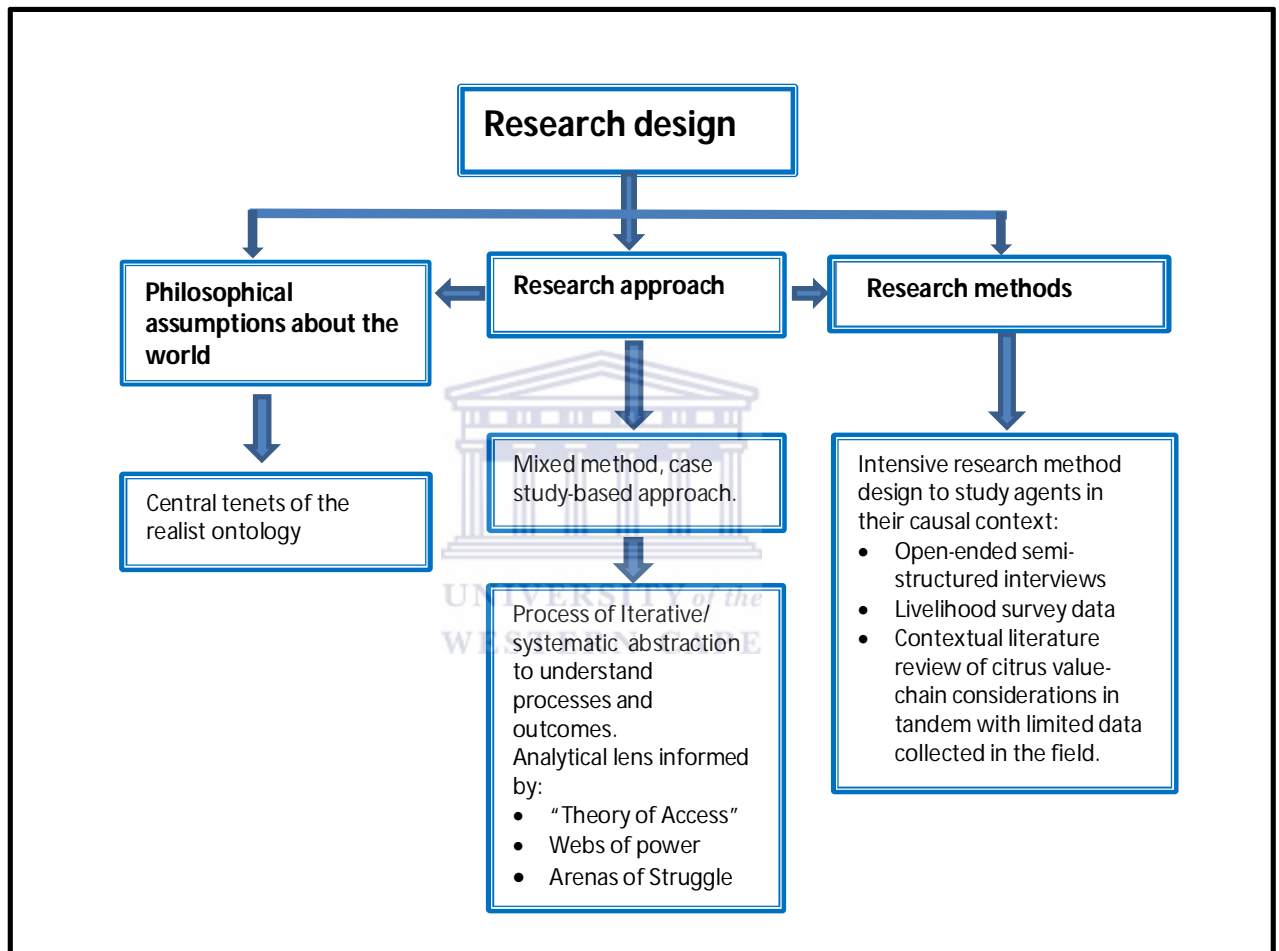


FIGURE 2.1: GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Right from the outset, the lens of inquiry for the research was to be informed by understanding the *causal* nature of events, the *social relations of my objects* of inquiry and, given the level of the complexity of the reality I was about to encounter, a process of *abstraction* was necessary. For this study, a mixed method research design with the Moletele claim as the case study, in combination with the critical realist approach as

championed by researchers such as Bhaskar (1989) and Sayer (1992, 2010), was deemed suitable.

Maxwell and Mittapalli (2007:4) explain that qualitative and critical realism work very well together because both these approaches seek to understand ‘social actors’ perspectives and meanings as real phenomena that are fundamental to social science. These approaches also tend to employ a process-oriented, rather than a variable-oriented approach to explanation, emphasising the importance of context for explanation; and, seeking the explanation of singular events and situations through case studies, rather than requiring that explanation be based on regularities or “general laws” (Maxwell and Mittapalli, 2007:4).

2.2 Critical realist approaches to social science research

Andrew Sayer contends that for many social scientists, “method” still sadly translates into the use of quantitative techniques, and even though these are often supplemented with qualitative methods of inquiry such as participant observation and informal interviewing, the basic activity of conceptualisation remains unexamined (Sayer, 2010:i). He also observes that the validity and value of qualitative-based social science research are often questioned with many outsiders remaining somewhat suspicious and social scientist themselves deeply divided over “what constitutes a proper approach to social research” (Sayer, 2010:ii). Sayer (1992, 2010), Wai-Chung Yeung (1997), Nielson (2002), Maxwell and Mittapalli (2007) and Brown *et al.* (2002) comment on the strength of the realist ontology, but reflect on some of the methodological challenges confronting social science researchers who adopt a critical realist approach in their work.

Sayer (2010) asserts that “method covers the clarification of the modes of explanation and understanding, the nature of abstraction, as well as familiar subjects of research design and methods” (Sayer, 2010:4). He comments on linkages between philosophy and method, and contends that social scientists should refrain from becoming overly in awe of philosophy, but should rather try to contribute to it (*ibid.*: 4). Wai-Chung Yeung agrees with this assertion, observing that we need a philosophy to inform our practice of science, but at the

same time, through our practice we should inform our philosophy in dialectical ways (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997:54). In addition to these calls to influence philosophy through our research endeavours, Bernstein (2013:69) comments on the issue of doing committed social research and observes, “producing knowledge of the world we inhabit involves investigating, through engaging with, the practices of social life and the social relations that generate them, in order to *change/transcend* those relations and practices” (ibid.: 69-70, *emphasis added*). The statement that the point of social research is to change the world, according to Bernstein, serves as a kind of manifesto for Marxist and other radical social researchers (ibid.: 70) and the emancipatory/revelatory nature of the critical realist approach is often highlighted as a particular strength of this approach.

Wai-Chung Yeung (1997: 56) mentions “methodological battles” between social scientists adopting the realist approach. He contends that “method”, particularly in terms of the realist approach, is “underdeveloped and misunderstood, resulting in a methodologically handicapped philosophy” (ibid.: 56). With the exception of work done by, among others, Andrew Sayer⁵, he contends that only limited methodological work has been conducted and that social scientists who adopt this realist approach could embarrassingly end up with a [strong] “realistic” philosophy in search of method (ibid.: 54). Peter Nielson (2002:727) also expresses his concern with what he calls “a tension in realism”. He complains that realism has been demarcated into a philosophical project that refuses to deal with substantive theoretical or political issues (Nielson, 2002:727). Nielson (2002) mostly echoes the methodological concerns of Wai-Chung Yeung (1997), but adds reservations about a strand of the realist approach which tends to deal primarily with ontology without allowing researchers to choose between different substantive theories or political practices. Nielson continues to voice his discontent, postulating that realism leaves an immense number of scientific practices open so that the scientist is left to navigate by him or herself in an overwhelming space of choices and possibilities (Nielson, 2002:727). By implication, Nielson (2002) is also hinting at the need for more methodological clarity. Brown *et al.* (2002:776) share some of these methodological apprehensions regarding the realist approach. They claim that the realists’ attention to the question of ontology and its

⁵ Henry Wai-Chung Yeung is one of the authors who refer to Andrew Sayer as a “critical realist”.

sensitivity towards the layering of social reality are particularly appealing, but the approach offers “no method to the social scientist in the process of *combining* abstractions” (Brown *et al.* 2002:787). They fear that social scientists have become so driven to abstraction that there are fundamentally no tools available to aid a more holistic and all-inclusive comprehension of the “inner connection” of social reality, resulting in an ever-present risk that the *totalising* moment of understanding social reality will be lost (Brown *et al.*, 2002:787) to social scientists adopting the realist approach.

In addition, Wai-Chung Yeung (1997:54) cautions very strongly against the notion that adopting a critical realist approach to research automatically translates into a method per se. He suggests that the initial, almost exclusive focus of realist researchers on developing their own ontology in response to positivism, has resulted in very little attention being directed towards developing sound methods for this new approach (*ibid.*: 54). He is also concerned about a seeming lack of clarity between realism as a method and realism as a philosophy. He warns that critical realism is not merely a methodological approach based on the use of abstraction to identify the (necessary) causal powers and liabilities of specific *structures* that are realised under specific (contingent) conditions (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997:55). He concludes his argument against viewing critical realism as merely a methodological approach, stating that “methods are surely important, but their importance cannot be exercised unless they are supported by strong philosophical claims at the ontological (nature of objects) and epistemological (social knowledge of them) levels” (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997:55). In his opinion, the realist approach already provides the necessary strength in terms of its philosophical claims, but the methodological approach used by social science researchers adopting a critical realist approach warrant more careful deliberation than what has been evident to date. He calls for critical realist researchers to do the type of scientific work with a clearer demonstration of what the realist approach can *practically* do in terms of research, thus celebrating its ontological strength, but also moving towards a more practical (methodological) strength, linking up to similar calls from Maxwell (1992), Brown *et al.* (2002), Maxwell and Mittapalli (2007) and Lau (2010). In response to these calls, I would hope that the process of my scientific inquiry could also perhaps (even in a very small way) illustrate how a critical realist approach can be applied in practical terms.

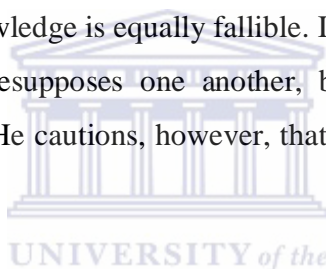
2.2.1 Philosophical tenets of the realist approach

Key considerations of the realist approach include abstraction, explanation (causality) and the nature of social relations (Pratt, 2013:27). The central tenets of the realist approach is summarised in Table 2.1. According to Easton (2002) the realist approach is increasingly gaining prominence in a range of disciplines, such as economics (Lawson, 1997), sociology (Sayer, 1992), geography (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997), history (Steinmetz, 1998) and politics (Tsoukas, 1989). The authors Maxwell and Mittapalli contend that there has been proliferation of realist positions in philosophy and the social sciences since the 1970s to the extent that one philosopher claimed that “realism is a majority position whose advocates are so divided as to appear a minority” (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2007:1).

Table 2.1: Central tenets of Realism

Discipline: Social Science	
<i>Origin</i>	(1) Rejection of positivist account of science: methodological individualism (2) Rejection of empiricism, positivism, structuralism and hermeneutics (3) Search for possibility of naturalism
<i>Ontology</i>	(1) The world exists independently of our knowledge of it (2) Pre-existence of social structures transformed by social actors (3) Human agency with intentions: reasons and real causes (4) Continuous process of structuration between structures and agencies (5) Open systems: no regular conjunctions of social events and outcomes
<i>Epistemology</i>	(1) Subject matter: internal (necessary) and external (contingent) relations between objects and events (2) Perspective of knowledge: Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice. Use of language to understand and “know” the world. (3) Practice: Immanent critique and emancipation of actors. Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena, we have to evaluate them critically” (Sayer, 1992:5).
<i>Methodology</i>	(1) Process of <i>abstraction</i> (systematic and iterative abstraction) and <i>retroduction</i> (2) Impossibility of experimentation (3) Possibility of direct awareness of structures and mechanisms (4) Theoretical (abstract) and empirical research
Adapted from Wai-Chung Yeung (1997:53)	

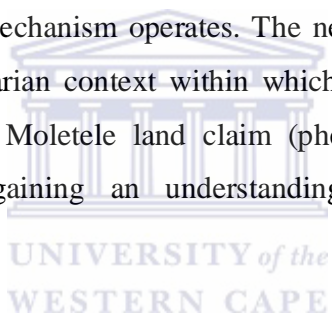
Wai-Chung Yeung (1997:52) also mentions “the many varieties and versions of realism which are not entirely consistent with each other”.⁶ Notwithstanding these differences, a key feature of these versions of realism is that they all deny that we can attain a single “correct” understanding of the world (also referred to as a God’s eye view perspective), while all our observations about the world are always theory-laden (Sayer, 2010, Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997). There is also general agreement among realists that all our theories of the world are grounded in a particular perspective and worldview, and critical realists tend to maintain that “all knowledge is partial, incomplete and fallible” (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2007:3). More importantly, critical realist asserts that “all knowledge is regarded as fallible, but they are *not equally* fallible” (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997: 56). Sayer (1992, 2010) contends that knowledge is not immune to empirical check and its effectiveness in informing and explaining material practice successfully is not mere accident, thus linking up to the notion that not all knowledge is equally fallible. In fact, Sayer (2010:iii) postulates that realism and fallibilism presupposes one another, but progress to greater truth or practical adequacy is possible. He cautions, however, that we should not expect perfection (ibid.: iii).



According to Easton (2010), the next central tenet of realism is *explanation*; answers to the question “what caused those events to happen?” Realism thus shares with positivism the aim of explanation, but May (2011:12) asserts that this is where the similarity between the two approaches ends. For Sayer (2010:65) causal explanation is structured in terms of the relationships between the objects and elements we have abstracted from the real world for our process of inquiry. From the realist perspective, *explanation* also involves the need to understand the underlying structures informing social relations and outcomes. If researchers simply content themselves with studying everyday social life, such as conversations and interactions between people, this will distract them from an investigation of the underlying mechanisms that make those possible in the first instance (Collier 1994, Sayer 2000). In this regard, the conceptualisation of what “mechanisms” entail is also deemed important. According to Bhaskar (1978:14), mechanisms “are nothing other than the ways of acting of

⁶ Tim May warns that critical realism is a subset of realism and that the two strands should not be conflated (May, 2011). This thesis adopts the use of critical realism to refer to the central tenets of the realist approach as outlined on pages 5-6 in the 2010 edition of Sayer’s book, entitled: *Method in social science: A realist approach, revised 2nd edition*.

things” while others observe that causal explanation is “one that identifies entities and the mechanisms that connect them and combine to cause the events that occur” (Easton, 2010:122). Thus, mechanisms are at the heart of causal explanation, and perhaps the simplest way of regarding mechanisms is that they are ways in which structured entities, by means of the powers and liabilities, act and cause particular events (Sayer, 2010:66). The task of researchers within this tradition is therefore to uncover the structures of social relations in order to understand why we have the policies and practices that we do. In employing the critical realist perspective in my research, the aim of the inquiry was therefore not simply to collect observations of the social world, but to *explain* these, while also attempting to examine the underlying mechanisms that inform people’s actions. In addition, Maxwell and Mitteralli (2007) maintain that “the relationship between causal mechanisms and their effects is not fixed, but contingent”; it is intrinsically dependent on the *context* within which the mechanism operates. The need to understand the historical, community, economic and agrarian context within which the joint venture models were introduced in the case of the Moletele land claim (phenomenon studied) is therefore regarded as important for gaining an understanding of the operations (“causal mechanisms”) at work.



Realists argue that the knowledge people have of their social world affects their behaviour (May, 2011:12), but knowledge is also largely – though not exclusively – linguistic, and the nature of language and the way we communicate are not incidental to what is known and communicated (Sayer, 2010:14). A fundamental tenet of all forms of realism thus relates to the fact that we use causal language to describe the world. In both everyday life and social science, we frequently *explain* things by reference to causal powers (Sayer, 2000:14). Easton observes that causality is a subtle and disputed concept that Sayer attempts to capture by a process of interpolation, using what he describes as “ordinary (arguably pragmatic) accounts of causality” (Easton, 2010:120). Thus, to ask for the *cause* of something is to ask what makes it happen, what produces, generates, creates or determines it, or more weakly what leads to it (Sayer, 1992:104).

Realism also mirrors the language and procedures we routinely adopt and the explanations that we create about the world we live in (Maxwell, 1992). Following from this assertion, a critical realist conception of social science would not necessarily assume that we can “know” the world out there, independently of the ways in which we describe it (May, 2001:13). We therefore tend to use causal language without thinking. Some critical realists argue for the use of causal language *with* thinking (Easton, 2002:103 *emphasis in the original*). Of crucial relevance to my study, the critical realist perspective accepts that the *extra-discursive* reality can only be known by means of human concepts (discourse), but does not accept the (relativist) position that all discourses are equally (un)true (Lau, 2010:492). Critical realism as a sub-set of realism, thus accepts the importance of discourse, but also seeks *extra-discursive* reasons to explain why a certain discourse becomes hegemonic; hence it also accepts insights of Foucault’s power/knowledge perspective according to which it is the comparative power of the individuals/organisations that advance competing discourses that determines which discourse is able to achieve hegemony (Lau, 2010:492).

For the purpose of my study, I realised that I needed to understand the dynamics and influence of the *dominance* of the “export-driven large-scale commercial farm discourse” in the context of broader South African agrarian discourses. During my process of inquiry, I realised that I also needed to understand the *discursive* dynamics in the local Moletele context. With the settling of the Moletele claim, an export-driven large-scale commercial farming discourse was clearly set to dominate activities on Moletele land which was already evident from the speech made by Minister of Land Affairs (at the time) at the land handover ceremony. Initially, dissident groupings within the community opted to use a more “restorative justice”-inclined discourse to mobilise support for their intended purposes. The dissidents however started to believe that those members of the community who were able to promote the externally imposed commercial farming/business discourse were the ones able to “benefit” from farming activities on Moletele land. This knowledge and perception of their world quickly influenced their behaviour as the dissident groups opted to change tactics and discourse. While these members during the initial interviews rejected the very notion of commercial farming practices continuing on their land, and

indicated that they would prefer to move back onto their land with some cattle, they eventually also started to reach out to other commercial farmers as new potential partners. By the end of 2010, the dissidents thus also started to actively promote the export-driven large-scale commercial farming discourse. They sourced legal support and took their battle for control of the land into the Moletele Community Property Association (MCPA) boardroom and meetings. The discourse deployed by those in “comparative power” thus inspired a discursive repositioning amongst the dissidents that allowed an even deeper entrenchment of the hegemony of the export-driven large-scale farm discourse amongst Moletele actors.

2.2.2 Design and methods in terms of a critical realist approach

Wai-Chung Yeung (1997) contends that a critical realist method is basically a posteriori in that a realist attempts to reconstruct causal structures and their properties on the basis of constant reflections and immanent critique. Casual mechanisms are also viewed as historical and contextual in their realisation. He contends that a realist method must *abstract* posteriori causal mechanisms and stipulate their contextual circumstances (ibid.: 55). Regarding the use of abstraction as a methodological tool, Sayer (2010:87) asserts that we need a way of individuating objects and of characterising their attributes and relationships, thus we need to “abstract” for a specific purpose, from particular conditions. In terms of abstraction, it is implied that we need to exclude those aspects that have no significant effect in order to focus on those that do have an effect. According to Lawson (1997) abstraction refers to a process of focusing on certain aspects of something to the momentary neglect of others or to simply focus on some features while others remain in the background. Sayer (1992:87) thus contends that abstraction necessarily isolates in thought a one-sided or partial aspect of an object and involves a double movement from the concrete to the abstract and from the abstract to the concrete. Sayer, (1992:87) asserts:

At the outset our concepts of concrete objects are likely to be superficial or chaotic. In order to understand their diverse determinations we need to abstract systematically. When each of the abstracted aspects has been examined it is possible to combine the abstraction to and from concepts which grasp the concreteness of their objects.

Authors, Brown, Slater and Spencer (2002:780) call for what they term a process of “systematic abstraction” where emphasis is placed on the necessary ordering of historical categories from the relatively abstract to the ever more concrete. They make a case for this “systematic abstraction”, where analysis and synthesis have to occur simultaneously as two inseparable sides of a single process of abstraction that will eventually allow for a process of totalising/synthesising (Brown *et al.* 2002:780). On the other hand, Wai-Chung Yeung (1997:58) calls for an “iterative process of abstraction”. He explains that the critical realist starts from an empirical problem and proceeds to abstract the necessary relations between the concrete phenomenon and deeper causal structures to form generative mechanisms (Wai-Chung Yeung, 1997:58). As more empirical evidence is collected, a realist might revise or reaffirm his or her abstraction so that the process of iteration continues until no further contradictory evidence is obtained and the alleged generative mechanisms are robust and powerful (*ibid.*: 59). This type of abstraction is known as iterative abstraction and the broader realist method in which iterative abstraction is embedded is known as *retroduction*, in which an argument moves from a description of some phenomenon to a description of something that produces it or as a condition of it (Sayer, 2010:107).

Lawson (1997:207) identifies three dimensions of abstraction. The first, “vantage point”, identifies the specific position one looks from. This part of the process of abstraction also entails detailing the choice of phenomenon to be explained. Lawson (1997:207) cautions that the choice of phenomenon to be explained and the object of explanation would be influenced by the knowledge, understanding, values and interests of the individual scientist or research group conducting the inquiry. The second dimension of abstraction involves locating the real causes of the social phenomenon under investigation, while the third element of abstraction relates to the scope or extension from a space-time perspective, which will have a bearing on the level of generality in terms of the abstractions made.

From Lawson’s conceptualisation, the need to “combine” and rethink/reaffirm the abstractions I made over the last few years in an attempt to understand and explain what was happening in the case of the Moletele joint venture initiatives, proved to be a very important lesson for me. My role, my “vantage point” as an outsider/researcher in terms of

the process of abstraction became very evident in how I framed my understanding of the dissident groups operating in the context of the Moletele land claim. I thought that the dissidents seemed fairly passive and that they were just talking under the tree where they got together on a bi-weekly basis to reminisce about the claim and their past experiences. The one-dimensional responses they gave me during interviews certainly led me to believe that I have captured the interests and expectations of this grouping. I was also led to believe that the two dissident groupings, I was able to identify, did not know about each other. When the two groupings however launched a take-over of the MCPA at the 2011 MCPA Annual General Meeting, I realised that they were busy strategizing all along and that I needed to re-focus my attention back to them. Events, actors and institutions that I had mentally moved to the background in order to understand and explain what I thought were happening, had to be brought back as a focal point. I can only conclude that, in my attempt to “explain” what was happening, a number of things remained hidden to me, especially regarding the nature of the relations between the two dissident groupings. This relationship turned out to be substantial, rather than a formal relationship between two taxonomic groupings (distinctions made in terms of Table 2.2). When I reached the synthesising phase of my research, I realised two things: my “vantage point” clearly impacted my process of abstraction, and I needed to embrace Sayer and Lawson’s observation that the messiness of the social world is such that formal methods and theories have only limited application in many kinds of social research (Sayer 2010, Lawson, 2004). I reflect more on this valuable lesson and the limitation of my approach in terms of my vantage point in chapter 9 of the dissertation.

Finally, Henry Wai-Chung Yeung (1997:54) asserts that all forms of realism should be regarded as the hallmark of the Bhaskarian version of realism in the social sciences that celebrates the existence of a reality independent of human consciousness (realist ontology), ascribes causal powers to human reasons and social structures (realist ontology), rejects relativism in social and scientific discourse (realist epistemology) and re-orientates social sciences towards its emancipatory goals (realist epistemology). Realists thus retain an ontological realism (there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions), while accepting an epistemological view that our understanding

and knowledge of this world is inevitably a construction from our own perspective and viewpoint.

Table 2.2: Central features of the intensive and extensive research design

	INTENSIVE	EXTENSIVE
Research question	How does a process work in a particular case or small number of cases? What produces certain change? What did the agents actually do?	What are the regularities, common patterns, distinguishing features of a population? How widely are certain characteristics or processes distributed or represented?
Relations	Substantial relations of connections	Formal relations of similarity
Type of groups studied	Causal groups	Taxonomic groups
Type of account produced	Causal explanation of the production of certain objects or events, though not necessarily representative ones.	Descriptive, representative generalisations lacking explanatory penetration.
Typical methods	Study of individual agents in their causal contexts: interactive interviews, ethnography, qualitative analysis.	Large-scale survey population or representative sample, formal questionnaires, standardised interviews, statistical analysis.
Limitations	Actual concrete patterns and contingent relations are unlikely to be representative, average or generalisable. Necessary relations will exist wherever their relations are present e.g. causal powers of objects are generalisable to other contexts as they are necessary features of these objects.	Although representative of a whole population, they are unlikely to be generalisable to other populations at different times and places. Problem of ecological fallacy in making inference about individuals. Limited explanatory power.
Appropriate tests	Corroboration	Replication

Adapted from Sayer (2010:243)

2.3 Research design and methods in this study

In the first instance, I decided to use a case study-based approach for the purpose of my inquiry. This approach is defined as a research method that involves investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data is collected using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process (Easton, 2010:103). The case study-based approach thus clearly aligns with the intensive research method as conceptualised by Sayer (1992; 2010). It is also consistent with the

realist ontology, making it a very suitable option in terms of the intention of my inquiry. I thought that the case study approach would be useful for my study as it would allow me to *understand* the phenomenon in depth and comprehensively because it is “more suited to how and why questions, which can be explanatory in nature” (Easton, 2010:119). This approach, combined with a strong ethnographic orientation, gave me the opportunity to tease out and disentangle a complex set of factors and relationships, and this flexibility is one of its major advantages, not shared by, for example, survey-based methods.

In the second instance, I decided to use a predominantly qualitative approach. Kirk and Miller (1986:86) suggested a working definition of qualitative research as “a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms”. From the qualitative research perspective, the research took an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, studying the phenomenon in its natural setting in an attempt to make better sense of it or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people ascribe to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Commenting on the need to maintain rigour in terms of qualitative research design, Mays and Pope (1995) contend that the basic strategy to ensure rigour in qualitative research is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation and communication.

Aamodt (1982) noted that the qualitative approach is reflexive in that the researcher is part of the research, not separate from it. More importantly, Aamodt (1982:120) asserts that research situations are dynamic, and the researcher is a participant, not merely an observer. From this brief conceptualisation of what qualitative research entails, I was once again reminded that I needed to understand and interrogate *my role* (*my “vantage point”*) in terms of the research process. The strengths and weaknesses of the research tools (key informant interviews, observation, focus group discussions and open-ended interviews with community members) I had used throughout the inquiry also became evident.

In terms of the research tools I used, the use of focus group discussions was particularly thought-provoking. Generally, during the individual interviews I conducted with community members, I encountered a great deal of research fatigue among respondents

who expressed reservations and concerns regarding the value of being interviewed. Many of the respondents mentioned that they felt tired of researchers coming into the area, asking questions and then doing nothing to change their situation. On the contrary, during the focus group interviews conducted with the dissident group members, there was a rather surprising keenness to participate in the research. Unbeknown to me at the time, the dissident group tried to use the focus group discussions to “enrol” my interest and support for their cause, thus inspiring the level of eagerness to participate, but also influencing the type of information and responses the respondents chose to give me. I tried to counter this bias (a limitation of the focus group interviews) by also arranging individual follow-up sessions with some respondents who formed part of the focus groups to allow them the opportunity to express their views away from the watchful eye of other dissident members. This proved to be a much more fruitful research endeavour, and alerted me to the fact that even the dissident groups should not be treated as homogenous groupings.

In the process, the strength of the group interview was also revealed to me (almost accidentally, I might add). When I went to one of the homesteads to conduct an open-ended interview with individuals in one of the homesteads, some community members spontaneously joined the discussion while we were sitting outside. I realised that the members who were sitting there listening to the interview started nodding their heads, making all sorts of gestures and grunts, and interrupting the comments of the homestead respondents. I then asked them if they would mind participating. I adapted the interview process to include them and asked them about the process of land dispossession, about their expectations in terms of the land claim and what they knew about the MCPA and the partnership initiatives. In response to these questions, dialogue erupted between the group members and, almost instantaneously, subgroups emerged roughly along age lines. The young people in the group became very emotional and asked the older people how they could have allowed government officials to move them from their heritage: land that should now belong to them. They also confronted the older members because they said that these matters were never spoken about. In response, the older people shook their heads in dismay asking the younger ones how *they* would have been able to resist dispossession and pointed out that they never spoke about these things because it was so hurtful. The young people in

the group became quickly divided along gender lines when I asked them what they think should happen to the land. The younger women in the group seemed more inclined to suggest that land should be made available for residential and food garden-type projects, while the younger men in the group felt that commercial farming with better benefits being distributed to the community should continue. Surprisingly, the older people in the group (men and women) were not keen to move back onto the land and actually agreed with the perceptions held by the younger men in the group who favoured the distribution of benefits from commercial farming activities. Interviewing this group of 20 individuals, which comprised men and women of different ages, revealed a great deal to me in terms of the respondents' attitudes and interests. However, it was far more revealing for me to see the dynamics in the discussion between brothers and sisters, grandmothers and their grandchildren, and between neighbours who have lived next to each other for years, but have never spoken about these issues. Needless to say, it turned out to be one of the most thought-provoking and insightful moments in my own research journey, highlighting a particular strength in terms of the use of a focus group discussion as a research tool.

In the third instance, I decided to use an ethnographic approach to the research. The realist approach recognises the inherently contextual nature of causal explanations (Sayer, 1992:60-61); thus supporting an ethnographic research approach that emphasises the importance of context in understanding social phenomena (see Table 2.1). Clearly, from this discussion, the complementarity between using an ethnographic approach in combination with the realist approach is already quite evident. Hammersley (1992), in his book entitled *What's wrong with ethnography*, argued that there is a strong realist strand within the ethnographic tradition as an ethnographic approach provides a deeper and more accurate account of the beliefs and behaviour of those studied than any other method. Clifford Geertz (1973) contends that the aim of an ethnographic approach should be to present a "thick description", which is composed not only of facts, but also of commentary, interpretation and an analysis of those comments and interpretations. For the purpose of this study, my methodology was aimed at capturing the very diverse nature of interests, motives and expectations from the vantage points of the range of different actors involved in the Moletele land claim, which could ultimately culminate into Geertz's

conceptualisation of a “thick description”, helping me to understand the context, as well as the processes and outcomes of these partnership initiatives.

2.3.1 Research methods

As already stated, the intention of my research was not to create generalisable quantitative data about a “real world out there” with a clearly established link between cause and effect as identified in terms of regularities and common distinguishing patterns. The framework for the inquiry was to be guided by the understanding that “the relationship between causal mechanisms and their effects is not fixed, but contingent” (Pawson & Tilley, 1997:69) and intrinsically dependent on the *context* within which the mechanisms operate (Mawell & Mittapalli, 2007:2). The contextual relations of the elements, phenomena and social actors involved or operating in the context of the joint ventures functioning on Moletele land was therefore regarded as crucial to understand the operation of the causal mechanisms at work in the study site. I also used the central tenets of the critical realist approach (Table 2.1) to frame the nature of my inquiry.

In terms of research design, Sayer distinguishes between the intensive and extensive approach and cautions that the extensive/intensive distinction in a research design is not identical to the quantitative versus qualitative distinctions (Sayer, 2010:86). He explains, “the distinction between these two approaches might seem nothing more than a question of scale or depth”, but warns that “these two types of designs ask different sorts of questions, use different techniques or methods and define their objects and boundaries differently” (Sayer, 2010:42). The research approach adopted in my study, clearly links up more to the intensive research design (Table 2.2), involving the use of qualitative methods that seek to understand “the process in a particular case and what the agents did”.

In order to *understand* the individual agents in their causal context, I decided to use interactive (open-ended) but semi-structured interviews, ethnographic research tools (i.e. immersion into the context by means of extended visits to the study site spread over a period of four years, during which time, observation and recordkeeping was crucial), key informant interviews and participant observation. The methods used during the extensive

phase of the research involved some descriptive statistical analysis and a contextual literature review of the citrus value chain to gain insight into the citrus production activities on Moletele land. My inquiry was however predominantly qualitative, and I was primarily concerned with processes, activities, relations and episodes of events, rather than statistics and particular characteristics.

The intensive research design methods used in this study involved the following:

Eighty semi-structured, open-ended (interactive) interviews were conducted with Moletele community members at their homesteads. According to Mr Sempe from the Limpopo Commission for the Restitution of Land Claims office, seventy percent of the registered 1 615 households for the Moletele land claim reside in either the Acornhoek or Buffelshoek areas of the Bushbuckridge Municipal district. These areas are located approximately 40 km away from the land that is being claimed by the Moletele. The remainder of the Moletele claimants (thirty percent) reside in areas located even further away from Hoedspruit. I decided to conduct interviews with homestead members residing in the closer located Acornhoek and Buffelshoek areas only. I opted to interview these Moletele members located closer to the farms, because one of the benefit streams envisaged in the partnership arrangements included the creation of employment opportunities which were predicated on the idea that people would be able to commute between the farms and their places of residence. When the MCPA chairperson informed me that the vast majority of the Moletele resided specifically in the Buffelshoek area, I decided to conduct only twenty interviews with homestead members in parts of Acornhoek (Green Valley and Brooklyn) while the majority of the interviews (sixty) were conducted in different parts of Buffelshoek.

I realised that the eighty open-ended semi-structured interviews I planned to conduct with Moletele members would represent only 5 percent of the total 1 615 registered claimant households. I opted to employ a 'convenience' sampling strategy, but did attempt to stratify the sample to be somewhat 'representative' in a loose sense, of the broader demographic profile of Moletele members. My fieldwork assistant and I therefore targeted households to

include male and female respondents based on their employment status (employed/unemployed), age (whether they had a memory of being dispossessed or whether they were descendants), marital status (married/divorced or abandoned) and “income status”, judged by the general level of access to amenities and size/quality/condition of the homestead structure. I tried to stratify the sample according to these characteristics because I saw them as important variables that would shape and differentiate the nature of the expectations and interests amongst members in the claimant group. The majority of the members interviewed ended up being male heads of households, but in instances where both husbands and wives were available and expressed a willingness to be interviewed, both members were interviewed separately. For the majority of the cases (n=53) the respective male or female heads of the households were interviewed, but in cases where the heads of households were not available (n=27) we would speak to the homestead member that everyone else agreed to be “the second one in charge of the homestead. A detailed account of the demographic profile of respondents interviewed and their responses are provided in chapter 5 of the thesis.

The eighty open-ended questionnaires were designed to gain an understanding of the respondents’ expectations and awareness of the Moletele claim, their awareness and understanding of the MCPA, their awareness and understanding of the partnership arrangements and to find out what they would have liked to see happen to the land or the types of benefits they anticipated with the settling of the claim (i.e. trying to gauge their expectations), compared to what they had received (i.e. their level of disillusionment or disappointment). I asked them whether or not they had attended the land hand-over ceremony and whether or not they had attended any other community meetings. This was followed by questioning them about why they attended, versus why they chose not to attend, MCPA or traditional council meetings. A number of the respondents were also older individuals, who were able to relate stories of how they were dispossessed and how their current living conditions compared to where they used to live. The questionnaire also attempted to gauge the level of their willingness to move back to the land. Their general awareness and interest in the land claim was also gauged. Findings from this part of the inquiry inform the discussion in Chapter 5 and also Chapter 8 of the thesis.

I need to acknowledge the following possible limitations of the methodological approach I used to conduct the eighty open-ended and semi-structured interviews. Firstly, the small size of the sample (5%) means that any claims to be representative of the total claimant group would be questionable. The sample did, however, provide valuable insights on the range of interests, motives and expectations of members of the claimant group. Secondly, we started the interviews by giving the respondents pre-determined phrases to capture the expectation they would assign as their “number one” ranked expectation for the claim. Giving the respondents a choice between two pre-determined options invariably restricted the nature of responses that the respondents provided. I did try to counter this unintended bias by following up with more probing questions and allowing the opportunity for elaboration and the expression of alternative articulations, but I still need to acknowledge a missed opportunity that would have allowed a more nuanced interpretation of respondent’s expectations. I discuss findings from this part of the investigation in chapter 5 of the research.

Open-ended, unstructured interviews (spread over three years) were also conducted with the leaders of the two dissident groups. The intention of these interviews was really to understand *who* these leaders were (historical context), to understand who they were representing, and why they were so vehemently opposed to the elected management structure (MCPA). The leaders of the dissident groups and their members were all very candid about their opposition to the MCPA and what they would like to see happen to the land, but they were much less forthcoming about the strategies they were going to use to operationalise their vision. Findings from this part of the research are discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 8 of the thesis.

A sequence of focus group discussions and meetings were also conducted with both the dissident groups at a few of their bi-weekly meetings (four sessions in total attended). Focus group discussions were also held with members of the Moletele traditional authority council members and with members from the women’s farming group. The conflicting or converging nature of interests, motives and expectations among these groupings of people and the strategies they deploy to influence decision-making became very apparent during

these interviews. The nature of these contestations, negotiations and alliances are discussed in Chapter 8.

Over the course of the four years, frequent interviews were conducted with the chairperson of the MCPA (Mr Mashile), the tribal authority representative who was also an ex-officio member of the MCPA Executive Committee (Prince Jan Chiloane), the Financial Manager appointed for the MCPA (Mr George Fraser) and the remaining strategic partners or representatives of the partners. Their initial intentions, visions and motives for setting up the partnerships were interrogated. The challenges, risks and opportunities they anticipated versus the actual opportunities, risks and challenges experienced over the last few years were discussed. These interview sessions were useful in gaining an understanding of the citrus value chain from the perspective of the partners and the MCPA. The findings of this part of the inquiry are discussed in Chapter 6.

Open-ended, unstructured interviews were conducted with members from the “partner institutions”, who assisted in setting up these partnership initiatives. The intention of these interviews was to gain an understanding of the broader rationale or impetus for setting up these partnership initiatives. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with officials from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the Limpopo Land Claims Commission’s Office and officials from the Provincial Department of Agriculture in Limpopo (list of key informant interviews detailed in Appendix C). Other “partner institutions” interviewed included a representative of MABEDI (Business Trust Maruleng and Bushbuckridge Economic Development Initiative) one of the main social actors involved in setting up the Moletele partnership, which was originally tasked with the structuring and facilitation of the commercial partnership) and a representative of the Nkuzi office (to provide a non-governmental perspective), who could provide some insights into the historical sequence of events and challenges. Findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

It was also deemed important to capture the views of those institutions resisting aspects of the Moletele land claim. In this regard, a focus group discussion was held with Sehlare Traditional Council members who raised their concern about the fact that the Moletele

claim was overlapping with some of the land on which they also had a claim. They alerted me of the fact that a fairly large percentage of the Moletele people had been taken in by the Sehlare people when they were dispossessed, hence they found the delineation of “Moletele community” highly questionable and inflammatory.

An open-ended unstructured interview was also conducted with the chairperson of the White Commercial Farming Group currently resisting the claim on 40 000 ha (of the roughly 72 000 ha) of the land. These farmers are often accused of holding up the process with their unreasonable prices, so I felt that it was important to capture their perspective during the research. The farmers resisting the claim have however opted to take their battle to court and as the matter was still pending the outcome of a court hearing (and therefore *sub judice*), I was informed that I would only be allowed to interview the chairperson of this group. The chairperson (speaking on behalf of the group) therefore provided me with his perspective of the nature of the interest, motives and expectations of the white commercial farmers in his group. Subsequent interviews were conducted with government officials, strategic partners and the representative of MABEDI who helped me to capture more of these perspectives and also provided impressions of white commercial farmers in the area more generally. At this juncture, I therefore need to concede that my discussion of the white commercial farmers’ perspectives could well be incomplete and probably fails to fully capture the differentiated nature of this group⁷. Key findings derived from this part of the inquiry are discussed in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

The extensive methods used in this study involved the following:

The extensive part of my research involved 50 structured questionnaires aimed at obtaining a “broad brush” understanding of the nature of the livelihood strategies being deployed by Moletele members still residing in the Bushbuckridge area (Sample provided as Appendix B). Conceptual insights derived from this part of the research are detailed in Chapter 5 of the thesis, but it is deemed important to briefly mention the following. The use of a formal standardised questionnaire was valuable as it gave me the opportunity to ask each

⁷ This is illustrated by the fact that some of the members in the resisting group were actually “willing sellers” who became tired of waiting for government to honour purchase agreements for their farms. To avoid the uncertainty of waiting for the state to come back to them, some have joined the resisting farmers group.

respondent the same questions under fairly similar conditions, allowing for comparisons between responses, while (arguably) minimising observer-induced bias (Sayer, 2010). The intention of these interviews was to find patterns of similarity, dissimilarity, trends and correlations between variables, with a focus on identifying taxonomic groups, rather than a focus on structural or substantial group relations or connections. In this instance my fieldwork assistant and I specifically targeted homesteads where one could clearly observe some form of involvement in land/agriculture-based activities. The sample was therefore skewed towards households in the Buffelshoek area who were in fact engaged in farming of some kind. We interviewed a total of 50 homestead members and 33 of these respondents indicated that they, or members of their homesteads, were engaged in farming activities. Once we identified whether household members were involved in farming or other land-based activities, we proceeded to stratify the sample further by including members where the size and appearance of the homestead structure and quality of amenities (access to services and cars parked outside the homesteads) hinted at a comparatively higher level of affluence. The homesteads where we saw some form of an informal business running and homesteads where the situation (superficially at least) seemed a bit more dire, based on the condition of the building and lack of access to amenities, were also included. The involvement and the role of farming related activities in livelihood strategies employed by Moletele members was a primary concern which informed the selection of respondents. Groupings identified during this phase of the research were clearly more taxonomic in nature, i.e. groups whose members share similar or formal attributes, but that need not actually connect or interact with one another because, with the questionnaire analysis, I was able to identify the following groupings of respondents:

- Group 1: Members farming at their homesteads and on additional fields, receiving social grants, with one or more homestead members employed or self-employed and producing enough to sell.
- Group 2: Members farming at their homesteads and/or additional fields, receiving *only* social grants, and producing enough to sell.
- Group 3: Members farming at their homesteads and additional fields only for consumption, irrespective of their different income sources.
- Group 4: Members not farming at all, irrespective of income sources.

These groupings are discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis.

The nature of the relations identified in terms of the intensive and extensive phases also differ (Table 2.2). Realists argue that there are two kinds of relationships among entities: substantial relationships and formal relationships. Intensive research tends to focus mainly on groups whose members might be either similar or different, but who *actually relate to each other* structurally or causally (substantial relations). Thus, in terms of the intensive research design, specific identifiable individuals or entities are of interest that relate to each other as opposed to ambiguous formal relations that are evident in the case of taxonomic groups, which exists irrespective of actual relationships. For example, the nature of the necessary or substantial relationships between the MCPA and its private-sector partners, the MCPA and the community, the MCPA and the tribal council, and the MCPA and the dissident groups needed to be interrogated. The nature of these relations is clearly substantial. The nature, implications and dynamics of these relations are discussed in Chapter 8.

In order to understand the business performance of the MCPA in the context of production and exporting commodities, this part of the inquiry started off by examining the financial statements of the MCPA and conducting a sequence of interviews with the financial administrator of the MCPA. From the financial statements, it became apparent that the MCPA was certainly striving to be a viable business entity, but the financial reports provided a rather “thin description” of what was really happening regarding commodity-specific production and exports from the land. The financial statements were also not really giving an indication of where value was being captured or how the community was able to “benefit” from these activities. I realised that I needed to shift my attention towards gaining better insights on value chain related considerations.

Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) contend that an appraisal of the performance of inclusive business arrangements should include an assessment of the business performance of the partnership in terms of value chain considerations. They state that this should especially be the case in instances where these types of partnership arrangements are articulated as viable

avenues for introducing poor rural communities into the global value chain arena and that “much depends on the specific agricultural commodity being transacted and the need to understand key aspects in the field of high value agricultural production” (ibid.: 4). The challenging nature of the insertion of rural communities into value chains as producers was therefore a key consideration for this part of the research.

In tandem with information gleaned from the literature I reviewed, I used limited empirical data collected by means of interviews with some of the commercial partners and with a representative from the Citrus Growers Association in Hoedspruit to gain insights into value chain dynamics in the context of these partnership arrangements. The data I collected for this part of the analysis were limited in scope due to the sensitive nature of the questions I needed to ask. The commercial partners were extremely wary of divulging information about the extent, frequency and scope of their production and export activities as these were already contentious issues underlying struggles between them and the community. The representative from the Citrus Growers Association felt more comfortable to provide a somewhat generalised and crude “input-output” description of the citrus value chains in Hoedspruit. He expressed his reservations about disclosing farm-specific production and export figures without the explicit consent of the commercial partners, fearing that these figures might end up in the hands of a disgruntled community member, who might not understand them. The production data were not regarded as too contentious, as this should have been disclosed to the community as producers, in any case, but the export-related data were quite problematic as the community’s interest presumed to stop at the farm gate. I did, however, manage to extract limited value-chain related data. These data are presented in chapter 7, to form part of a contextual framing of structural dynamics in the South African citrus value chains and their implications for these partnership arrangements. It should be noted, therefore, that the analysis in chapter 7 is in the format of a conceptual literature review supplemented with limited empirical and secondary data, and does not purport to be a full analysis of these citrus value chains.

2.4 Ethical considerations and the role of my fieldwork assistant

During interviews with claimant respondents I tried to ensure ethical accountability by starting each interview with a brief explanation of who my research assistant and I were and the reason for the visit. Once we were given permission to enter the premises of the homestead I asked the field worker to read out a prepared declaration providing our names and my institutional affiliation along with a short description of the nature and purpose of my research. The declaration also detailed the role that the potential respondent would play in this process and stated that they were under no obligation to conduct the interviews with me. The declaration was read out and translated sentence-by-sentence for the convenience of the respondent, and only once the full declaration was read and respondents agreed to be interviewed, would we proceed. In the declaration I also assured them that any question that would cause them discomfort could be avoided and that their identities would be kept concealed if they wanted to remain anonymous.

After the declaration was read, the introductory phase of the interview would commence. During this ‘introductory phase’, which often lasted several minutes (we made every effort not to rush the process) introductions were once again made and misconceptions surrounding my presence in the area were clarified. Respondents were generally curious about me as word had spread quite rapidly about the interviews I was conducting with my fieldwork assistant. As already mentioned, some respondents thought that I might be from the “government” expecting financial compensation for their involvement. Others feared that they might be forced to answer my questions. It was therefore imperative to debunk these misconceptions. I also tried to make sure that participants were able to follow up with any questions or concerns of their own before we formally started with the interview and also during the course of the interview. We tried to make sure that the respondents knew that their agreement to participate was completely *voluntary*. I assured them that they were free to opt out of the study before, during, or after their initial participation and I tried to be as clear as possible about exactly how I was planning to use the data collected from them. Generally the claimant respondents interviewed indicated that they did not mind the use of their first names in my reporting, but they seemed less inclined to have their surnames revealed.

During interviews the power-differentiated nature of the Moletele actor-landscape soon posed challenges for me. As mentioned above, attempts were made by the dissidents to enrol my support for their cause. I also needed to explain to the MCPA members why I was talking to the dissidents, which caused unhappiness for the MCPA members who feared that talking to the dissidents might “legitimise” them. In fact, my very presence in the area caused a bit of a tussle for my support. It could also have inspired a heightened sense of anticipation, thus inflating the very expectations I was trying to capture. My fallible role and vantage point as ‘outsider researcher’ also emerged. I tried to counter the implications of these challenging power dynamics, which might have caused a bias in the information provided to me, by (1) conducting several follow-up visits and interviews with the same key informants, (2) by “being there” to observe things for myself (although deliberate deceptions can never be ruled out) and (3) by trying to verify information from different sources and people (triangulating) in order to provide the “thick” contextual descriptions I was aspiring to produce.

For the key informant interviews I also made sure that respondents understood the nature of my research and asked permission to cite the interview and the information provided to me during these sessions. I would also ask key informants permission before recording the sessions and generally found the key informants adept at deciding which questions they felt comfortable to answer and which questions they would rather side-step. The government officials I interviewed were generally very helpful, but surprisingly they were less willing to talk about the pending court challenge surrounding the claim. I reflect on outcomes on these interviews in more detail in chapter 8.

In reflecting on the role of my field assistant, the following aspects merit attention. Buffelshoek and Acornhoek are predominantly rural settings and the prospect of walking around amongst homesteads in an area where I did not speak the language was particularly daunting. I was fortunate enough to meet Gert Sakoane who acted as my translator and fieldwork assistant during the claimant interview phase of the research. I came to know Gert as a very pleasant and easy-going person who also happened to reside in the area. I found his involvement particularly useful because he knew the people, the area and the

leaders of the dissident groups, but he also got along well with the members of the MCPA. While Gert's intimate knowledge of the area and the claimants was a definite benefit, on the one hand, I sensed that some claimant members felt somewhat uncomfortable in divulging information in front of someone from the area, who "knew" them. I therefore need to acknowledge possible bias or distortion of the information that claimant respondents provided to me. Added to this, I also needed to caution my fieldwork assistant, on one or two occasions against "dramatizing" the questions when he translated them to the respondents. It is therefore possible and even likely that some bias could be present in the responses I recorded once it was translated back to me. To counter the extent of this bias I also made use of an additional translator, named Angel Sokoane, who occasionally assisted us, especially during the focus group interviews where a more rapid rate of translation was required. As the research progressed, recurring themes and answers emerged however and at least in a few instances I was able to verify responses from respondents who did understand English and even Afrikaans.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the philosophical assumptions that guided the process of my inquiry. This was followed by a discussion of some of the strengths, as well as perceived methodological weaknesses linked to the philosophical approach I have selected. The research procedures in terms of methods and tools that were used for data collection and analysis were also discussed. The decisions that went into the process of designing the research, which ultimately informed the choice of my approach, as well as the more practical decisions about how to collect and analyse the data, were also highlighted. From an ethnographic research perspective, I hope that my struggle and journey in terms of philosophical and methodological considerations, which informed my process of scientific inquiry, become evident. I am also hopeful that my approach to my research design is starting to point towards the type of research that can demonstrate how a realist approach can be applied in practical terms.

Chapter 3: **The Political Economy of Agrarian Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Key Concepts and Theories**

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss some of the key conceptual tools and theories of agrarian change that have informed my analysis of the Moletele strategic partnership initiatives, with a particular emphasis on theories of class relations and class structure in agrarian contexts drawn from materialist political economy, of both Marxist and non-Marxist varieties. I also discuss Ribot and Peluso's (2003) approach to understanding property right and benefits, which informed my analysis of inclusive business models.

An extended literature review revealed to me that contract farming and a variety of contractual or partnership arrangements between farmers and agri-businesses on commercial and communally owned land have been theorized within diverse and contrasting schools of thought (key examples include Little and Watts, 1994, CDE, 2008, Lahiff, 2008, Oya, 2012, Freguin-Gesh and Anseeuw, 2011, Li, 2011 & Deininger and Byerlee, 2012). As noted by Smalley (2013:13), two approaches dominate the literature: mainstream economics and agrarian political economy.

According to Smalley (2013:13) mainstream economic studies generally display a concern with efficiency, scarcity, intensity and relative proportions of the factors of agricultural production: land, labour and capital. Many of these scholars (Kirsten & Satorius, 2002, Deininger & Byerlee, 2012,) aim to identify the conditions under which partnership arrangements will ensure the 'economic viability' of large-scale commercial farming, albeit with some equity considerations (ibid: 13). Smalley characterises scholars from the New Institutional Economics (NIE) as a variant of these mainstream economic approaches. Their studies tend to place institutions, and issues of governance, communication and structure, at the centre of the inquiry (see also Cousins and Scoones, 2010). Often the goals of these scholars are to: (1) help refine the nature of partnership agreements in order to ensure "win-win" scenarios for both partners; and (2) limit contractual abuses (see also Oya, 2010a).

More recently, critically-minded NIE economists (such as Simmons, 2002, Deininger *et al.*, 2011) have begun to identify unequal power relations as a key aspect of contractual arrangements (Smalley, 2013).

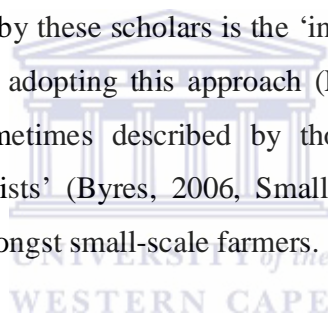
In the agrarian political economy literature dealing with partnership or contractual arrangements, the very notion of partnership deals between two “equal partners” is often questioned (e.g. Lahiff, 2008; Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010 and Franco and Borras 2010). These scholars are concerned with underlying structural dynamics and focus on the limited autonomy and leverage available to the “less powerful” contract partner, compared to the potentially higher levels of autonomy and control of the more dominant partner (e.g. Derman, *et al.* 2006, Bolwig *et al.* 2010, Spierenburg *et al.* 2012). This literature also reveals a focus on the contrasting pressures and motivations of different partners as well as of sub-groupings *within* contracting partners (Oya, 2012, Lahiff, *et al.*, 2012, Spierenburg, *et al.* 2012).

Furthermore, studies from within this perspective highlight the need to interrogate the character of the linkages between the different nodes in the value chains in which the partners participate (Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010), and the asymmetrical power relations between the different actors or entities involved in the value chains. Other key issues include the role of standards and regulations, and ultimately the nature of control (governance) of the value chain (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000, 2004; Gereffi, *et al.* 2005, Gibbon and Ponte, 2005). It soon became apparent that these are also key issues relevant in the Moletele partnership initiative. Because the agrarian political economy literature has a central concern with unequal power relations, and thus with conflict, it seemed most relevant for my study of the Moletele claim, and most of this chapter focuses on key concepts, theories and debates from within this school of thought.

3.2. The Political Economy of Agrarian Change

The key concepts of agrarian political economy are those of class relations, class dynamics and agrarian structure, which are deployed in theories of the class dynamics of agrarian

change. It is important to note that Political economy approaches have always been concerned with understanding the role of agriculture within broader processes of structural transformation (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010: 180). A key tradition of agrarian political economy originated in Marx's analysis of the genesis of capitalism and the processes by which its core characteristics came to be established (ibid.: 180). Smalley (2013:13) suggests that scholars in the field of agrarian political economy differ from those in mainstream economics in terms of their different opinions regarding the efficiency of the 'small-scale farming sector', as well as in relation to disagreements regarding the homogeneity of this 'small-scale farming' (or peasant) sector. Some mainstream economic perspectives tend to suggest that small-scale farmers are more efficient than large-scale farmers (Lipton, 1996, Binswanger & Deininger, 1996) and that agrarian reform should thus be driven by the rationale of supporting small-scale farming to achieve both efficiency and equity. A core proposition held by these scholars is the 'inverse relationship' between farm size and productivity. Scholars adopting this approach (Lipton, 1977, 1985; Binswanger and Deininger, 1996) are sometimes described by those from the agrarian political economy school as 'neo-populists' (Byres, 2006, Smalley, 2013), because they do not distinguish class differences amongst small-scale farmers.



Marxist theory on the other hand, allows for the superior productivity of large, capitalist farms and estates, and forecasts the eventual disappearance of peasants (Smalley, 2013: 13). It should be noted, while Marxist scholars tend to criticise the 'small-scale-farm-efficiency' rhetoric, there is support for small-scale farm production activities from some of these scholars, but for different reasons than those provided in the neo-populist narrative. Also, in countering mainstream economic perspectives, Marxist theorists reject the notion of a homogeneous peasantry and maintain that the peasant sector should be understood as being stratified or differentiated into classes, as a result of the class dynamics of reproduction and accumulation (Bernstein, 2010, Cousins, 2011). Class analysis is thus crucial to (Marxist) agrarian political economy, being used to define power-laden social relations between interest groups located within historically specific processes of capitalist development (Smalley, 2013:14).

Kautsky and Lenin (both prominent Marxist theorists of the Agrarian Question – see below) viewed capitalism as both a progressive and dispossessive system (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185). Both paid close attention to the profound transformations wrought by the consolidation of capitalist relations of production in the societies in which they lived. They also tried to make sense of, in particular, “capitalist relations of production in agriculture” (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:185). Kautsky concluded that peasant farms were only able to survive because they served the interests of capital, providing commodities cheaply and selling labour-power to capitalists (Bernstein, 2010, Smalley, 2013:14). In this interpretation, family-worked farms could produce cheaper food commodities, and thus lower the cost of labour-power and hence wages. Furthermore, peasants and small farmers who sell a portion of their labour-power can make do with low wages because a part of their reproduction is provided for by their own farming activities (Bernstein, 2010:85). In strong contrast to the Chayanovian perspective, which views smallholders or peasants as the central factor in agrarian economic development, Kautsky viewed the existence of peasants as temporary, and in fact only “tolerated” by large capital. In line with the Leninist school of thought, Kautsky assumed that peasants would inevitably disappear as a result of ongoing processes of class differentiation (Bernstein, 2009).

Marx’s central concern with the development of the capitalist mode of production and the concomitant creation of a working class became the starting point of analysis of the ‘Agrarian Question’, as it was termed (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010:181). Lenin, focusing on rural accumulation strategies and class differentiation, distinguished between two paths for agrarian transition (which would resolve the Agrarian Question): a transition driven *‘from above’*, as in the case of nineteenth century Prussia, where the land-owning class metamorphosed into an agrarian capitalist class, or a transition driven *‘from below’*, where peasants differentiate themselves over time into classes of agrarian capital and agrarian labour (Bernstein, 2003, Cousins and Scoones, 2010:46). Bernstein (2003, 2007a) argues that the Agrarian Question needs to be understood in the context of specific time periods. The initial concern of the classical Agrarian Question was with transitions to capitalism and Bernstein labels this the “agrarian question of capital”. Byres (1991, 1996) distinguish three aspects of this classical Agrarian Question (AQ). In the first instance, Agrarian Question 1

(AQ1) concerns the role of agrarian classes in the struggle for democracy or socialism. AQ2 relates to concerns with the transformation of the social relations of production and the development of productive forces in agriculture in the transition to capitalism. AQ3 addresses the issue of how such transformations contribute, or otherwise impede, accumulation necessary for industrialisation. Byres (1996) opts to reformulate the Agrarian Question as “agrarian transition”, and stresses that the core of this reformulation is what he terms “historical puzzles”: agrarian transitions which do not necessarily imply the full development of capitalist social relations of production in agriculture as part of the establishment of the dominance of capitalism within a particular social formation (Byres, 1996:15).

Bernstein (2007a, 2010) argues that there is no longer an agrarian question of capital today. He asserts that the transition to capitalism has already taken place, and in instances where these transitions have not fully taken place (as in the global South); the original formulation of the question is no longer relevant, given the dominance of capitalism as a world phenomenon. Bernstein introduces the notion of an “agrarian question of labour”, suggesting that where contemporary capitalism fails to absorb the labour force by providing adequate and secure employment, particularly in the South, land redistribution may acquire a new significance (Bernstein, 2007b:29). Other Marxists, however, contend that the agrarian question of capital has *not* been fully resolved. Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:178), for example, assert that the Agrarian Question has assumed new relevance in the context of neo-liberal globalisation and global circuits of food production. They (2010:180) maintain that:

... the concerns of the agrarian question, a problematic that offers a remarkably flexible, subtle, and nuanced analysis of the modes and mechanisms of agrarian change, has returned with a vengeance as capitalism enters a new phase in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis.

This brings into view other broad themes and issues that agrarian political economy is concerned with. Whereas mainstream economics can be regarded as somewhat a-historical in its basic stance, Marxist studies consider the historical origins of social change (Smalley, 2013:14). Capitalism involves the commodification of labour and land, which was not the case in pre-capitalist societies. For Marxists, the notion of “*primitive accumulation*” is a

primary concern. Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:180) define “*primitive accumulation*” as the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production to create a class of workers that are ‘free’ (through their release from ownership of the means of production) to sell their labour power. David Harvey re-conceptualised the notion of “*primitive accumulation*” as ‘*accumulation by dispossession*’ (Harvey, 2003) and highlights the importance of understanding how historic structures and processes of accumulation inform present-day processes of agrarian change.

Smalley (2013) labels the outcomes of primitive accumulation processes in the developing world as the legacy of ‘*imperial capitalism*’ (Smalley, 2013:19). In the South African context, imperial capital is blamed for destroying pre-colonial natural economies and then preventing African producers from “accumulating from below” (ibid: 19). Seminal research conducted by Bundy (1979) points out that opportunities to become successful African petty commodity producers in South Africa existed in the early period of industrialisation, but these were increasingly constrained by discriminatory policies. This links to Cousins’ (2011:97) argument that Lenin’s typology of class differentiation is problematic in the Southern African context because capitalist development “involved the deliberate creation of labour reserves in the countryside, alongside the appropriation of large areas of productive land for an emerging (white) capitalist farming class, constraining the emergence of an African peasantry”. As anticipated, the legacies of imperial capital are therefore key considerations for agrarian reform policies in post-apartheid South Africa. For example, a critical issue for land and agrarian reform policies is therefore the level of farming interest and agricultural skill that currently exists amongst former Bantustan residents (Levin and Weiner, 1997:7). Informed perhaps by Michael Lipton’s (1977) seminal work, there has been a shift recently in favour of the idea that some black smallholder farming capacity exists, but the extent of this capacity remains hotly debated (Levin and Weiner, 1997:7; Cousins, 2011). Another outcome of imperial capitalism in the South African context is the dualistic agrarian structure that the post-apartheid government needed to address (see below for further discussion).

Bernstein (2010) highlights a central concern of agrarian political economy - the continued persistence of peasant farms. A common theme in the explanations for why peasant farming continues to exist in the modern world is that capitalist agriculture devises ways of subsuming or incorporating small-scale or family farmers (“peasants”)⁸ within its market structures and dynamics of accumulation. That is, as long as peasants provide benefits to capital, they will be allowed to persist (cf. Kautsky’s arguments on the Agrarian Question). Bernstein (2010:97) argues that family farms should therefore not merely be seen as either competing with or independent of capitalist corporations. Peasants are often dependent on inputs (i.e. ‘upstream’ activities and products) or processing (i.e. ‘downstream’ activities) provided by agri-business capital and might have entered into contracts or other arrangements with capitalist interest. He points out that peasants often turn to commodity production, and eventually capitalist farming, on their own initiative (ibid.: 97). Peasant responses to commodification have not been one of simple acceptance or rejection; they are often marked by a complicated processes of negotiation (ibid: 97) that can not only ensure the continued existence of peasants but also cause differentiation amongst them. Bernstein (2010:117) therefore strongly rejects any conceptualisation of a homogeneous peasantry, citing Harris White and Goopta’s (2000: 89) call for the need to differentiate between a “struggle over class” which precedes and is a condition of “struggle between classes”. Reimer’s (1996) and DaVilla Villiers’ (1998) classification of rural differentiation in terms of ‘Rural Worlds 1, 2 and 3’ also attempts to capture the differentiated nature of peasant involvement and relations with agribusiness/capital. The notion of an archetypal, self-sufficient subsistence-oriented peasant, who does not purchase any inputs, market any produce or sell any labour power, is no longer regarded as useful by many scholars, given the near-universal penetration of commodity relations in the contemporary world (Bernstein, 2010; Cousins, 2012). Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:178), for example, argue that the modern-day dynamic of globalisation necessitates a new way of depicting and understanding the continued existence of the peasantry. They assert that:

⁸ Bernstein (2006:454) asserts that “peasants” are best understood as petty commodity producers subject to processes of class differentiation. Some succeed in becoming small rural capitalist farmers, some are able to reproduce themselves as small farmers but others need to engage in wage labour. Cousins (2011:93) cautions that authors tend to use the terms ‘peasant’ and ‘smallholder’ interchangeably, but that the basis for these distinctions are not always clear. Here, my references to ‘peasants’ or small plot producers denote the categories ‘petty commodity producers’ and “worker peasants” in Cousins’ (2011) typology.

Trying to do both (operating as petty capitalist of little consequence and as workers with little power) ... brought with it a set of challenges; while most survived, and many resiliently and indeed defiantly held on to their agrarian culture... they did not prosper. Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2010:178)

Understanding the continued existence of small plot/"peasant" farm production activities (as can be found in the former Bantustan areas in South Africa) and exploring the wider implications is a central concern of scholars in the field of agrarian political economy. The role of small-scale farming in processes of agrarian reform is at the centre of disagreements and debates amongst political economy scholars.

"Radical political economists" (see Cousins and Scoones' 2010 typology), tend to highlight the fact that peasants are under threat from processes of *de-peasantisation* and argue that they need to be nurtured and protected against agribusiness expansion; in addition, they often advance the concept of food sovereignty as an alternative objective (Borras, 2008). Other scholars more modestly suggest that the ability to use even small plots of land for cultivation, for food provisioning and for sale of crops has promise for rural residents, and can form the basis of processes of "accumulation from below" (Cousins, 2013, Hall, 2009). There are also those who question the benefits of small-scale farming altogether, arguing that production is 'efficient' only because households do not calculate the cost of their own labour, and engage in "self-exploitation" (Bernstein, 2010:94). Small-scale producers often rely on unpaid family members committed to long hours of back-breaking work (Smalley, 2013:13). Sender and Johnston (2004), James (2007) and Bernstein (1998) also voice their reservations about an uncritical attachment to the small-scale farming model. Analysts, who use a livelihood lens to examine agrarian change tend to stress the importance of the de-agrarianisation of rural economies witnessed in recent years and support Bryceson (1999) in questioning whether agriculture should still remain the core focus of rural development policies (Sender and Johnston 2004, Du Toit, 2013).

Hebinck *et al.* (2011) caution that those arguing against the merits of small-scale farming approaches should not simply assume that large-scale commercial farming is in fact efficient or profitable. These authors are strongly opposed to the arguments articulated by Sender and Johnston (2004) in favour of an agrarian reform strategy focussed only on

expanding wage employment and improving the conditions of workers on commercial farms. They accuse Sender and Johnston (2004) of a seemingly uncritical belief in the productivity of large-scale commercial farming and assert that “the South African example shows the exact opposite in that commercial farms are expelling labour rather than creating rural employment” (Hebinck, *et al.* 2011:8). Bernstein (2006:454) also questions the benefits of large-scale farming, asserting that “the productive superiority of large-scale farming is often contingent on conditions of profitability underwritten by direct and hidden subsidy and forms of economic and ecological rent”. Scholars such as Tania Li (2011) support, in principle, the desire of many rural people to diversify out of farming, but maintain that small farm plots should continue to provide an economic safety net in the absence of alternative employment and social welfare. Also appealing is the view of Bernstein (2006:458) who rejects both large-scale and small-scale models as *the* preferred option on *a priori* grounds, emphasising instead the promotion of agriculture that will be able to meet the needs of a growing urban world population.

Amongst agrarian political economists there is also a shared focus on the role of elites in processes of agrarian change and in accumulation trajectories (Smalley, 2013). It is often anticipated that locally-based elites might appropriate resources at the expense of small-scale producers (Mueller, 2011). Mamdani’s (1987) twofold model of capital accumulation, informed by Lenin’s work on the Agrarian Question, is of particular importance. Based on his analysis of rural change in Uganda, Mamdani proposed that when capital accumulation involved not only a village bourgeoisie which emerged from the peasantry, but also an external bourgeoisie of merchants and landlords using their political connections to acquire land and loans, this should be termed “*accumulation from above*” (Smalley, 2013:20). This he contrasted with “*accumulation from below*”, which involves internal class dynamics.

3.3. Agrarian change and land reform in post-apartheid South Africa through the lenses of political economy

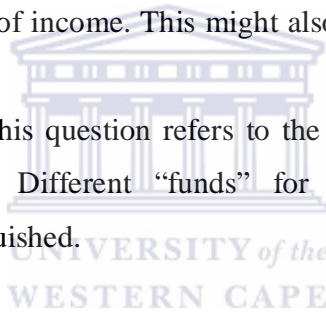
Bernstein's (2010:22) "four questions of political economy" provide a useful lens on agrarian change in post-apartheid South Africa. He suggests that in order to understand the social relations of production and reproduction, the following four questions should be asked:

(1) *Who owns what?* This question concerns the social relations of different property regimes: how the means of production and reproduction are distributed.

(2) *Who does what?* This refers to the social division of labour. Who performs what activities of production and social reproduction? The issue of gender and different classes in agrarian and capitalist societies are the key concerns in terms of this question.

(3) *Who gets what?* This question refers to the social division of the fruits of labour, which is often termed the distribution of income. This might also include non-monetary forms of income.

(4) *What do they do with it?* This question refers to the social relations of consumption, production and accumulation. Different "funds" for consumption, replacement and ceremonial activities are distinguished.



In this section I discuss key aspects of agrarian change in post-apartheid South Africa through the lens of some of these questions. This allows me to further explore the utility of key concepts and theories from agrarian political economy for analysing agrarian change in South Africa.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, land and production, poverty and power are key coordinates of the terrain of the agrarian question and of the prospects for agrarian reform (Bernstein, 1998:1). For Bernstein, South Africa's Agrarian Question display "striking peculiarities and complexities", partly because the dispossession of land through colonial expansion was more extensive and systematic, more protracted and probably more violent, than elsewhere in Africa (Bernstein, 1998:2). He describes these aspects of the history of South Africa as "extreme" and in some respects "exceptional", especially in terms of the way in which capitalism developed (Bernstein, 1996).

In relation to the question, “*who owns what?*”, Hart (2002:11) asserts that in 1994, the ‘land question’ in South Africa invoked “memories of how the forces of colonialism and apartheid dispossessed black South Africans of 87 percent of their land and packed them into the reserves or Bantustans comprising of 13 percent of the land area”. Inequality in land ownership in South Africa is a central legacy of colonial conquest and violent dispossession, and according to Hart (2002:11) it “continues to carry tremendous symbolic and moral force”. It is thus unsurprising that debates on the issue of land and agrarian reform since 1994 have been dominated by a focus on the painfully slow pace of delivery, frustrating the urgent need to reverse the gross racial inequality in land ownership (Ntsebeza, 2006).

Bernstein (2011:2) describes South African capitalist agriculture in 1994 as highly diversified by branch, production and regional location, with its diversity also marked by distinctive social, political and institutional features. He also observes that capitalist agriculture in South Africa displays similar tendencies to capitalist agriculture elsewhere, in terms of differentiation, concentration, technical change, labour processes, and vertical integration with agribusiness enterprises, albeit mediated through the racial order and its inherited impacts (Bernstein, 2011:2). Ntsebeza (2007:6) notes that “while colonialism and apartheid systematically undermined African agriculture, white farmers, through substantial state subsidies and the availability of cheap black labour, developed a model of large-scale commercial farming still dominant today”.

In 1994, the post-apartheid South African government also had to contend with the fact that great majority of black rural residents (including farmers and would-be farmers) were confined to the crowded ‘communal lands’ of the former Bantustans. Under apartheid, Bantustans were viewed as both labour reserves and dumping grounds (Levin and Weiner, 1997:26). Black agriculture was regarded as underdeveloped, and rural areas as dominated by processes of proletarianisation, while Bantustan residents were viewed by many as ‘functionally urbanised’ (ibid: 47). Bernstein (1998:4) estimates that about 15 million people, roughly half of the African population in 1994, lived in these Bantustans, and their

poverty presented the new post-apartheid government with an immensely complicated challenge.

Land and agrarian reform is often implemented with a view to “break with the past”, particularly by transforming the uneven ownership of land (Hebinck, *et al.* 2011:1), and post-1994 land and agrarian reform in South Africa began with a similar agenda. Bernstein (1997: 29; 2013) observes however, that at the end of apartheid, the original notion of distributing “land to the tiller” as envisaged in the Freedom Charter in 1955 (when millions of black South Africans worked on white farms as coerced labour), was not possible after 1994. Four decades of mechanization and evictions had effectively removed many black South Africans from being “tillers” of the land. The newly-elected ANC government’s new policies reflected urban bias and did not have a very clear policy vision regarding the residents of the Bantustans (Bernstein, 1998; 2011).

In relation to the question “*who does what?*”, Bernstein maintains that the newly-elected ANC government in 1994 was simply not prepared for the ‘nice talk’ of the World Bank policy advisors who advocated a land reform programme based on the promotion of economically efficient small-scale farmers, poverty alleviation and a redistribution target of 30 percent of white-owned agricultural land (Bernstein, 2011). Bernstein (2013:24) emphasises that two principal reform scenarios were urged upon the democratic government. One was the argument for (orderly) land redistribution and ‘small farmer development’, as informed by Lipton’s “pro-small farm thesis” (Lipton 1996). The other was provided by the report of the Macroeconomic Research Group (MERG), commissioned by the ANC-aligned Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which recommended a key focus on improving the wages and conditions of farm workers. Bernstein (1998:24) also stresses the role of enlightened (“*verligte*”) agricultural economists within the Development Bank of Southern Africa, who quickly aligned themselves with, and started to promote the World Bank rhetoric, compared to a rather ill-prepared National Land Claims Commission (NLC), mostly unable to influence the negotiated route to South African land reform (Bernstein, 1998; 2011). Similarly, O’Laughlin *et al.* (2013:8) assert that the reconstruction of an agrarian structure dominated

by large-scale commercial farms was not clearly articulated as an objective in post-1994 policy documents such as the Reconstruction and Development programme (ANC 1994) or the White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997).

In relation to reform of the inherited agrarian structure, it is evident that land reform has made little impact to date. Since 1994, commercial farms have continued to produce almost all marketed agricultural production (Vink and Van Rooyen, 2009) and Bernstein (2013:4) reports further concentration of both farm ownership and production (2013:4). He indicates that the estimated 60,000 or so (white) commercial farms in 1994 had reduced to 45 000 by 2002, suggesting a concentration of landed property that accelerated in the first decade after 1994 (ibid.: 4). The AGRI SETA Sector Analysis Report (2010:4) estimates a further drop to 37 000 commercial farms by 2007. Bernstein observes that these figures suggest how effectively “organised white commercial agriculture” was able to position itself for the new dispensation (ibid: 1). In terms of production, little has changed since 1994 - by 2002, it is estimated that large farms received 99,7 percent of all profits made from farming (Makgetla, 2010:32). O’Laughlin *et al.* (2013:9) report that some large farms have been purchased by black South Africans with access to capital, but the numbers remain unclear. Alongside deregulation and concentration, employment on commercial farms have dropped from 1,1 million in 1993 to an estimated 800,000 in 2007 Makgetla (2010:36).

Anseeuw and Ducastel (2013:49) identify renewed interest in agricultural investment as a result of: (1) the global 2008 economic crisis and (2) improved prospects for returns on agricultural investments. They report a higher level of involvement of banks and other financial institutions in the South African agricultural sector and see this as its “financialisation”, thus implying that financial logics now dominate this sector (ibid.: 48; see also AGRI SETA Sector Analysis Report, 2010). Furthermore, they contend, beyond industrialisation and mechanisation, there are also increasing processes of “corporatisation” taking place, with control over various value chains being established either through direct acquisition or contractualisation, giving a few actors in the value chain a great deal of control (ibid.: 49). Anseeuw and Ducastel (2013:49) identify banks and former co-

operatives now operating as large private companies as the main actors in the South African agricultural context, with significant consequences for agrarian change trajectories.

At the other end of the spectrum, around 2,5 million black rural households, mostly located in the former Bantustans, engage in some form of farming, mostly to produce some food for their own consumption (Aliber and Hall, 2010:13). It is also estimated that between 250,000 and 300, 000 black farmers derive some cash income from agriculture and are sometimes seen as 'commercially oriented', but many of these, including those on irrigated land, struggle to 'get by' (ibid.: 14). Neves and Du Toit (2013:94) assert that rural livelihoods in South Africa are marked by both continuities with the past and changes. They highlight the recent impacts of jobless de-agrarianisation, the high dependence of rural dwellers on the state's social assistance and the ascendancy of supermarkets. Neves *et al.* (2009) assert that social grants have in effect become the most significant source of income for many rural households, and Statistics South Africa (2011) concludes that rural dwellers are now increasingly becoming "consumers" rather than "producers of food". Neves and Du Toit (2013: 94) argue that present-day rural livelihoods in South Africa are marked by enduring racialised and spatial legacies of poverty with over 25 million South Africans living below the 2 US dollars per day poverty line in 2000. Westaway, (2011) suggests that for residents, living in these "grand-apartheid territories", even though they enjoy political freedom, nothing much has changed in their economic circumstances and in their daily struggles: they remain "Bantustan" residents, disenfranchised and marginalised. O' Laughlin *et al.* (2013:9) conclude that:

"In effect, the agrarian dualism that is deeply rooted in South Africa's distinct trajectories of capitalist accumulation has been reproduced after the end of apartheid"

The AGRI SETA Sector Analysis Report (2010:8) also warn that "dualism" might be a useful way of describing the agricultural sector, both in terms of understanding the economics of the sector and planning skills development interventions, but the two main categories (large-scale and small-scale farmers) have their limitations. They point out that "within the commercial sector there are large established and thriving farming businesses but there are also smaller ones that struggle to survive, and within the less formal sector

there are emerging farmers striving to achieve commercial success (ibid.: 8; see also Vink and Van Rooyen, 2009). However, a fixation on ‘viability’ measured in terms of the dominant large-scale commercial model, and a limited understanding of small-scale farming practices, might result in limited options for those in the less formal farming sector (Cousins and Scoones, 2010). Hall (2009) and Cousins (2011) highlight a consistent neglect of policy options for smallholder production either for consumption or for the market. Between the poles of tiny food security gardens, on the one hand and huge commercial farms, on the other, is a “missing middle” (Hall, 2009:3). Cousins (2011:103) maintains that the untapped potential of smallholder farms to produce a marketable surplus could fill the gap created by this “missing middle” and the option of promoting “accumulation from below” could allow a radical reconfiguration of the inherited agrarian structure.

The AGRI SETA Sector Analysis Report (2010:8) asserts that it is particularly important to also have a better understanding of the category of “emerging” farmers in terms of dualism in the agricultural structure. These “emerging farmers”, they insist, should include: those who may be striving to move from subsistence farming to a more commercial model; those who have benefited from land reform processes and want to establish an agricultural enterprise on the land that has been allocated to them and those who have made use of BEE funding to acquire a stake in a farm and are trying to achieve profitability (ibid.: 9) The “emerging farming sector” is often the stated focus of many of the government’s efforts to achieve transformation, but incoherent policy directives could potentially leave the agrarian structure mostly intact, while changing only the pattern of racial ownership.

Hall (2004b:213) observes that a new alliance of class interests in post-apartheid South Africa is committed to de-racialising the land ownership pattern, but the strategies and policy directives being used to achieve this objective clearly reflect an underlying motivation to retain the current structure of the commercial farming sector rather than radically restructure it. She highlights the limited options or models of production available to land reform beneficiaries arising from the South African governments’ decision to pursue market-based land acquisitions, their unwillingness to subdivide large farms, and

government's emphasis on business planning aimed at maintaining the existing production regimes on acquired commercial farms (ibid.: 14).

The stated aims for the introduction of joint ventures, equity share schemes, contract farming and strategic partnerships (also known as inclusive business models) in the context of South Africa's restitution programme were to assist in de-racialising agriculture and transforming the dualism of the inherited agrarian structure. Hall (2009:18) cautions, however, that dualism in the agrarian structure could continue as a result of incoherence in policy, but also because of deliberate policy choices made in the context of the dominance of neo-liberal discourses. The implications and possible consequences of the introduction of these models in terms of dualism in the South African agrarian structure are considered in chapter 8 of this thesis.

3.4. A theory of access



In order to help me to understand some of the outcomes of the inclusive business models initiated on restored Moletele land, the “theory of access” as conceptualised by Ribot and Peluso (2003) has a particularly strong appeal. I see this theory and its associated concepts as complementing those offered by leading theorists of agrarian political economy, as discussed above.

In the broader land tenure-related literature, the utility of ‘property’ as an analytical lens has been criticised as providing too narrow a view, and recent scholarship has emphasised instead the multiple mechanisms that open up, influence, hinder and close down access to resources (Sikor and Lund, 2009:2). There is an increasing recognition that property is only part of a larger picture of access to resources, because property rights are not the only way by which social actors can benefit from resources (ibid.: 4). “Access”, on the other hand, is regarded as an analytically broader concept that includes property as only means of access to resources and their benefits (Ribot, 1998). Ribot and Peluso thus suggest that an empirical focus on the issues of *who does* (and who does not) get to use, *what*, in *what ways* and *when* (i.e. in what circumstances) allows a better understanding of who actually

benefits from things and through what processes they are able to do so (ibid.: 154; *emphasis in the original*). The complementarity between this approach and that of agrarian political economy (as summed up in Bernstein's four questions, see above) is evident.

A brief clarification of the key terms and concepts is necessary. At the most basic level, von Benda-Beckmann *et al.* (2006:14) view property as relationships among social actors with regard to objects of value. Property relations exist at the level of laws and regulations, cultural norms and social values, actual social relationships, and property practices (Sikor and Lund, 2009:4). Property is therefore a legitimised claim, in the sense that the state or some other form of politico-legal authority sanctions it (ibid.: 4). Ribot and Peluso (2003) contend, however, that law or social norms do not sanction and encompass all forms of possession. They assert that it is equally important to acknowledge that social actors gain and maintain access to resources in many ways that do not amount to property (ibid.: 156).

They therefore introduce a definition of access as the *ability* to benefit from things – including material objects, persons, institutions and symbols (ibid.: 153; *emphasis in the original*) and assert, that a focus on *ability* rather than *rights*, as in most property theory, brings attention to a wider range of social relationships that can constrain or enable people to benefit from resources (ibid.: 154). They introduce a variety of access mechanisms which conditions people's access to resources and benefits. In addition to property, these mechanisms include technology, capital, markets, labour, knowledge, identities and social relations (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:159-160). Earlier, in 1998, Ribot provided an illustrative example of the various ways by which social actors were able to derive material benefit from resources without necessarily owning them, when he investigated the distribution of benefits along a charcoal commodity chain in Senegal, from extraction through processing, transport and trade to final use. He concluded then that “multiple mechanisms influence the distribution of benefits among social actors” (Ribot, 1998).

For Ribot and Peluso (2003:154) it is also important to acknowledge that some people and institutions control resource access while others must maintain their access *through* those who have control. Access analysis thus helps us to understand *why* some people or

institutions benefit from resources, *whether or not* they have rights to them (ibid.: 154). This is regarded as the primary difference between analysis of access and analysis of property. An earlier theorist, McPherson (1978), observed that the study of access is concerned with understanding the multiplicity of ways people that derive benefits from resources, including, but not limited to, property relations. The distinction between property and access therefore needs to be understood: property is about claims which are considered legitimate, while access is about “the ability to benefit”. The difference between access and property therefore implies that social actors may derive benefits from resources without holding property rights to them (Sikor and Lund, 2009:4). Correspondingly, formal property rights do not necessarily imply that the social actors holding them are able to derive benefits from these rights (ibid.: 5).

The expansive literature on common property and resource tenure has clearly shown that law can never completely delineate all the modes and pathways along complex and overlapping webs of power (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 156). Especially in instances where property rights are held on a communal basis, people may hold property rights to some resources without having the capacity to derive any material benefit from them (ibid.: 159, Rangan, 1997). Cousins (1997) argue that people lack “real rights” if such rights are promised in law but denied in practice. Verdery (2003) refers to this scenario as an example of “ineffective ownership”.

Ribot and Peluso (2003) theorise access as comprising “bundles and webs of power” that enable actors to gain control and maintain access. They propose that “locating access in a political economy framework provides a theoretical model of social change in terms of which social relations and differentiation emerge from co-operation and conflict over benefits within particular political economy moments” (ibid.: 162). The political economic aspect of the concept ‘access’ becomes evident when social action is divided into access *control* and access *maintenance* (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:158). *Control* refers to the checking and direction of action, the function of power directing and regulating action (Rangan, 1997:72) *Maintenance* of access on the other hand requires expending resources or powers to keep a particular sort of access (Berry, 1993). In terms of a focus on access *control* and *maintenance* where the relations between different sets of actors ultimately

influence the distribution and sharing of benefits, the notion of “power webs” are introduced by Peluso and Ribot (2003). The strands in these power webs and the bundles of power assigned to different actors are thus regarded as the means, processes and relations by which actors are enabled to gain *control* and *maintain* access to resources. Importantly, Ribot and Peluso (2003:159) postulate:

Because of the fragmented nature of control and maintenance and the webs and bundles of powers that constitute them, people cannot be divided neatly into classes, as in a traditional Marxist frame. Various types of power relations around a given set of benefits must be analysed to understand these webs of access.

The strands in these power webs and the bundles of power assigned to different actors are thus regarded as the means, processes and relations by which actors are enabled to gain *control* and *maintain* access to resources. Benefits can therefore be redistributed and captured in the course of changing social relations and legal frameworks as new conflicts and cooperative arrangements emerge (ibid.: 163). Access analysis is thus the process of identifying and mapping the mechanisms by which access is gained, maintained and controlled. Moreover, because access patterns change over time, they must be understood as processes. Access analysis involves: (1) identifying and mapping the flow of particular benefits of interest; (2) identifying the different mechanisms by which different actors involved gain control and maintain the benefit flow and its distribution and (3) an analysis of the power relations underlying the mechanisms of access involved in instances where benefits distribution are involved (ibid.: 163).

The key concepts of the theory of access as introduced by Peluso and Ribot (2003) are particularly useful in the context of the Moletele land claim and the strategic partnership arrangements established as part of the settlement of the claim. Here, the land is transferred to a Moletele community, but in order to ensure the continued production on the land, the Moletele is not allowed unfettered “access”. The community is therefore the rightful owner of the land but its *ability* to benefit from the resources is clearly delimited. The contestations and struggles that have erupted over those resources that have eventually come under the control of the Moletele community are influenced by the composition and nature of the different groupings, alliances and mechanisms that control the flow and

distribution of benefits. In the Moletele case, the role of the dominant discourse of the “business of commercial farming” and those able to engage in this discourse, which influences the distribution of benefits from the strategic partnerships, is illuminated by Ribot and Peluso’s theory (e.g. its focus on the use of information and technology to channel and dominate benefit distribution). Adopting Ribot and Peluso’s (2003) framing of ‘access’ would thus allow me to gain useful insights into who actually benefits from things and through what processes they are able to do so in the case of Moletele land partnerships arrangements. These issues are discussed in detail in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

As already mentioned, the common concern regarding the “event” of strategic partnership initiatives on Moletele land thus causes struggle/contestation and negotiation/compromise between differently positioned actors who strategize to articulate and enforce their interests, rights and access to resources. According to Olivier Sardan (1998:240) an “arena of struggle” is defined as “a place or event of concrete confrontation between social actors interacting on issues of common concern”. This conceptualisation emphasizes the fact that bargaining processes do not only take place within ‘political’ bodies, like parliaments or village councils, but in every ‘real’ meeting place of actors where they converge around resources or opportunities (Bastiaensen *et al.* 2006:8). A Marxist informed interpretation of the arena of struggle approach stresses the importance of acknowledging that ‘actor entities’ confronting each other in this arena should not be seen as representing the interest of only one social class or group (Swartz, 1996:79). Each actor entity is instead also an “arena of struggle,” in which different classes, groups and individuals compete for control or conduct struggles for legitimizing their access to resources. Within these arenas, actors struggle over valued resources or forms of capital, but they also ‘struggle’ over the very definition of what are to be considered “most valued resources” (Crehan & van Oppen, 1988, Swartz, 1996:79). It is therefore important that the complex web of meanings and the discourse actors deploy in order to weave their competing strategies and alliances are taken into account when we try to understand “arenas of struggle” (Crehan & van Oppen 1988). According to Renn (97:181) actors in this struggle try to influence the outcome of the collective decision process, but ultimately, the outcome of this struggle is determined by the cumulative interaction effects of competing group interests and strategies. Swartz (1996:146) in his exploration of Bourdieu’s field analysis thesis highlights the importance

of “arena rules” which requires “tacit acceptance of the rules of the game” amongst the competing actors, meaning specific forms of struggle are legitimized whereas others are excluded. Elwert and Bierschenk (1988:146) likens the “arena of struggle” conceptualization to an image of a complex chess game where some groups control more pawns than their competitors. Where some are allowed only a few moves while others (if necessary) can change the rules to their own advantage and where some actors might play according to rules others do not know, giving them an added advantage (ibid. :146). In line with this conceptual framing, I propose that the strategic partnership initiatives introduced on Moletele land epitomize “arenas of struggle”, discussed in more detail in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

The notion of “community” is interrogated in chapter 5 of the dissertation but it is deemed important to just briefly reflect on the use of conceptualisations of ‘the state’. Van Lynseele (2011:77) asserts, while the principle of “letting the market do its work” has certainly taken hold in the land redistribution programme, land restitution implies a more pro-active state intervention in terms of land acquisition and the selection of beneficiaries. Fay and James (2009:14) posit, since the state acts as both the arbiter and implementer of land claims, land restitution is a site where both the authority of “the state” and the language and notion of property gain currency. It is however important to bear in mind that the idea of an autonomous, unambiguous “state” is increasingly being critiqued. Li (2005:385) questions the framing of “the state” as a unified source of intention capable of producing coherent policies and plans. Mitchell (1991:78) recommends that an understanding of “the state” should be informed by examining the practices “through which the uncertain, yet powerful distinction between state and society is produced”. In this way, Mitchell reasons, we can account for the prominence of “the state” idea, without attributing to “the state a coherence, unity and absolute autonomy that it does not have” (ibid.: 78). Tania Li, therefore asserts that it is important to recognize, “rather than emerging fully formed from a single source, many improvement schemes are formed through an assemblage of objectives, knowledge, techniques and practices of diverse provenance” (Li 2005:386). Van Leynseele (2013:79) adopts the perspective as introduced by Li (2005) and argues that restitution in South Africa should also be conceptualized as “an arena of contested cultural politics”. Greenberg urges

us to understand the post-apartheid state's land reform policies "in the context of open class contestation *within* the state". From this perspective, "the state" could be conceptualised as an arena of struggle between, amongst others, actors on the left driven by the industrial working class (and their commercial farming allies) versus proponents calling for a smallholder farming approach to address the needs of the poorly resourced and mobilised in the South African society (Greenberg, 2010). This is also the perspective adopted in this dissertation with reference to "the post-apartheid state".

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the literature I reviewed to inform my selection of some of the concepts and tools I will be using for the analysis of my case study, the Moletele strategic partnership initiatives. Considering the wealth of literature available on issues, debates, theories and approaches pertaining to the political economy of agrarian change in South Africa, my discussion in this chapter is necessarily somewhat selective. My intention is to capture some of the key contours of the main debates that are relevant for understanding the dynamics, outcomes and wider implications of these inclusive business models in the context of both the South African land restitution programme and the broader terrain of agrarian reform.

I briefly reflected on some key debates regarding the agrarian structure and dynamics of agrarian change in post-apartheid South Africa where the state has committed to transforming the racialized pattern of ownership of productive land and even more so, to the reconfiguration of an agrarian structure dominated by large commercial farms. The different theoretical perspectives regarding the importance of smallholder farming and prospects for rural differentiation were reviewed. The need for a land and agrarian reform policy to disaggregate beneficiaries in terms of a diverse range of needs and requirements was highlighted. This part of the analysis concluded that in the post-apartheid context the needs of those who want to diversify out of farming, and the importance people attach to having small amounts of land to supplement their diets, should be catered for.

The utility of key concepts and theories derived from the tradition of agrarian political economy for the analysis of South African realities was also explored. Continuities between the apartheid and post-apartheid eras, as discussed by leading scholars, were described in terms of the reproduction of the inherited “dualism” of the agricultural structure, as well as and persistent poverty in the Bantustans. Key dynamics and shifts in the commercial agricultural sector since 1994 were also discussed. The ability of ‘organised white commercial capital’ to position themselves for the new dispensation was mentioned. In particular, processes of corporatisation and financialisation in the ‘formal’ agricultural sectors, with a number of new actors such as banks and investment companies now emerging, are certainly important considerations for understanding inclusive business models. Also of importance is the fact that notions of “emergent farmers” should include those individuals engaged in small-plot farming activities for commercial purposes, as well as the beneficiaries of land reform who expresses a need for access to land. In terms of the outcomes and trajectories of agrarian reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa, the neglect of small-scale production for markets and own consumption, incoherence of policy and the uncritical adherence to the notion of “viability” in terms of the large-sale commercial farming model are therefore highlighted. Land reform policy thus generally tends to neglect “the missing middle” that could be filled by small-scale producers, perhaps engaged in “accumulation from below”. It is noted that the narrative of strategic partnership and community-private partnership models also aim to ensure the continued use of commercial land. The manner in which new inclusive business models are currently structured, seems unlikely to create avenues that would allow the model to accommodate those among the beneficiary communities who would like to engage in farming (for consumption or for the market).

I have also discussed the ideas of Ribot and Peluso (2003) as conceptualised in their “Theory of Access” and I motivated why these concepts would be applicable in my analysis of inclusive business models. I concluded the chapter with a brief introduction of my conceptual understanding of the constructs: “arenas of struggles” and “the state”. In chapter 8 of the thesis I explore how different classes or subgroupings within the Moletele community are able to manage and control access to resources through different “power

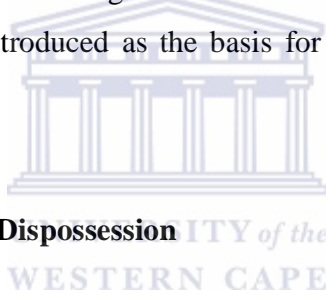
webs” emerging in the context of the Moletele initiatives making use of some of the conceptualisations introduced in this chapter.



Chapter 4: The Moletele land claim: history and settlement

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the historical background to the Moletele land claim, which provides a useful contextual understanding of both the timeline of dispossession and the nature of the impacts of successive legal instruments used to dispossess the community. I summarize key aspects of the Moletele land claim, and highlight contentions over leadership that emerged at the very inception of the claim. I provide a summary of the claim's progress to date (e.g. hectares of land transferred) and a description of how different parcels of land were 'clustered' to form consolidated farming units. I conclude the chapter by briefly outlining the management structures and the types of partnership arrangements that have been introduced as the basis for the transfer of land back to the Moletele community.



4.2 History of Ownership and Dispossession

The Moletele 'tribe'⁹ has a long and proud history. Some of the chiefs (*dikgoshi*) who have reigned over the tribe include Maripe, Sehlare (Maripe's successor), Panyana, Segodi, Mokibane and Seganyane (Niehaus, 2002:560). In terms of understanding the history of the Moletele people, there is consistent reference to the fact that the Moletele are an offshoot of the Pulana tribe. The earliest recorded oral testimonies of people from the area thus refer to the immigration of the Northern Sotho-speaking Pulana people, when they were driven from their 'homeland' near present day Waterval Boven (Niehaus, 2002:561). Most members of this group fled to Sekhukhuneland, but one group led by *Kgoshi* Maripe came to the area around Acornhoek. Here Maripe's group defeated the local Northern Sotho-speaking chiefdoms (such as Mosala eja Barama and Boraka) and incorporated them into his following. Maripe's enlarged chiefdom then climbed the mountain of Moholoholo (Niehaus *et al* 2001:178), from where they fought and defeated a powerful Swazi regiment

⁹ The term "tribe" is a very contentious construct, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

in a locally renowned battle in 1864. According to the oral tradition of the area, the Pulana won this battle and the Swazi retreated, leaving many people behind to settle amongst the Pulana (Thornton, 2002:15). According to the Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) Acceptance Report of 2004 (CRLR, 2004:38) claimants maintain that the Moletele people occupied this land before the 1864 war with the Swazi. This battle is referred to as the “battle of Moholoholo” and it is this event that informs the basis of the Pulana tribe’s claim on the land. (It is important to note that the Pulana ‘tribe’ included a number of sub-groupings, the Moletele, Mogane, Mohlala, Sehlare and Mashiele). The land claim is based on the view that “ownership of the land came through conquest and the shedding of blood, the ideology linking land to the divine authority of the ancestors” (Ritchken 1995:223). After the Moholoholo victory, *Kgoshi* Maripe, established a powerful chieftdom at the foot of the mountain. Some of the affidavits submitted by Moletele claimants in support of their claim, mention stories narrated to them by their fathers and grandparents, who fought this battle on the Moholoholo Mountain. There are also a number of affidavits of people who said they fought in this battle (Annexure M, CRLR Acceptance Report, 2004), The implied timeline that would make these ‘first-hand accounts’ of the battle plausible is of course highly questionable, but the memory of the battle is clearly embedded in what people decide to relate or pass down as “oral testimonies” to their descendants.

The ‘battle of Moholoholo’ was not the only struggle that took place in this part of the South African landscape. Niehaus (2002 and 2005) provides a succinct account of historic, inter-ethnic-struggles (but also alliances and cultural assimilation) between the Northern Sotho-speakers (of Pulana descent) and Shangaan-speaking (or Tsonga) people living in this part of the lowveld between 1861 and 1935. Thornton (2002:15) affirms similar patterns in this time period, stating that “people of all languages dispersed in all directions across the broader Bushbuckridge area; sometimes clashing but also settling peacefully amongst one another.” Thornton also contends that Pulana and Tsonga-speaking people “settled the area in a complex interplay of agreements and arrangements between people and chiefs, creating an ethnically very heterogeneous society still evident today” (Thornton, 2002:15). For the Moletele people, however – the primary focus in this thesis - the arrival

of the first white settler in the Hoedspruit area in the 1920's signalled the start of the real battle for land.

The Moletele people were named after *Kgoshi* Lekobo Moletele Chiloane, who died after the 1864 battle at Moholoholo mountain (Niehaus, 2002), but it was during the reign of *Kgoshi* Makgahlise Chiloane (ninth in the line of succession) in the 1920's that the first white colonial settlers arrived in the area now known as Hoedspruit (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008: 2). "The whites first arrived and met the *Kgoshi* and his tribe at his place, Mosweswe. This farm was later named Glenlyden by Mr J.A.H Travers after he seized it from them" (Mashile cited in the CPA Annual General Meeting minutes, 21 January 2010). The hardship of the Moletele people started then. All men, women, young girls and boys (upon their graduation from initiation schools) were taken to the farm of Mr Travers to provide free labour (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008:2). Following the promulgation of the 1913 Native Land Act a system of labour tenancy was enforced on all white owned farms (Niehaus, 2005:560). Those who resisted the intrusion of white settlers were evicted from the farms and were given a '*trekpas*' to go and find themselves somewhere else to live. Moreover, even those who wanted to stay on the farms were sometimes regarded as 'redundant' and were simply removed. This is clear from a letter dated 6 September 1920, in which the new landowner, Mr Travers, complains about the presence of "elderly natives" with stock on his land. In the letter he asks the Native Commissioner to have these people removed because "*they are no use for labour, no one else wants them on account of their stock ... and I cannot have a farm full of natives who cannot give service and are not allowed to pay rent*" (CRLR Acceptance Report, 2004, Annexure O). The dispersal of the Moletele people commenced during this time, for people began to move around, lost their stock and scattered all over the country looking for a better place to stay.

Many white farmers followed on the heels of Travers and were allocated new parcels of land to farm, and the indigenous people found they were either chased out or retained as a source of free labour. Thornton (2002:17) asserts that "during the 1920's and 1930's land was surveyed, divided into farms and sold by government to citizens of the Transvaal, the so-called *Boers* ... who became single white male owners irrespective of people already

settled on the land”. It was during this time of increasing white penetration into the area that *Kgoshi* Makgahlise Chiloane passed away (1929) and the chieftaincy was passed to his son Stephen, until he died in 1959 (Mashile, cited in the minutes of the MCPA Annual General meeting 21 January 2010). His son, *Kgoshi* Aneas Chiloane, took over the chieftaincy in 1960, while the area continued to be flooded by white farmers moving onto the land.

The period between 1936 and 1962 proved to be a tumultuous period for the Moletele people, characterized by population removals (to Acornhoek and other places) following the demarcation of “reserves” in terms of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936. Also during this time, the cultivation of white-owned land intensified and this meant that land available for use by African labour tenants resident on the farms, decreased (Niehaus, 2002: 558). People were increasingly removed to make way for cattle, and irrigation schemes were established. To compensate for the loss of access to fields, male labour tenants started working for longer periods of time on the farms, while increasing numbers of women and children were obliged to work with them (Niehaus, 2002). The Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 accelerated this process, according to Niehaus (2002:563), since it required all labour tenants to perform six months labour service and stated that surplus Africans had to be resettled on land purchased by the South African Native Trust (Niehaus, 2005:96). Moreover, thousands of Africans were being scattered throughout the Lowveld by the afforestation of large tracts of land on the slopes of Mount Moholoholo, and large numbers of people had to scatter and settle where they could, despite their loyalty to a specific chief located in a particular place (Ritchken 1995:96).

While households were being scattered all over the ‘released areas’ of the Lowveld, the Ramsey Report of 1940 was of great consequence for the Moletele people. This report argued that “in the Lowveld, tribalism defined as chiefly control over a specific area and ethnic group, had absolutely broken down and had not been substituted” (Niehaus, 2002:560). The report suggested that only one chief should be recognized per settlement, and given a tribal area to rule over on land purchased by the Trust. Consequently in 1940 the South African state recognised four chiefs resident on Trust land, and only one of the

three, *Kghoshi* Mathibela, was of Pulana descent. Only in 1948 did the South African Native Trust purchase a block of farms for the other two Northern Sotho-speaking chiefs namely Sethlare Chiloane and Pitas Mogane (Niehaus, 2002: 564). The colonial South African government's proficiency at deposing and marginalising rebellious chiefs, while rewarding those that did their bidding for them (King, 2005) is clearly evident in terms of this allocation: Neither Aneas¹⁰ Chiloane, who rebelliously still resided on the white-owned farm of Bedford, nor Matsikitsane Mashile, who rallied against child labour on the farm Welverdiend, were accommodated by the Trust (Niehaus, 2002:565). According to Ritchken, (1995: 292-297) this treatment of Northern Sotho-speaking people resulted in "great ethnic tensions between them and their Shangaan counterparts". In the case of the Muleteer, it is quite evident that the allocation of land to particular groupings, enabled the colonial powers to exploit traditional leadership systems for their own benefit by fostering competition and uncertainty between different ethnic groups (Ntsebeza, 2000).

The apartheid period saw great hardship for the Moletele people especially during the reign of *Kgoshi* Aneas Chiloane. He continued to challenge the legitimacy of the white settlers and vehemently opposed their oppressive practices. As a result of his actions he was resented by many of the white settlers in the area (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008). *Kgoshi* Aneas was eventually stabbed to death by one of his followers in 1969 (an incident still deeply mourned by many of the older Moletele people). In 1970, after the death of their *Kgoshi*, the last of the Moletele were removed from the farm Glenlyden and taken to Buffelshoek in the Bushbuckridge area.

In addition to being removed from their ancestral land, the areas where the Moletele were forced to resettle were also increasingly overcrowded and rife with conflict. The Moletele were scattered across the lowveld, but the majority were moved into the Bushbuckridge area. This was initially scheduled in terms of the 1913 Land Act as a "released area" reserved for the exclusive occupation of Africans (Niehaus, 2006; Niehaus & Stadler, 2004: 15). Subjects of the chiefs in the 'released area' now became tenants who had to pay rents

¹⁰ It should be noted that some references refer to *Kgoshi Ananeas* whilst others refer to Aneas. The Moletele people themselves just simply refer to their previous *kgoshi* as Neas. I have opted to use *Kgoshi* Aneas, which was confirmed by his son (Prince Jan Chiloane) and daughter (Suzan Chiloane) as the correct spelling of their father's name and title.

to private land holding companies for residential, cultivation and stockholding rights. With the advent of Apartheid in 1948 the South African Native Trust purchased all such company farms in the released areas, and Bushbuckridge became a “native reserve” administered by an Assistant Native Affairs Commissioner (Niehaus, 2006: 528).

To accommodate ever-increasing numbers of people moving into the reserves, an Agricultural Betterment scheme was introduced in 1960. Land was subdivided into new residential settlements, arable fields and grazing camps, with officers of the Trust assigned to forcefully relocate households into eight village sections (Niehaus, 2005: 94). Niehaus (2002:564) reports that betterment planning resulted in very few households being allocated any fields above a morgen (around 0.8 ha) in size, and cattle ownership was limited to a maximum of ten cattle per household. For the Moletele, betterment was devastating. Given the loss of access to the fields they had previously cultivated, the small size of the stands they had been relocated to, and being allowed to keep a maximum of only ten head of cattle, it “effectively almost destroyed any remnants of subsistence agriculture in these reserves”(Niehaus, 2006: 529). Niehaus observes that “soon labour migration became a career and agricultural production a mere supplement to the migrants’ wages for people in these reserves” (Niehaus, 2002:564).

Soon after betterment was implemented, the Bantu Authorities Act No 68 of 1951 was introduced. This allowed for the creation of “tribal, regional and territorial authorities”, initially run by the Native Affairs Department, but with the promise of self-government in the future. In accordance with this act, Bushbuckridge was allocated two new structures divided in terms of two ethnic zones: the Mapulaneng Regional Authority for the Northern Sotho-speaking people in the west, and the Mhlala Regional Authority for the Shangaan-speaking people in the east. Niehaus (2006:529) reports that in 1972 these structures were placed under the authority of the Lebowa and Gazankulu Bantustans respectively.

In Bushbuckridge, severe overcrowding, the virtual destruction of agricultural self-sufficiency and the deliberate and concerted efforts of the South African government to cause ethnic divisions amongst the newly resettled inhabitants, underpinned the emergence

of severe ethnic conflict in the Buffelshoek and Acornhoek areas of Bushbuckridge. This tension gradually escalated and finally erupted into violent clashes between resident “Shangaan” and “Basotho” people. In the opinion of Niehaus (2002:567 and 2005:95) the most important precursor to these violent clashes at Buffelshoek was the treatment of the Moletele tribe in terms of the allocation of land. The following of *Kgoshi* Aneas, who was perceived by many Northern Sotho-speakers as the Paramount Chief of the Pulasas, was granted only one farm to occupy in the Bushbuckridge area: Buffelshoek. In strong contrast, the less prestigious Mnisi chieftaincy was allocated nine farms (Ritchken, 1995: 224). Based on these facts, Ritchken (1995:225) described the allocation of land to these respective regional authorities as “*ad hoc* and blatantly unfair”. He maintains, “with the formation of the Bantustans, the Moletele became squeezed in by the Mhala area of the Gazankulu homeland on the east and the mountains on the west” (Ritchken, 1995: 225). The limited space available for settlement resulted in Northern Sotho-speaking residents becoming extremely irate about their inclusion into the Shangaan area of Mhala. In addition, a section of Buffelshoek was also demarcated as part of the scattered Lebowa Bantustan, which caused the people of the Pulana chieftaincy resident in Buffelshoek (i.e. the Moletele) to experience a heightened sense of marginalization (Niehaus, 2005: 94).

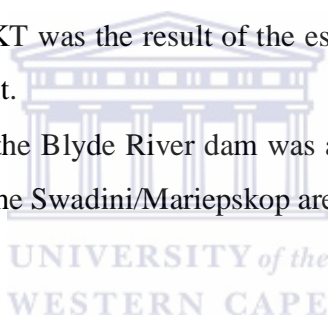
4.2.1 Summary of the process of dispossession

From this historical overview it is clear that the Moletele community were dispossessed of their rights in land after the stipulated 19th June 1913, as set out in terms of Section 2(1) of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 as amended, and Section 25(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The process of forced removal of the Moletele community from the farms in the Hoedspruit area is summarised as follow, based on the findings of the investigation by the Regional Land Claims Commission in Limpopo (CRLR 2004:36-39):

- Moletele people were dispossessed of their rights in land in terms of the Native Land Act of 1913 (Act 27 of 1913) which allowed only white people the right to own the land on which the Moletele had customary rights. In terms of the provision of the Natives

Land Act of 1913 specifically, a letter dated 09 November 1920 addressed to the Minister of Native Affairs indicated that when the Europeans took ownership, the farms Madrid 372, Eden 370, Glenlyden 371 and Bedford 366 were in fact occupied by Moletele people, who were left with no alternative but to become farm labourers or be removed from the land.

- In terms of the provisions of the Native Trust Land Act of 1936 (Act 18 of 1936) there is proof that the Moletele people were evicted from the farms Dunstable 240, Richmond 214, Scotia 494KT and Steenveldt.
- The Moletele were also removed from the farm Driehoek 510, according to a letter dated 6th September 1951, in terms of Section 12 and 14 of the Group Areas Act of 1950.
- Their removal from Portion 8 of the farm Antioch 240KT, Berlin 209KT, Welverdiend 243KT and Happyland 241KT was the result of the establishment and extension of the peri-urban area in Hoedspruit.
- Finally, the construction of the Blyde River dam was also used to remove people from what is currently known as the Swadini/Mariepskop area.



4.3 The lodgement of the Moletele claim

Since the 1970s the Moletele people had been trying to claim back rights to their ancestral land (Legal Resources Centre Submission to ACLA, 1992)¹¹. In 1981 they made a claim for the return of one farm (Glenlyden) for grazing purposes and in later years handed over a memorandum to then Minister Piet Koornhof in this regard (Legal Resources Centre submission to ACLA, 1992). They also approached various government ministers of the Lebowa Bantustan regarding their claim to land, but all these efforts had been to no avail. In 1991 the De Klerk government repealed the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and appointed an Advisory Committee on Land Allocation (ACLA) to make recommendations on the disposal of state land, including restoration to dispossessed landowners. Representatives of the Moletele decided to lodge their claim with the Advisory Committee on Land Allocation

¹¹ Included as an Appendix in the CRLR Acceptance Report for the Moletele land claim, 2004).

(ACLA) in 1992. Their sustained and concerted effort to get back their land, culminated in a formal land claim lodged on behalf of the Moletele to the former ACLA on the 8th of November 1995 (CRLR, 2004).

4.3.1 Some contentious issues

Initially, Mr BA Chiloane lodged an individual claim for land his family resided on, and Mr E Chiloane and Mr AL Chiloane lodged a claim for 28 farms on behalf of the Moletele community. After an initial investigation of the claims by the CRLR, it was concluded that the claims lodged on behalf of the Moletele community and the one lodged by Mr BA Chiloane were in fact for the same people. It was then recommended that the claims be consolidated into one community claim and subsequently the claimants took a resolution, on the 26th of September 2003 at the Moletele Traditional Council office, to merge the land claims into one community claim, under the name “Moletele Community Land Claim”, (CRLR 2004:35). In terms of the resolution it was also decided that community members would empower their traditional council to lodge the claim on their behalf (i.e. of the people who were actually dispossessed of their land rights and their descendants) (CRLR 2004:35).

During the claim verification process it was discovered that Mr NA Letebele had lodged a claim on behalf of the Ba Ga-Letebele, Mpuru and Moraba communities, and that *Kgoshi* Moraba had lodged a claim on behalf of the Moraba Tribal Authority; in both instances, on some of the very same properties claimed by the Moletele community. The Moletele, Ba Ga-Letebele, Mpuru and Moraba communities then took a resolution, on the 29th of July 2004 at Acornhoek, to merge their land claims into one community land claim under the name “Lekaung Community Land Claim”. According to the CRLR Acceptance Report (2004) the claims were merged in order to “eliminate the problem of competing land claims”¹². For the purpose of this study the focus was on the properties that are claimed exclusively by the Moletele community, and not those consolidated under the Lekaung

¹² If the Land Restitution Act Amendment Bill of 2013 comes into effect, this problem will mostly likely resurface, as there are still conflicts regarding the merger of the claims.

Community Land Claim, which is still highly contentious and in the process of being negotiated.

Apart from the challenging nature of the claim due to competing claims, the conflictual nature of the Moletele land claim was also evident in terms of the internal community dynamics that had surfaced during the land claim process. After the death of *Kgoshi* Aneas, the chieftancy was headed by his brother Masotja, who became the acting *kgoshi* of the tribe. When Mosatja passed away in 1990, the currently reigning *Kgoshi* Abuti Chiloane (the son of the late Aneas) was supposed to take up his rightful place to become the *kgoshi* of the Moletele tribe (Mashile, cited in the minutes of the MCPA Annual General Meeting Report, 21 January 2010). At this point in time however, *Kgoshi* Abuti was regarded as too young and just not ready to take on the responsibility of tribal matters. For this reason, *Nduna* Enos Chiloane was elected and appointed as the *Kgoshi's* legal guardian, also granting him authority on all matters pertaining to the Moletele community land claim. While negotiations for the resolution of the claim were still taking place, *Kgoshi* Abuti declared that he was ready to assume his duties and took over authority for leading the land claims process from Enos Chiloane.

A number of decisions made and agreements signed by *Nduna* Enos Chiloane, during the interim phase of the claim, in his capacity as 'care taker' and legal custodian, were, however, deemed highly controversial. This resulted in the expulsion of *Nduna* Chiloane from the traditional council. He was denounced as "the one who sold out the right of the community" because he signed an agreement for financial compensation in regards to some of the land under claim, currently owned by Swadini Aventura Forever Resort. As a consequence of his actions, the Moletele Traditional Council decided that his title and privileges as an *nduna* of the Moletele should be revoked. Despite being stripped of his title, Enos Chiloane established a rather vocal group of devoted followers, who decided to "leave" with him. Chiloane and his group of followers assert, however, that they are being ostracized from traditional council matters, and group members maintain that only Mr Chiloane now acts on their behalf. This conflict with the Chiloane grouping has been linked to subsequent violent clashes and death threats among the Moletele (Marc Wegerif, Nkuzi

Times, 2004), causing fracturing of allegiances among the Moletele with far reaching consequences for the resolution of the claim.

During the course of this research (2009-2013), the subgroup of the Moletele under the leadership of Mr Enos Chiloane still conducted bi-weekly meetings to talk about progress with the land claim. This sub-grouping I conceptualized as Dissident Group 1. This sub-grouping consisted of approximately 150 families who still recognize the authority of *Kgoshi* Abuti, but they felt that their interests were better articulated by Mr Chiloane. There was also a subgrouping of older women who gathered on Sundays after church to talk about the progress with the claim. This group of dissidents involves an estimated 30 families who have mandated Mr Marius Chiloane to represent their interests in terms of the land claim. This group I have conceptualized as “Dissident Group 2”. Both these groupings questioned the legitimacy of the MCPA, stating that they were feeling marginalized and, that their interests were being ignored by the MCPA. They wanted to be recognized as groupings that were distinctively independent from the authority of the MCPA. During interviews with both groupings they were seemingly not aware of each other or of the MCPA activities. They articulated their interests and expectations in terms of a desired outcome where they are all allowed to return to their land. The role of the dissident groupings in shaping outcomes and processes in the Moletele land claim is discussed in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

4.3.2 Determination of qualification

After the consolidation of different claims into one Moletele Community Land Claim, the Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) in Limpopo accepted the land claim by the Moletele Community in 2004 as a ‘prima facie’ valid land claim in terms of Section 2 of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994. The investigation by the CRLR thus concluded that the Moletele community was dispossessed and removed in furtherance of racially discriminatory laws as contemplated in Section 2(1) of the Restitution of Land rights Act; that no equitable redress (compensation) was given to the dispossessed; and that the land claim was lodged before the 31 December 1998 cut-off date. The community lodged claims on 28 farms in the Maruleng area, but some of the properties they claimed

had been subdivided and consolidated into other farms. This brought the total number of farms under claim to 42, with approximately 516 individual portions. The claim was then gazetted on the 20th of August 2004 in terms of government notice no 1665 of 2004. The CRLR realized a little later that some properties had been left out of the gazette notice. The notice was amended and published on the 15th of April 2005, in government notice no 536 of 2005.

4.4 The restitution landscape

It is important to point out that this study focused on realities in two separate geographic areas. The first is the actual land that is being claimed by the Moletele community, located in and around the town of Hoedspruit. The second area is where the community currently resides in Buffelshoek and Acornhoek, located in the Bushbuckridge area demarcated as part of the Mpumalanga province (Figure 1.1).

The Moletele claim was lodged on land in the Limpopo province, Bohlabela Municipal district and comprises families who were forcefully removed between the 1920s and 1971. The land under claim is bordered by the Klaserie River to the east, the Drakensburg Mountains to the west, the Olifants River to the north and Mapulaneng to the south (CRLR 2004:3). Older members of the claimant community point out that the CRLR demarcation aligns with their recollection of their boundaries in the past and illustrates the historic tendency of ‘tribes’ to use rivers and mountains as landmarks to define their territories. This recollection coincides with Thornton’s assertion that “traditional boundaries in the area were often associated with historical events such as battles, rivers, valleys or hills” (Thornton 2002:17).

4.5 Handover, and settlement to date

In July 2007, the Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture handed over 3 453 hectares (on 26 parcels of land) to the Moletele community, represented by the Moletele Communal Property Association, with Mr Thandos Mashile elected as the chairperson. At the land

handover celebration the then Minister of Land Affairs and Agriculture, Ms Lulu Xingwana enthused that the successful conclusion of this claim would make the Moletele community one of the “biggest owners of agricultural and ecotourism land in the area (Xingwana, 2007). The Minister also stated that the transfer of land could be regarded as the proverbial “land of milk and honey” being transferred back to the rightful owners and she promised that this transfer was only “the tip of the iceberg” with many more transfers to follow (Xingwana, July, 2007). Fulfilling her promise, the amount of land transferred increased to 7 141 hectares (on 42 parcels), valued at R 183 million, by the end of 2010. With the additional transfer of Eden farm, the value of land transferred at the end of 2013 was estimated at R 242 million (Farm transfer timeline and costs is provided in Table 4.1). The map depicted in Figure 4.1 shows how the 7 141 ha of land that have been transferred back to the Moletele have been consolidated into productive units. Note that the 7 141 ha transferred to date represents a meagre 10% of the total amount of land under claim. The legitimacy of the claim to the full 40 000 ha is still under challenge by a group of white commercial farmers (the land owners).

The claim included two properties that could not be restored back to the community, as these are both nature reserves. In these cases the claimants opted for financial compensation which amounted to R2 897 606.00. Land acquisition has taken place in four different phases at a total cost of R 183 million; in terms of the Restitution Discretionary Grant a total of 4 845 000 has been paid, Settlement Planning Grant payments amounted to R2 325 6000, and Restitution Section 42C grants amounted to R 35 166 602. At the time of writing, the Section 42C grants had been approved but had not yet been paid.

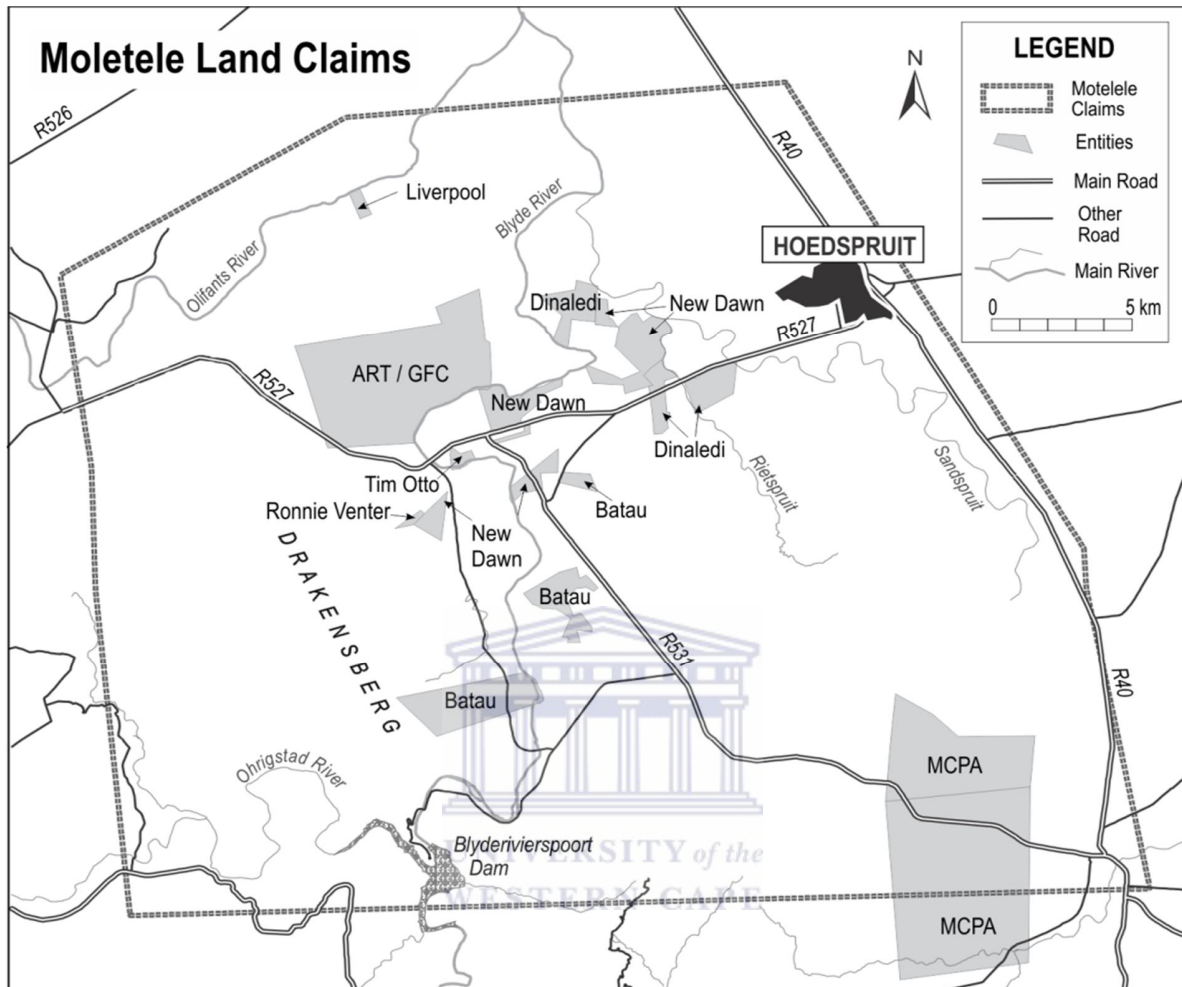


FIGURE 4.1: MAP DEPICTING CONSOLIDATED FARMING UNITS OF THE MOLETELE PARTNERSHIPS. Map produced by Ingrid Booyesen, Cartography Unit, University of Pretoria, 2011

The farms claimed currently produce high-value commodities for export, with a combined turnover of over R1 billion per annum (MCPA Property Portfolio Report, April to June 2010). Products on these farms range from mangoes, citrus and litchis, to cattle ranching and vegetables under shade netting, with ecotourism ventures as an additional source of income. To contextualize these claims, note that high-value agricultural land in Limpopo equates to a tiny 0,02 percent of the total land area in Limpopo, but this produces a massive 62% of total farming income for the province. With a very high percentage of the land in Limpopo currently under claim (Lahiff *et al* 2008:6) it is “crucial to ensure that agricultural

productivity on this land is maintained by restitution beneficiaries, as failure to do so would result in a massive blow for Limpopo's agricultural economy" (Sustainable livelihoods Consultants, www.livelihoods.co.za). The full extent of claims has not yet been mapped in all parts of the province, but in areas like the Makhado Municipality it has been found that over 90% of the land is under claim (Lahiff *et al.* 2008:6). The Limpopo Premier Sello Moloto, in his State of the Province address in 2009, thus warned that "the whole concept of land restitution will not yield the desired outcomes if beneficiaries do not understand that they equally have a responsibility to ensure that productivity of restituted farms is maintained".

4.6 Institutional structures introduced in the context of the Moletele land claim

The Moletele were informed¹³ by the CRLR that they would only receive their land back if they agreed to set up a legal entity to represent the community, but also that the legal entity would enter into partnership arrangements with strategic partners, who would assist the community and ensure continued productivity on the newly transferred land. As already mentioned in this chapter, a number of resolutions were signed by members of the Moletele community prior to the land transfer and the Moletele Communal Property Association was then established. After the land was acquired by the Regional Land Claims Commission in Limpopo, it was handed over to the Moletele community and the MCPA entered into a number of partnership arrangements on behalf of the Moletele Community. It was envisaged that the strategic partners would be able to help the communities manage the land for a period of 10-15 years during which time the community would benefit from the payment of dividends, job opportunities and income from land rental. The assumption was also that the strategic partners would make the necessary arrangements to ensure the training of communities to prepare them to manage these farms once management is handed over to them after the 10-15 year period. In terms of the Moletele land claim, the following institutional structures (Figure 4.2) were established:

¹³ Documentation that I was allowed to scrutinise at the Limpopo Regional Land Claims Office states that the RLCC was aware of conflicting claims to this land, and appointed a facilitator to work with the different groupings to help them reconcile their differences. But this was to no avail, and the claimants were allowed to set up the MCPA, despite the unease of the Commission.

- The Moletete Communal Property Association (MCPA) which, upon registration, took ownership of all the transferred land on behalf of the Moletete Community.
- Strategic partners (operating companies): New Dawn (18 portions), Batau (6 portions) and Dinaledi (4 portions) and finally;
- the Richmond Community Partnership with Boshoff Citrus Co.

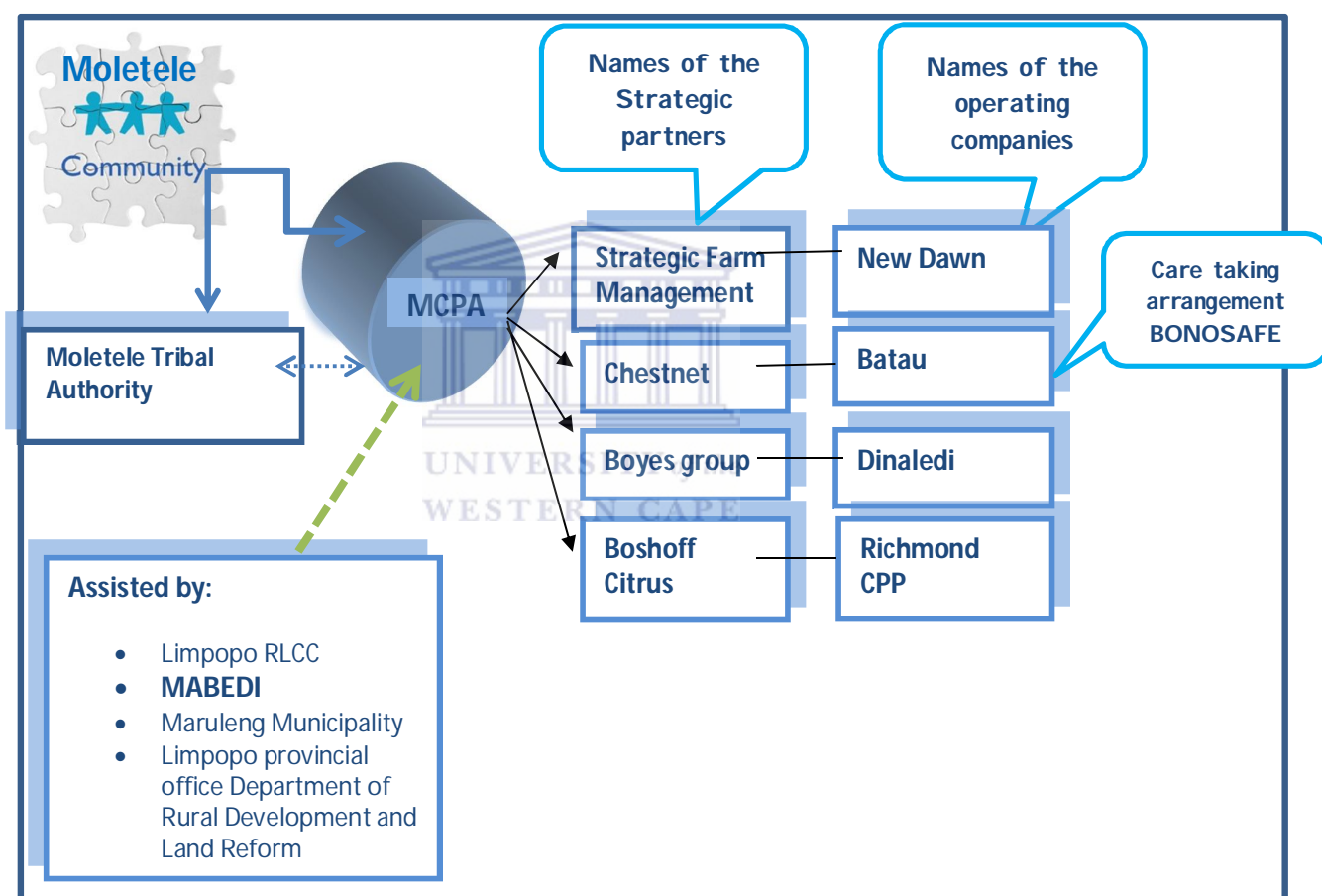


Figure 4.2: Management and Support structures in place for the Moletete land claim

4.6.1 Unpacking the partnerships

The drive towards adopting the strategic partnership business model in the Moletele claim was informed by government's conviction that such partnerships would enable communities to maintain agricultural productivity on restored land. In terms of this business model, restitution beneficiaries enter into agreements with agri-business partners to manage their land on their behalf, and a number of benefits are anticipated for both the strategic partners and the claimant communities. Derman *et al* (2006:4) contend that the model assumes the beneficiary community will benefit from a combination of rental payments by the operating company, a share in the profits, training and skills development opportunities provided by the strategic partner, and preferential employment on the farms by the operating company.

The decision to appoint different strategic partners for each cluster of land was seen as a way to minimise the risk factor for the beneficiaries, by not "putting all the eggs in one basket with only one strategic partner for all of the Moletele owned farms" (Moletele Bulletin, July 2008). Consequently, strategic partnership proposals were invited and after consideration and presentations, Chestnet (Pty) Ltd and Strategic Farm Management (Pty) Ltd were selected as the preferred strategic partners for the first 26 transferred portions, resulting in two joint venture companies, Batau (Pty) Ltd and New Dawn (Pty) Ltd, being established. A third partnership for the remaining farm portions was concluded in 2008, the Dinaledi partnership, with similar arrangements in terms of shareholding and operational functions as in the case of New Dawn and Batau. In all three of these strategic partnerships, the CPA initially held the majority of the shares in the operating company.

It was also decided that each cluster of the strategic partnerships should focus on different products to enhance the competitiveness of the arrangements as a whole. The primary products for the New Dawn cluster are thus citrus crops (mangoes, oranges and grapefruit), with the Batau partnership producing a mix of vegetables (tomatoes, cucumber and peppers) and sub-tropical fruit (litchis, mangoes and oranges) while the Dinaledi cluster also focuses mainly on citrus.

Table 4.1: Timeline and hectares of land transferred to the Moletele

Table 4.1: Timeline and hectares of land transferred to the Moletele				
Farm	Portion	Area in Hectares	Value at Transfer in Rands	Phase of Transfer
BATAUBONOSAFE)				
Chester 235 KT	Rem extent	667, 4132	R 5 397 478,00	Phase I
Chester 235 KT	40	34, 4249	R 1 878 677,00	Phase I
Chester 235 KT	7, 9, 10, 11 & 12	111, 0776	R 5 212 172,00	Phase I
Grovedale 139 KT	39 rem extent	59, 9572	R 4 462 530,00	Phase I
Antioch 240 KT	11	72, 8052	R 2 140 017,00	Phase I
Antioch 240 KT	12	29,6947	R 1 544 559,00	Phase I
NEW DAWN				
Blyderus 596 KT	41 rem ext	39,1914	R 109 735,00	Phase I
Blyderus 596 KT	42	39,2486	R 283 431,00	Phase I
Blyderus 596 KT	43	57,7088	R 161 585,00	Phase I
Essex 240 KT	15	15, 9990	R 996 309,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	*25			Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	26	100,8816 (25&26)	R 3 443 624,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	29 rem ext	48,8584	R 1 985 449,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	33	72,6802	R 3 559 419,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	35	49,9822	R 2 746 157,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	8 rem ext	98,1504	R 2 710 380,00	Phase I
Glencoe 210 KT	9	75,2862	R 3 257 374,00	Phase I
Jongmansspruit 234 KT	4 rem ext	98,5202	R 3 517 157,00	Phase I
Moriah 238 KT	52	25,0910	R 1 370 963,00	Phase I
Moriah 238 KT	4 re ext	24,8485	R 1 985 449,00	Phase I
Moriah 238 KT	2 re ext	116,1542	R 7 535 665,00	Phase I
Moriah 238 KT	60	2, 10226	R 4 037 563,00	Phase II
South Hampton 213 KT	3	68,1177	R 5 434 491,00	Phase I
South Hampton 213 KT	9	64,2399	R 2 243 480,00	Phase I
DINALEDI				
Grovedale 239 KT	10 rem, & 57	227,1486	R 6 900 000,00	Phase III
Grovedale 239 KT	16 & 52 & 32 rem	229,6321	R 16 221 277,00	Phase III
Southampton 213 KT &	*7			Phase III
Glencoe 210 KT	28&32	242,5486	R 8 581 047,00	Phase III
Bosveld Citrus				
Richmond 603 KT	Full portion	2 434,0176	R 63 886 838,00	Phase V
MCPA				
Scotia 248 KT	2 rem ext	1 268,9066	R 4 841 800,00	Phase I
Eden 425 KT	Portion	658,8048	R 3 260 000,00	Phase IV
Eden	Full Portion	2 758ha	R 58 997 000	Phase VI
OTHER LEASES				
Moriah 238 KT	45	43,7614	R 9 450 000,00	Phase III (lease to Tim Otto)
Liverpool 202 KT	68 & 69	42,8283	R 2 450 000,00	Phase III (68) and Phase IV(69)
Jongmansspruit 234 KT	15	21,5900	R 2 800 000,00	Phase III
TOTALS	42 portions	7 141,6432	R 242 165 110	

Adapted from MCPA Annual General Meeting Report, 2011

The fourth deal with the Moletele CPA was signed during June 2010, and is named the Golden Frontier Citrus (GFC) partnership. This partnership was *not* formulated along the same vein as the previous strategic partnerships. In this instance, a “community private partnership” (CPP) agreement was signed. This new approach is regarded as “innovative and valuable” because Richmond farm (comprising 2 434 ha) has been restored to the community as a whole unit, with promising possibilities in terms of large-scale citrus

production for the export market. Since 2010, the Golden Frontier Citrus CPP has been taken over by Boshoff Citrus because it was decided that GCFC was located too far away (being based in Malenane in Mpumalanga) from the site of production, complicating management of the enterprise. Table 4.2 provides a summary of agricultural land use for the different partnership arrangements on Moletele.

Table 4.2: Summary of the types of commodities and sizes of land.

Joint Venture Company	Total Ha Managed	Current ha under production	Production	Employment created
New Dawn Farming Enterprise	1019 ha	405 ha	Citrus, Mango, Guava, and Paw-paw	123 permanent and 390 seasonal
Dinaledi Farming Enterprise	686 ha	355 ha	Lemons, Grape Fruit, and Valencia	650 permanent and seasonal
Batau Farming Enterprise	855 ha	157 ha	Mango, Citrus, Litchi, and Vegetables	72 permanent
Richmond Estate	2434 ha	590 ha	Grape fruit, Valencia and Mango	135 permanent and 440 seasonal

NB. The difference between total ha managed and current ha under production indicates the potential of the farm as well as portions that cannot be farmed due to the terrain of the farm. (Source: MCPA AGM minutes, 2010).

4.6.2 Progress to date

As described above, the claim was re-lodged in 1995 and after a resolution was signed to consolidate the claims as the Moletele land claim, it was finally gazetted in 2004 with the transfer of some parcels of the land back to the community in 2007. The Annual General Meeting Report, at the end of 2011 was produced to update members on progress made by the MCPA for the time period, 2007-2011, and the following achievements and challenges were listed:

Table 4.3: Summary of key achievements and challenges identified by the MCPA

Key Performance Areas	Description of Performance
Achievements	2007-2011
Land Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restored farms are running as commercially viable units and exporting Moletele produce to a range of overseas countries. Two Community Private Partnership agreements in place, at Richmond with Boshoff Citrus and at the Blyde Adventure Camp with Chester. A few leases (3-5 years) signed with: Mr Ronnie Venter & Mr Tim Otto. 15 Houses on Batau and New Dawn farms restored and ready to be rented out.

Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portion of Scotia farm has been rezoned and planned for residential settlement. • A total of 350 stands at an undisclosed cost have been sold to members. The municipality will be providing services once people are settled. "This will become estate like settlement to be admired and marveled by many" (Mr Mashile, 2011).
Stock Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are about +/- 600 cattle on Scotia and Eden Farms. There are 32 cattle owners at Scotia and 12 owners at Eden farms occupied as of March 2011. A budget of R 794 600,00 will be provided by the Department of Agriculture of Limpopo to complete the division of cattle camps at Scotia.
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income from the Blyde Adventure camp is promising but even though the Moletele has claimed quite a significant number of game reserves in the area not one has been transferred back to them, causing some limitations in terms of the benefits that could be gained from tourism related initiatives
Disbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has provided a grant of R 2 779 756 for disbursement to members. In this regard, 1 505 households received payments of R 1 679,00 with 106 payments that still needed to be made. The original beneficiary list detailing 1610 households still in effect, awaiting official update.
Blyde 800 water scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Moletele are the very first community to have been awarded a water license not attached to the land. The Department of Water Affairs has implemented this innovative approach which translates into the subsidised water allocation to the community estimated at R 33 million spread over the next 20 years.
Offices, vehicles and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPA established a well-equipped office managed by staff from the Moletele. • Agricultural implements are being stored at the Office. (5 tractors amongst the many other implements). • Two vehicles (One 4x4 bakkie and Kombi) for the use of transporting MCPA members. • A Computer Training Facility has been established at the office to train matriculated Moletele in basic computer skills to enhance their chances in the job market.
Challenges	
Land owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is still a large percentage of the claim that is being resisted by white commercial farmers holding planning and further development at ransom
Existence of factions within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community allegiances and unity is problematic as letters are sent to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to complain about matters that should be handled by the MCPA.
Release of Government Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant payments that were supposed to be made have not transpired to date and the liquidation of Batau as well as the financial challenges currently being experienced by New Dawn is a direct result of the failure of Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to make these payments.
Job creation, Mentorship and Willing-buyer-willing seller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Moletele CPA assert that the willing buyer willing seller is holding up the process Government needs a new strategy. • MCPA is also of the opinion that the Moletele are not being mentored enough to ensure effective take over when partnerships come to an end. • Work opportunities created on Moletele land is not regarded as enough and also a concern is noted regarding Moletele people who only prefer to go and work in pack houses further reducing job opportunity possibilities.
Summary of Achievements and Challenges communicated to Moletele at the Annual General Meeting (2011)	

From Table 4.3, it is deemed important to mention the following. Production on the land is continuing, but the continued production on the land is not necessarily transmitting benefits to the broader Moletele "community" and it is not really a reflection of the health or sustainability of the partnerships to date, as it will be discussed in chapter 6 and 8. The

envisaged benefits in the form of employment opportunities for community members, who still reside in the Buffelshoek area, turned out to be somewhat disappointing. The long commuting distances and the small number of employment opportunities available in the commercial citrus production context resulted in limited employment related benefits being transmitted to the Moletele. The employment-related implications from these partnerships are explored in chapters 6 and 8 of the dissertation.

Regarding the grazing scheme at Scotia, it should be noted that the MCPA and the traditional leader decided that only individuals who owned more than twenty heads of cattle should be allowed to have their cattle graze at Scotia. This could imply that these cattle owners are part of a more affluent grouping within the Moletele “community”. Conflicts regarding access to the grazing scheme are discussed in chapter 8. There is also some unhappiness regarding the 350 plots that have been made available for “estate” type of housing on Scotia farm. The construction of these houses is finally underway but an undisclosed cash payment that had to be made within a specific timeframe to *Kgoshi* Abuti was set as an entry requirement. Members who were interested in building houses at Scotia also had to agree to building the type of house that would fit into an “estate” type vision (Interview Mr. Mashile, November 2011). The MCPA insists that the option to get involved in the housing opportunities were available to any member of the Moletele, and that it was widely advertised. But the set requirements might have limited the extent to which poorer members amongst the community would be able to benefit from this initiative. The consequences of these stated requirements are discussed in chapter 8 of the dissertation.

Regarding willing-buyer-willing-seller considerations, a seeming ‘reluctance’ from the state to purchase land from “willing sellers” in the Hoedspruit area where “offers to purchase by the state have already been accepted”, is being reported. The chairperson of the group of white commercial farmers currently resisting the claim, asserted: “some willing sellers have become so frustrated with the state dragging its feet to buy the land from them at already agreed prices, that they have joined our group of farmers currently resisting the claim on 40 000 ha of the land”.

With reference to “factions in the community” the agency of the two dissident groups was particularly profound in shaping the outcomes with the claim and partnerships to date. The intended aim of the dissident groupings was to disrupt the current processes of the MCPA’s “control” and “maintenance” of access to the resources. These two dissident groups joined forces and asked an independent attorney to assist them in planning a takeover of the MCPA. They ended up launching a spectacular takeover of the MCPA at the 2011 MCPA Annual General Meeting. Their strategy entailed: (1) showing up in bus-loads at the meetings they previously avoided, (2) publically questioning and aiming to discredit the financial records presented at the meeting, (3) reminding the MCPA that a new committee had to be elected as stipulated in terms of MCPA constitution and (4) not allowing any discussions that did not involve the planning of an election meeting in January 2012. The slogan echoing throughout the day was that the “Mashile rule has come to an end and a new leader should be elected”.

In addition to using the stipulations in the MCPA constitution, the dissidents also enrolled the support of the Moletele traditional leader. At the same time, the relationship between the traditional leader and the MCPA soured considerably when the traditional leader and his supporters insisted that a luxury car should be procured for the traditional leader. When the MCPA refused to buy the car, the *Kgoshi* asserted that the MCPA was only an institution that he needed to tolerate and he decided to respond to the efforts from the dissidents who wanted to enrol his support. The dissidents and the *Kgoshi* joined forces and at the 2011 AGM of the MCPA, a takeover was launched by the dissidents. The only thing the *kgoshi* was required to do, was not to show up at the Moletele AGM because his absence would communicate to the rest of the “community” that he was supporting the dissidents. Their plan worked, even “community” members not in the “know” of things commented during the meeting that the absence of the *Kgoshi* was “bad” and that the “way the *Kgoshi* was being treated by the MCPA was not right”. Explanations from the MCPA members about the *Kgoshi’s* absence were simply dismissed. The implications of the strained relations between the traditional leader and the MCPA, and the actions taken by these dissident groupings are discussed in chapter 8.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the historical background of the Moletele which provided me with a very useful contextual understanding of the timeline and the nature of the impacts successive legal instruments had in the process of alienating the land from the Moletele. After dispossession of the Moletele, the level of overcrowding, betterment related restrictions, poor quality soil and lack of water and resources in the Bushbuckridge area have left the majority of the Moletele in an impoverished and very poorly serviced environment.

Key aspects of the Moletele land claim, and contentions over leadership that emerged at the very inception of the claim were discussed and I elaborated on my conceptual distinction between Dissident group 1 and Dissident group 2. I provided a summary of the claim's progress to date (e.g. hectares of land transferred) and a description of how different parcels of land were 'clustered' to form consolidated farming units. The chapter also provided a brief outline of the management structures and the types of partnership arrangements that have been introduced to enable the transfer of land back to the Moletele community. I concluded the chapter by reflecting on a summary of the challenges and achievements as it was mentioned by the MCPA during the 2011 MCPA Annual General Meeting. Some of these key aspects identified from this summary will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Differentiated dispossession: the ambiguities of ‘community’ in the Moletele land claim.

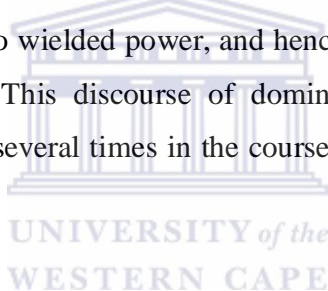
5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores some of the ambiguities and contradictions embedded in the terms ‘community’ and ‘tribe’, and discusses how these manifest in the Moletele land claim and strategic partnerships. I argue that the notion of a ‘Moletele community’ is imbued with just such contradictions and ambiguities, incorporating differentiated groupings of people whose interests, motives and expectations might converge at times but are often in conflict. From this perspective, the notion of a ‘Moletele community’ could thus be articulated as inclusive and unifying, or it could also be used to exclude or create division amongst these groupings. Data collected by means of 80 open-ended, in-depth and semi-structured interviews and 50 livelihood questionnaires are used to disaggregate the ‘Moletele community’ along a variety of axes of differences.

In the first section of the chapter the differentiated nature of the Moletele “community” is illustrated by the range of key thematic concerns that emerged from diverse narratives of dispossession communicated to me during fieldwork conducted in 2010 and 2011. Secondly, I discuss the range of expectations of restitution, communicated by the respondents. I then move on to highlight aspects of class differentiation among the Moletele that have arisen subsequent to their dispossession, including those based on non-agrarian livelihood pathways. Based on a descriptive analysis of data collected in the livelihood survey, I reflect on the current economic and livelihood status of members of the Moletele ‘community’. I discuss those members who continue to farm in the area to which they were removed, Buffelshoek, despite overwhelming odds, and identify a small group of individuals who produce a surplus of farm produce that they sell. I then briefly reflect on the possible influence of these patterns of differentiation on expectations of the Moletele land restitution claim.

5.2 Critical reflections on the key terms ‘tribe’ and ‘community’

A very brief reflection on the use of the terms ‘tribe’ and ‘community’ is deemed necessary. Emile Boonzaaier, John Sharp and other notable South African scholars contributed to a collection of essays published in 1988, *South African keywords: the uses and abuses of political concepts*. The stated objective of the book was to examine conventional beliefs about the nature of South African society and to interrogate and critically reflect on the meaning of terminology we use to describe our society (Boonzaaier & Sharp, 1988: x). The authors argued for “a particular reading of a series of terms”, including “race”, “tribe” and “community” amongst others. They asserted that these terms are related to each other by the manner in which they are commonly used and understood (Sharp, 1988: 6). They proposed that dominant uses of these terms in the apartheid era constituted a particular discourse about South African society, which revealed the logic and served the interests of those who wielded power, and hence they labelled it a “discourse of domination in South Africa”. This discourse of domination, they argued, was hardly stagnant as it had been revised several times in the course of the twentieth century (Sharp, 1988:6).



5.2.1 “Tribe”.

In *South African Keywords*, the discourse of domination was well illustrated in the mainstream use of the term “tribe”. Sharp (1988: 4) argued that the then current articulation of ‘tribes’ had its origin in flawed simplifications and categories historically created by European travellers and anthropologists. He asserted that some of these travellers and anthropologists failed to merely report what they saw when they visited African societies, and instead opted to offer particular interpretations of what they observed. For Sharp (1988:4), these interpretations were gross simplifications of a complex reality, using categories and concepts familiar to the Europeans, resulting in “neatly bounded ‘tribal’, or ‘traditional societies’ composed of kith and kin who shared common beliefs, values and social practices, but which were in fact largely invented by these observers. Furthermore, Sharp (1988: 4) argued that the use of these fabricated articulations had a twofold impact. Firstly, it confirmed a particular vision of the superiority of European

nation states, a vision manifested in a binary divide between “modern” and “traditional” societies, where traditional societies were portrayed as smaller and simpler than their European counterparts. Secondly, these articulations were also adapted and assimilated by those who were being dominated. In fact, Skalnik (1988: 69) asserted that “the concept ‘tribe’ has been so fiercely internalised by the ‘dominated’ that it has become a powerful idiom for the expression of political affiliation and differences”. Sharp (1988: 5) concluded that this process, in which the representations of the dominators were assimilated by the dominated and pressed into service in all their dealings with the former, is important for understanding the politics of contemporary South Africa .

Skalnik built on the arguments proposed by John Sharp (and others), asserting that the concept “tribe” is “a colonial category which has been imposed on indigenous populations and used as a device to disaggregate the African population” ... rendering it “meaningless as an analytical tool” (Skalnik, 1988:69). He also contended that “tribes” were not natural or immutable social groups, but in fact were constructed by colonial rulers in order to dominate (ibid.: 69). To support his argument he referred to sections of the Native Administration Act, 38 of 1927 to highlight sections of the Act where it is stated that ‘tribes’ can be “divided”, “amalgamated” and “have chiefs appointed to them” (ibid.: 75).

Skalnik (1988:71) warned that despite the “constructed” nature of these entities, ‘tribes’ are still particularly resilient and relevant in the South African landscape. Moreover, ‘tribes’ still have relevance because it is commonly recognized that the pre-colonial South African population was not culturally or linguistically homogenous, and comprised a number of cultural and linguistic groups which showed a continuum of variation rather than a set of discrete or bounded entities (Skalnik, 1988:74). So, ‘tribes’ did exist in pre-colonial South Africa, and these groupings ranged in size from clans with a few hundred members to chiefdoms numbering several thousands, but they were “a far cry from the neatly bounded ‘tribes’ we so readily identify today” (Skalnik, 1988:75). Ironically though, despite acknowledging the prominence of ‘tribes’, Skalnik (1988:68) chose to introduce his exposition by stating that “the concept of ‘tribe’ is *no longer crucial* in South African political discourse” (emphasis added). He argued that the notion of ‘tribe’ had largely been

supplanted by reference to “ethnic groups”. In 1988, Skalnik could probably not have imagined that a post-apartheid government would introduce a land restitution programme that would ultimately revitalise, re-assert and legitimize the notion of ‘tribe’ in terms of the settlement of land claims. In fact, traditional leaders have been formalised into South Africa’s post-apartheid Constitution, in terms of Section 211. The notion of “tribes” thus retains its salience in South African political discourse, resulting in renewed ambiguity and contestations not only from the perspective of a past “discourse of dominance”, but also in terms of its roles and functions in post-apartheid South Africa (Ntsebeza, 2000; King, 2005).

5.2.2 “Community”.

According to Smith (1996: 250) “of all the words used in sociological discourse, ‘community’ is the one that most obviously comes from wonderland, in that it can mean just what you want”. Donnison (1993) goes as far as to classify ‘community’ as a fine motherhood word - one that produces a warm glow in the listener and elevates the speaker to a moral high ground. De Beer (2012:6) contends that the ‘wonderland’ and ‘motherhood’ attributes of ‘community’ makes it a very popular concept for both governments and NGO’s. Thornton and Ramphela (1988:10) assert that assigning the label of ‘community’ to diverse collections and categories of people demonstrates the existence of not only a “discourse of domination” in South Africa but also a “discourse of the dominated”. They argue that the term ‘community’ can thus also be deployed or operationalised by conflicting groupings within the *dominated*, who claim that they speak or act on “behalf of the community”, as if it was already apparent who was included/excluded in this designation (Thornton & Ramphela, 1988:10).

It is therefore generally acknowledged that there are difficulties in interpreting notions of ‘community’ and ‘tribes’ when social reality is always much more complex. These concepts are often used, however, without a critical awareness of their origins, meanings or the larger discourse in terms of which these constructs are framed. Tania Li (1996) cautions that the use of terms like ‘tribes’ and ‘communities’ is always contentious and should not

be trivialized, asserting that envisaging communities as tribes “may be quite hard to identify on the ground, where multiple, conflicting discourses arise in the context of struggles over resources resulting in different visions and articulations of ‘community’” (ibid.: 508). The contested nature of the terms ‘community’ and ‘tribe’ becomes even more problematic in the context of South African land restitution.

5.2.3 *The challenging nature of ‘tribe’ and ‘community’ in the context of South African land restitution.*

With reference to land claims in the Lower Transvaal area, Thornton (2002) refers to the ‘Moletele tribe’. He warns however that ‘tribe’ in this instance refers to:

a group of people that the traditional chief had to attract as his following [subjects] whom he then represented and to whom he distributed access to land and in the past organised for warfare and for the distribution of its spoils (Thornton, 2002:16).

Thornton (2002:16) is adamant that the “Moletele tribe” should not be interpreted as “a set of related kin-groups who follow a hereditary leader from a central lineage”. Niehaus (2002, 2005) agrees and provides a detailed account of Shangaan-speaking people opting to honour Basotho leaders by assimilating the customs and traditions of the Northern Sotho-speaking Pulana (i.e. Moletele) people, and Thornton (2002) mentions how some siSwati-speaking people adopted the customs, beliefs and traditions of the Pulana tribe and its chiefs. It is therefore deemed important to acknowledge that reference to the ‘Moletele tribe’ does not necessarily imply that this is a group of related kin, but includes those people amongst the Moletele who have abandoned their original ethnic identification by assimilating the customs, beliefs and tradition of the Moletele i.e. those members who used their agency to be formally adopted into the structures of the ‘Moletele tribe’.

De Beer (2012) uses the envisaged Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiative, planned as a means to help resolve the Blyde Canyon Reserve land claim, to demonstrate the problematic uses of the term ‘community’. He explains that the initiative would involve the transfer of land back to at least four very different claimant groups (one of which would be the Moletele “community”). The settling of the claim would involve about 15 000 claimants, living in an area inhabited by close to 600,000 people who

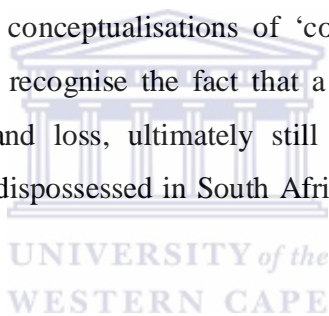
might not have been dispossessed, but who also have an expectation of sharing the benefits (De Beer, 2012:9). He suggests that the disproportion between the number of claimants who *will* be able to benefit and those in the surrounding impoverished “community” who *should* be able to share in the benefits, raises serious questions about the use of the concept of “community” in the context of land restitution and CBNRM (ibid.: 16).

Barry (2010:141) asserts that defining the boundaries of a ‘community’ within the South African land restitution programme is highly problematic because deciding who should be included and who should be excluded is far more complex than originally envisaged. These ‘communities’ and ‘tribes’ are often not the romanticized, coherent and unitary social entities portrayed in policy and development literature (Kepe, 1999, Walker, 2008, De Beer, 2012). In this regard, Beyers (2009) discusses the peculiar difficulties of settling the District Six land restitution case in South Africa and asserts that “inclusivist and exclusivist versions of ‘community’ coexisted and were causing rifts and contention even within the ranks of claimants themselves” thus demonstrating that a version of ‘community’ can become the discourse of the dominated and be used to exclude ‘others’.

Barry (2010) contends that in the context of restitution, the challenging nature of the task to establish the social boundaries of what would constitute a ‘tribe’ or ‘community’ is aggravated by the fact that communities and tribes are subject to social change where new communities emerge and old ones disintegrate. Thus, defining a ‘community’ or ‘tribe’ for the purpose of land restitution and reform is likely to stimulate conflict (Kepe, 1999). James (2000) shares this concern and observes that the South African state and its agents based their approach to restitution on a communalist discourse of an imagined ‘community’ which are “egalitarian and inclusive”; whilst claimants on the other hand thought of ‘community’ as exclusive and definitively bounded (Fay & James, 2009:13).

Despite these conceptual difficulties however, establishing the social boundaries in terms of who should be included versus who should be excluded from ‘communities’ and ‘tribes’ remains of critical importance in formalizing communal land systems (Cousins, 2008). There is therefore a need to recognize the challenging nature of conceptualisations of

'community' and 'tribe' which might not impress or convince anthropologists; but Li (1996:504) argue that while "conceptualisations of 'community' can be shown to be idealized, romantic, historically inaccurate or in current parlance 'invented', they nevertheless serve the purpose of keeping alternative possibilities for communal ownership alive. Li (1996) explains, "these representations (of community) though idealized, are capable of producing strategic gains as they counter prevailing orthodoxies, open up opportunities and provide a legitimate vocabulary for alternative approaches which can strategically be used to strengthen the property claims of potentially disadvantaged groups" (ibid.: 502). Despite conceptual difficulties, the framing of 'community' is thus not only crucially important to drive the implementation of policy interventions but the framing of 'community' could in fact potentially be used to strengthen the interests of the 'poorest of the poor" as envisaged in terms of a practical political economy approach. Moreover, despite the utilitarian value of conceptualisations of 'community' as highlighted by Li (1996), it is also imperative to recognise the fact that a shared discourse and collective experiences of dispossession and loss, ultimately still provides a very powerful and unifying narrative amongst the dispossessed in South Africa as very evident in the case of the Moletele.



5.2.4 Understanding the "Moletele community"

Given the contentious nature of the terms 'community' and 'tribe', it is important to distinguish between different sub-groupings within "the Moletele community". In this study, I see the "Moletele community" not as a given society or culture located outside of history, but rather as a political association formed through political and cultural processes in a context of unequal power relations, which is informed by Tania Li's "micro-political economy approach" (Li, 1996:509). In her view, the notion of 'community' is embedded within a conceptual framework that emphasizes human agency, and focuses on the way in which cultural ideas are adapted to meet new conditions, while culturally informed practices, in turn, structure daily life and shape and reshape institutions at various levels (Giddens, 1979). Furthermore, Li (1996:509) taking her cue from Chambers (1983), brands this approach as 'practical political economy at the micro level'. Representations of

'community' are produced in the context of struggles over resources, and the ability of different parties to defend their interests and advance their claims is acknowledged. The emphasis shifts away from the maximizing behavior of free-floating individuals, towards an approach that examines class, gender and other forms of differentiation. Ultimately this approach highlights the "practices of differently situated and positioned actors in contradictory social relations" (Roseberry, 1982). In relation to the Moletele land claim, it suggests that we need to understand different structural groupings within the "community", their relations with each other, and how these influence the range of outcomes.

5.3 Narratives of Dispossession

Here I discuss key narratives of loss and dispossession expressed by community members during the 80 in-depth, open-ended interviews that I conducted in Buffelshoek during 2010 and 2011. The importance of such oral testimony is eloquently expressed by Crush (1992: 14):

As memories fade and are replaced by new ones, the task of recording the lives and experiences of African communities in pre-removal localities is becoming increasingly urgent. Penetrating the geographies and histories of hidden people reveals that African communities are increasingly eager to relate their experiences, their victories and even their defeats in their struggle against white farmers, land companies and the state. These are best communicated through the medium of oral testimony.

A majority (60%, n=48) of the 80 respondents I interviewed mentioned a concern with the loss of their "historic memory" or "oral testimonies". They reported that a number of people have passed away since the claim was formally lodged. Some respondents (n=7) went so far as to label government's lack of urgency in finalising the claim as a tactic to make sure that their memories faded even more thoroughly, in order to ease the process of settling the claim. One of the respondents was particularly irate about time delays and stated that "individuals who know the truth about our history might die and then they will no longer be able to assert their rights... they will not be able to see the outcome of this painful process and even the graves of our ancestors are demolished everyday by reckless farmers". While some of the people in the study area expressed reservations about being interviewed, 48 of the respondents I interviewed were fairly keen to talk to me about their experiences during the processes of dispossession. They were even more eager to see me

writing them down. The remainder of the respondents (n=32) expressed some ambivalence, but did not seem to mind talking about their experiences. I did, however, also find a group of older individuals who chose not to talk about the injustices they suffered at the hands of the apartheid government and its agents. These individuals maintained that talking about the dispossession “invoked too many painful memories” for them (findings about the focus group discussion with 6 older Moletele mentioned already in Chapter 2). The urgency of respondents to have their testimonies ‘preserved’ was however also affirmed to me when I discovered the members belonging to “Dissident groups 1 and 2”¹⁴ who conducted bi-weekly meetings for the sole purpose of reminiscing about their experiences of dispossession and to strategise about how they would get back their land. And they were very keen to reflect on their memories with me. Dissident group 2 members met more infrequently, mentioning that they tried to meet at least one Sunday per month after attending church and they were also keen to talk to me about their experiences.

Fay and James (2009) posit that an understanding of the methods used in processes of dispossession in the context of land restitution is important and merits investigation for a number of reasons. Firstly, it affects the endurance of ties between the dispossessed people and their land. Secondly, the way the dispossession occurred will affect the kinds of evidence that will be available, and to what extent memory will inspire action in the present day (ibid. :6). A number of important facts about the dispossession of the Moletele should thus be mentioned in this regard. Firstly, the last remaining Moletele were removed from the Hoedspruit area as ‘recently’ as the 1970s, implying that relatively many of those who were loaded onto trucks and dumped in the Bushbuckridge area are still alive and able to relate their experiences. Secondly, moving around the homesteads, I found that these people still have vivid memories of being dispossessed and their sense of loss and despair is a constant companion for many of them who are still brooding and nursing these feelings of resentment. Thirdly, a number of the respondents mentioned that they were told that they would only need to move from the land ‘temporarily’ (they were told 7 years), meaning some Moletele never felt that they were being relocated permanently; they have been

¹⁴ These meetings were conducted by Moletele members belonging to the Enos and Marius Chiloane groups mentioned in chapter 4.

waiting all these years to return to their land. These are important case-specific issues, inspiring present day actions as well as informing people's expectations of restitution.

Hart (2002:39) warns that the legacies of dispossession persist over time: loss of land is not a one-off event, but an *ongoing process* insofar as it continues to shape the life chances of those affected and their descendants. Fay and James (2009:1) thus conceptualise restitution as a temporal process, and contend that land restitution enables land holders to reclaim spaces and territories which formed the basis of earlier identities and livelihoods, by drawing on the memories and histories of past loss. Land restitution, they contend, brings the past into the present. Fay and James introduced the notion of “formative temporality”. It is important to consider, for example, whether the land from which people were removed was experienced as the home of one's childhood or youth, possibly imbued with nostalgia for a happier, better time, compared to instances where land belonged to distant ancestors, with a connection that may have been forgotten – or unimagined- prior to the claim (Fay & James, 2009).

Certainly in the case of the Moletele claim, respondents consistently refer to a happier, better time before dispossession took place. To explore these notions of nostalgia about “happier times” and the hardship of being dispossessed an interview I had with 63 year old Rosie residing in Buffelshoek and her 70 year old husband (both relocated in 1965) was particularly revealing. She shared the following story about how the dispossession affected her:

My husband and I, we were not married yet, but I was expecting his baby and he was away in Nelspruit looking for work during that time. But then they came and told us we needed to leave. No notice, nothing was given, we were just told we needed to leave. It was 1966 and I was only 18 then, living with my parents, but I was expecting his (pointing to her husband) baby. They came and told us we needed to leave immediately... even the people who were in the field tending our cattle we had to leave them behind... We were also forced to leave many valuable items behind because we were to “jump the river” and would not have been able to carry heavy items with us. We also had some vegetables and corn on our field but we had to leave it behind. They relocated me with my parents and for many months, even after the baby was born, I was waiting for my husband to find me... he went back to our original piece of land, he did not know where I was and we ended up looking for each other for many months. There was no way for me to let him know where I was. People were telling themselves and each other that I have become ‘crazy’ because my grief was too

*much to bear and they started treating me differently. Who knows, maybe I was a little crazy and maybe that is what I would have been, did he not find me...at least I was lucky, he found me...*¹⁵

Within these narratives of loss a recurring theme was the “good old days”, contrasted with the hardship and challenges they now have to confront on a daily basis in the Buffelshoek area. The majority of the respondents (84%, n=67) expressed concerns regarding their harsh current living conditions, in contrast to the “abundance” they had experienced before being forcefully removed. This view was however particularly pronounced amongst 20 respondents who insistently complained about a lack of access to water for cultivation purposes. On closer inspection of my data, I realised that these were also those respondents who indicated that they used to live close to the Blyde River (Swadini) area. For these 20 respondents, the injustice of having been moved from an area where they had unlimited access to reliable water for farming-related purposes, into an area where it was difficult to procure water even for basic washing purposes, was profound. Resentment over dispossession of their land is thus intrinsically linked to the loss of access to resources, which was clearly apparent in the case of residents removed from the Blyde River area. There was also a general sense in many interviews that farming activities before the forced removals were in fact historically located largely in the Blyde River area.

In addition to this spatial aspect, the timing of dispossession also seemed to be significant. An 89 year old man, Enos (relocated in 1955) in Buffelshoek reflects:

You know we were part of the very first families to be removed, it was not like when the others were being removed, they did not even help us, we were not loaded onto trucks, we had to walk in the rain, trying to herd my father's cattle! I was very, very young back then.

It almost seems as if Enos would have liked to have been loaded onto a truck because he seemingly considered those who were removed later on by truck, as the ‘lucky ones’. On the other hand, Simon, a 92 year old man (removed in 1970) in Buffelshoek remembers:

“We stayed till the end with Kgoshi Aneas at Bedford, we fought them right till the end, we were not one of the first ones to cave in and flee the area. No we resisted and only allowed them to move us when Kgoshi passed away. We were the brave ones.”

¹⁵ She then reached for her husband's hand and they both just held hands for a while, too choked up to continue. Both the material and the symbolic losses experienced as a result of land dispossession are clearly evident in the quote above.

A divide between those who were the first to be removed versus those removed later on in the process is noticeable in these responses. The ones removed at a later stage also seemingly shared the sentiment that the people who relocated first into the Buffelshoek area were privy to some location-related benefits (e.g. being closer to water collection points) that later arrivals missed out on¹⁶.

It was also apparent that some of the older respondents (n=15) seemed greatly concerned over what they perceive to be an irredeemable fracturing or fragmentation of the Moletele 'community' and 'tribe'. These respondents mentioned their concern regarding the loss of the sovereignty of a once prosperous and proud Moletele 'tribe'. They expressed anger and resentment at the disruption of and disrespect shown to the Moletele when they were scattered across the Lowveld landscape. These older people mourn the loss of cohesion and strength of the 'tribe', which they fear has now been forever compromised, resulting in the "disrespectful behavior of younger Moletele". Views of this kind were repeated by a number of the interviewees, but are particularly well expressed in the following transcript of an interview I had with a 92 year old female respondent named Oinah (removed in 1965) from Buffelshoek:

Where we use to live (Glenlyden), the Kgoshi and the elders were respected. Growing up, I knew that I needed to respect the ways of my people. Even the elders and other members in the community made sure that we grew up adhering to the "proper Moletele way"... You know our customs... . Now when they relocated us, some Moletele even ended up living under the chieftaincy of Sehlare and even other Shangaan Kgoshi's. Which means those people lost (.. you know forgot) the proper Moletele ways. What about these young kids today? They don't know our Moletele ways anymore because now there has been a mixing up of our cultural and traditional ways.

The process of dispossession thus had profoundly detrimental consequences for the Moletele people as a "collective", but this experience was mediated by differences in relation to timing, location and age.

5.4 Disrupted trajectories of class differentiation

Recollections of dispossession by my respondents allowed me to gain some additional insights into aspects of class differentiation, both before and after dispossession. Of particular relevance is the following transcript of part of an interview I conducted with

¹⁶ This was an interesting observation, made by five different respondents, and clearly requires more detailed research to verify. This was, beyond the scope of my study.

Mohlolo an 89 (removed in 1969) year old female currently living in Buffelshoek, who described her experience of dispossession in the following way:

“We only saw these white people walking towards those of us living there on the mountain. They talked to our Kgoshi and Ndunas but refused to respect them or to negotiate with them and then they left. When it was time for us to harvest the fields, they came back. They told us, this is white man’s land now and that we needed to leave immediately. They forced us, we did not want to leave. They demolished our beautiful homes and the other structures we erected, and we had to leave behind many, many chickens, goats and pigs... We lost so much that day, even my dishes. I even had to leave behind my precious stones I used to grind maize. Now, here we stay... we have no water, nothing to harvest, no livestock, we battle... every single day is a battle.”

This quote reflect a sense of despair over their current situation, while the loss of material assets, and, more importantly, the loss of livelihood opportunities as a result of the dispossession, are also apparent. More importantly, the interview highlights the fact that this respondent and her family had been able to accumulate a fair amount of material wealth before dispossession occurred. The symbolic and material loss incurred during dispossession is therefore striking in this quote, exactly because this respondent and her family had more to lose.

A hint of some community members enjoying an ‘elite status’ prior to dispossession is also evident in the recollection of Marius, a 76 year-old man residing in Acornhoek, removed from his family’s land in 1956. He said that he was approximately twelve years old when they were moved. Marius is still outraged by the strategies of control and dispossession they were subjected to. In terms of Betterment¹⁷ planning strategies, he remembers:

“We were told that we were only allowed 10 cattle per household and because we had about two hundred cattle and many other livestock at that stage, they simply took one hundred and ninety of our beautiful cattle and left the ten bad ones for us. I was very, very young back then but I can never explain to you how bad it was for us, especially for my Mother, to see our livestock, our wealth removed... We were royalty,...my mother never fully recovered from that experience....She was royalty but without our wealth it meant nothing, people did not respect us anymore...”

Marius and his family also lost a great deal and he witnessed the consequences of this loss in “social standing” and material wealth for his mother. In contrast to Mohlolo and Marius,

¹⁷In terms of the Agricultural Betterment scheme introduced in 1960, land in the reserves was subdivided into new residential settlements, arable fields and grazing camps resulting in very few households being allocated any fields above a morgen (around 0.8 ha) in size, and cattle ownership was limited to a maximum of ten cattle per household (Niehaus, 2005).

the absence of material wealth even “status” could also be construed from the following transcript of an interview I had with 75 year-old Amos, now living in Green Valley. Amos remembers:

Yes... that was a bad time. We collected our belongings and we went to help the others with their cattle and belongings. We tried to help them carry their goods, as much as we could, and they even gave my father some things to keep, because my brother and I helped the others so well.

Even after probing about *the actual* losses his family had incurred, Amos could not remember why his family did not have that much to carry. He mentioned that his family were able to acquire items and livestock, because they (Amos and his brother) kept going back to help others to relocate. Unlike Mohlolo, and Marius, and perhaps other more affluent members of the community, Amos and his family were ready to pack up and move at a moment's notice. Their concern became helping the others with their belongings. I surmise that Amos and his family did not own much to begin with.

Nine respondents specifically referred to either “those people with many cattle” or “those people who the *kgoshi* liked (favoured)”. These references implied that, as perhaps in the case of Amos, there were other people who owned very little to begin with. This suggests that the Moletele was in fact a class-differentiated ‘community’ before land dispossession. This is quite contrary to claims made by the majority (63%, n=51) of the respondents that I interviewed. They remember a cohesive social structure where everybody lived in abundance with equal access to “pots of milk and honey” and where “the well-being of the communal would always supersede those of the individual” – as I was told by Efraim, a 90 year old Acornhoek resident. He explained that “this was just the Moletele way”. In reality, however, Efraim and others are probably wrong. The Moletele were most likely a status or class-differentiated community before land dispossession. The process of dispossession could well have acted as a kind of “wealth-equalizer”, with those in the community who had been able to accumulate wealth up to the point of dispossession now finding themselves in the same boat as the rest of the community, i.e. poor.

Even more interestingly, although all of the respondents conceded that land dispossession had disastrous consequences for the Moletele people in general, a few respondents (45%, n=36) asserted that some people were able to find new and even more effective avenues of

wealth accumulation. These respondents point out that people who invested in small businesses or petty commodity production activities (such as spaza shops, shebeens, etc) and those with a family member or two engaged in some form of employment, such as a governmental post, were most likely to live fairly comfortably in the Bushbuckridge area. Eight of the respondents I interviewed did in fact fit this description. These eight respondents owned very comfortable houses, with a fair number of amenities such as TV's, DVD players, washing machines and four of the respondents owned cars. As expected, these respondents expressed no interest in moving back to the land they lived on previously as they now pursued viable livelihoods where they currently reside. They indicated that they would prefer cash compensation for the hardship suffered as a result of the forced removals. These respondents seem to share a feeling of irritation regarding other people's "fixation with going back to the land". One of these respondents, who was particularly exasperated, contends:

When they get on to the land, what will they do? These people need to stop living in the past! When my family was relocated my father knew that he would have to work hard to better himself and improve conditions for our family. He did not go and sit under a tree to remember and talk about the past.

This respondent's father (who also sat in on the interview), as was the case for a small number of other people, was able to improve his living conditions by following new, non-agrarian livelihood pathways involving wealth accumulation. From this it is evident that even though wealth variations were somewhat levelled by the process of dispossession, people responded differently to their changed circumstances. Five of these eight respondents went so far as to concede that they felt that they were "better off now" compared to their situation before dispossession.

To summarize my observations regarding the differentiated nature of the material impacts of land dispossession: the Moletele community was clearly class-differentiated to a degree before dispossession, with an elite group of individuals (most likely affiliated in some way to the *kgoshi*) enjoying certain privileges and opportunities to accumulate wealth in terms of livestock, living in well-built home structures and having a sense of an abundant food supply, as mentioned by Mohlolo. Material losses incurred during the process of dispossession were therefore disastrous for the Moletele as a group or 'collective', but for

those who had been able to accumulate some wealth, the sense of material loss was particularly pronounced. When the Moletele were dispossessed, the livelihood pathways underlying class-based differentiation, especially those based on agrarian accumulation, were completely disrupted, with dispossession acting as a 'wealth equalizer'. In the present, the differentiated nature of the community is once again evident, particularly in relation to those individuals who were successful in non-agrarian related wealth accumulation. The general perception amongst interviewees was that those individuals able to find employment in government or elsewhere and those who engaged in small business enterprises, or petty commodity production activities, were the households able to not only escape the poverty trap but to accumulate wealth. After the process of dispossession, the role of livelihood diversification (an important survival strategy for rural people, which often allowed them to move out of poverty and towards more resilient and sustainable livelihoods), was also important.

5.5 Expectations of land restitution amongst Moletele community members

This section of the chapter reports findings on the range of expectations regarding the return of land to the Moletele and perceptions of the strategic partnership initiatives initiated as part of the settlement of their claim.

For the most part, the 80 interviews I conducted with respondents were open-ended and semi-structured. I did however ask them to rank what they would regard as the most important of their expectations from two choices we (my field assistant and I) read out and explained to them. They were asked to rank the statements which best captured their expectation as "their number one" expectation for the claim. Almost 80% of all of respondents (n=63) selected the statement articulated as "the return of land as an economic resource: creator of jobs, income (cash payments) and training opportunities that will allow them to accumulate wealth" as their highest ranking expectation. Thus, 63 of the respondents (men and women between the ages of 25 to 93) gave this statement their "number one" ranking. Only 21% (n=17) of the respondents, selected their highest ranked expectation as: "the return of the land that would allow them to reconnect with their long lost sense of 'community' and 'identity'". The restoration of dignity and notions of reconnect was thus selected as the highest ranked expectation for only 17 of the older male

respondents (aged 60 and up). For the most part, respondents' expectations were linked to the notion of land as an economic resource that would improve conditions for them. The implication and limitation of this approach to the articulation of their most desired expectation for the claim is already acknowledged in chapter 2 of the thesis.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the expectations of different categories of respondents. The table distinguishes between respondents according to their gender, age and their employment – and marital status. As shown in Table 5.1, I distinguished between older men and women (those older than 60 years of age), and men and women that would still form part of the working cohort in society (aged between 25-59 years). I then subdivided the respondents further along the lines of their marital and employment status. A key concern of this part of the inquiry was also to discern who amongst these respondents were attending community related meetings, what motivated them to attend or not attend meetings and what did the respondents generally know about the partnerships and outcomes to date. As reflected in table 5.1 a key imperative for this exercise was to discern to what extent age, gender, employment and marital status would influence the expectations articulated by these respondents.

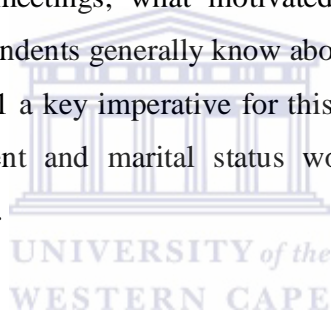


Table 5.1: Respondents Profile and summary statistics of expectations and Perceptions

Gender, age group, common income sources	Marital status	Expectations & perceptions of strategic partners
<p>Older men (n=25)</p> <p>Aged 60 and upwards.</p> <p>Unemployed or receiving pension from Government/private employer.</p>	<p>Married (n=12)</p> <p>Widowed/divorced (n=13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68% (n=17) of the respondents indicated that they would prefer to move back on to their land. Only 8 out of the 25 older men interviewed (32%) mentioned that they would also be happy with cash payments to complete the settlement of the claim. • 80% (n=20) of the respondents said that they attended both traditional council meetings and CPA AGM's (Annual General Meetings). The other 20% (5) said they do not attend any meetings and they had absolutely no idea what was happening on the returned land. • 60% (n=15) of these respondents expressed the notion that they are not expecting much benefits from this process, they were feeling somewhat disappointed about the outcome of the process thus far. 40% (n=10) of these respondents were still optimistic about the potential for benefits to reach them.
<p>Older women (n = 30)</p> <p>Aged 60 and upwards.</p> <p>Unemployed, receiving pension from Government/private employer.</p>	<p>Married (n =6)</p> <p>Widowed/Divorced (n=24)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the married women (n=6) agreed with the expectations framed by their husbands, so as it happened in my sample of respondents, they all wanted to move back on the land. All of the widowed or divorced (n=24) women representing 80% of the women interviewed, favored cash payments for the settlement of the remainder of their claim, • Only 40% (n = 12) of these women confirmed attending traditional council and CPA meetings. The remaining 60% (n18) cited health challenges, long walking distances and family commitments as reasons for not attending traditional council meetings. • 93% (n=28) of these women said that they have no idea what is currently happening on their land, they do not know what the role is of the CPA and they have only heard 'rumors' about some types of partnerships that have been established. • 83% (n=25) mentioned that some feeling of disappointment is setting in, with 17% remaining hopeful and still excited by the prospect of benefiting from the claim.
<p>Adult Men (n = 10)</p> <p>Descriptor: Aged 25 – 59.</p> <p>Some employed (n=2); mostly unemployed looking for work (n=8).</p>	<p>Married: (N= 6)</p> <p>Widowed/divorced (N=4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 of the 10 men interviewed were unemployed and they indicated that they would prefer to move back on to the land to engage in the commercial farming activities on the land. The remaining 2 respondents had no interest in moving back on the land • Five of these men indicated that they do attend both the meetings arranged by the traditional council and the CPA's AGM's. • The other 5 interviewees seemed less informed but still expressed their disappointment with the outcome of the claim to date.

<p>Adult Women (n = 15) Descriptor: 25-59.</p> <p>Mostly unemployed, some part time/contract work.</p>	<p>Married (n=7), Widowed or divorced/abandoned (n= 8).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) Most of the married women in this age group reported that their husbands were not living with them because “they were mostly working somewhere else. (2) This group of women has a more varied range of expectations and views about the claim. In this instance, some of the women (n=5) said that they would prefer cash payments whilst the majority (n=10) of the women expressed a keen interest in being able to perhaps do some food garden types of projects, should they be allowed to move back on to the land. • The rate of meeting attendance reported amongst this group, split them approximately in half, with 8 respondents confirming attendance of both meetings and 7 members indicating their absence from both types of meetings. • More than 70% (n=11) of these women said that they have no idea what is currently happening on their land, they do not know what the role is of the CPA and they have only heard ‘rumors’ about some types of partnerships that have been established. 100% of the women indicated that their initial excitement have been replaced by an overwhelming sense of disappointment.
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The older male (older than 60) respondents who indicated that they were attending both the traditional council meetings and the MCPA Annual General Meetings (80%, n=20) said that they would have assumed that some benefits should have come through by now from these initiatives. These respondents said that despite attending the Moletale CPA’s AGM’s they still only had a vague idea about these initiatives and reported that it seemed as if these ‘partnerships’ were only benefitting a few select individuals in the community. Only 40% of the respondents in this grouping still felt optimistic about outcomes from these initiatives because they mentioned the fact that they knew people who were actually able to benefit which inspired them to be hopeful of future benefits reaching them as well.

Amongst the older women age group, 80% (n=24) of the widowed or divorced female respondents expressed concerns regarding the option of being allowed to move back on to the land and preferred cash payments despite expressing their reservations about the performance of these partnerships to date. The reasons cited by 60% (n=18) of the respondents for not attending the CPA’s Annual General meetings included the claims that people were only informed of these meetings “at the last minute via loud hailers from cars driving around the day before the meeting” and as these meetings are conducted at Scotia farm, respondents mentioned that it was just too difficult for them to attend meetings.

Amongst the adult male respondents it was very evident that the marital status of these respondents did not seem to impact much on the nature of the responses they provided. The status of employment was a far more decisive. Unemployed male respondents preferred employment opportunities on these commercial farms, while the two employed respondents said that they would be happy with cash payments to complete the settlement of the claim. The majority of the respondents in this grouping (5 of the 8) asserted that the attendance of meetings were very important because they were particularly interested in the financial reports of the CPA. One of the respondents explained: “they have been tasked to manage our land and the money generated from our land... we need to go to these meetings so they can explain what is going on”. These men also seemingly have a better understanding of the partnership initiatives and share a perception that there must be millions of South African Rands floating about on Moletele land but the partnerships are seemingly allowing “white commercial partners to be the only ones benefitting from the farming activities on our land”.

I observed a number of striking differences between the responses given by the younger female age group compared to the responses from the older female respondents. The younger women were seemingly able to formulate their own ideas and expectations about the claim. During these interviews, I certainly did not get the sense that their thinking/views were being framed in terms of their husbands’ as it was in the case of the older women, who consistently made reference to “my husband says”. There was also 53% (n= 8) of the women who did not attend any tribal council or MCPA meetings because as one responded pointed out “they don’t have time to go and sit in meetings they are too busy just struggling to survive”.

Responses to the question regarding the possibility of being allowed to move back onto the land in Hoedspruit reflected a distinct trend in terms of age and gender. As indicated in Table 5.1, older female respondents, in particular, expressed reservations about the possibility of moving back onto former Moletele land, saying they would prefer cash payments. They were somewhat afraid of the unknown and one of them expressed this in terms of rather “staying with the devil you know”. Walker’s (2008:29) caution regarding the importance of the nature of events and the ties formed during the intervening years

between the time of dispossession and restoration is relevant here. Many of these older women (aged 60 and older) explained that their reservations about moving back onto the land stemmed from a range of factors, but some common themes emerge. They all mentioned: (1) they would not want to disrupt their church and broader community ties (“*stokvel*” and funeral societies amongst others are mentioned); (2) challenges in terms of their grandchildren, who might not be able to accompany them should they relocate; (3) their “comfortable” houses, often wondering where they will stay should they decide to move; and (4) concerns about their age and their health should they opt to leave Buffelshoek.

In contrast to the reservations expressed by older women, the majority of older male respondents indicated that they would actually prefer moving back on to their land as their very first choice. The reasons they cited were: (1) the fact that there would be enough land for cattle and farming; (2) they expressed very few concerns about the ‘ties’ they might be leaving behind; and (3) one of the respondents asserted that they looked forward to being able to “reconnect with their ancestors which will allow for wealth to flow once again”.

The responses from younger women (the 25-59 years age group) were somewhat mixed. Most of these women (80%, n=12) seemed less concerned about severing family, church, and community ties and said that they would actually not mind moving back to the original land where their parents use to live. A majority of the women in this category (66%, n=10) suggested that they would like to engage in food garden types of production. The younger men (aged 25-59) on the other hand, indicated that they expected to gain access to land for commercial agricultural purposes. In a focus group interview with a much younger set of interviewees (a group of twelve young, unemployed boys who recently completed Grade 12), the view was expressed that their preference would be jobs in the non-agrarian sector, but they would not mind working on the returned Moletele land. They quickly pointed out, however, “not as laborers”, i.e. they would all like to work as office workers or in some administrative position on the farms.

I also conducted focus group interviews with 35 older Moletele (60 years and older) forming part of “Dissident Group 1”. These respondents expressed their expectations of restitution in terms of: (1) being able to move back onto certain parts of the land with their

cattle and livestock; and (2) receiving cash payments for parts of the land they would not be able to settle on. In a second group interview in 2010 they also included: (3) the possibility of agreeing to partnerships with commercial farmers of their choice, in order to continue with productive large-scale commercial farming. These expectations of the older members in “Dissident Group 1” were repeated so frequently and vehemently during interviews that they almost achieved the status of slogans for the group.

Older women in this group seemed braver and more outspoken than the women I had previously interviewed. I was puzzled about their willingness to move back to the land, in agreement with the views of the men in the group, in contrast to the respondents discussed above. It was only when I conducted follow-up interviews at their homesteads with seven of these older female members that one of them was willing to express reservations about moving back to the land. One respondent, aged 82, when she felt assured that I would not reveal her identity, confided:

You know I am not always sure what the group really wants to achieve. I am so old now, how can anyone expect me to move? There are about 4 of us who feel this way. I mean, who will build houses for us? How can my legs move me? I would have been happy with just a cash payment for my grandchildren, it would be fine. But I need to stay with the group. They will only listen to us if we stand together, yes that is when they will listen. When we are successful, I will tell my group that I cannot move and that I need the money.

These follow-up interviews that I conducted away from other group members were an important indication that even amongst the dissident group members, interests, motives and expectations were somewhat varied. These women therefore opted to use ‘feigned compliance’ with the group’s expectations while pursuing their privately desired goals.

5.5.1 Expansive expectations vs Delimited expectations

The symbolic and material significance of resolving their land claim is intensely felt by many members of the Moletele community. This often translated into inflated or expansive expectations. During one of the very first interviews that I conducted, an interviewee mentioned that she attended a party with about 60 other individuals that lasted for three days. This party was held to celebrate the fact that the land had been handed back to the community. She explained that they partied so lavishly because they believed that “wealth and prosperity would now be able to find them and rescue them from the claws of poverty”.

She reflected that they thought their days of hardship were over and that abundance would follow soon after the handing over ceremony.

Initially, I was puzzled by the nature of the comments made by this particular interviewee. To my surprise, statements made by several other respondents (44%, n=35), seemed to reflect rather expansive expectations from a wide range of community members, that I could not link to any particular age or gender category. Most expectations of this kind appeared to be expressed by men and women of all ages who were straining to eke out a living in the Buffelshoek area. I then realized that I needed to contextualize these types of responses by examining them from a spatial and developmental perspective. The average resident living in Buffelshoek is confronted by a consistent water shortage, infertile soils, a lack of service delivery, a high incidence of unemployment (estimated at between 25-50%) and very limited alternative livelihood options. These conditions translates into a scenario where 75% of the population live below the minimum living level (MLL), with most residents reliant on various social grants and small remittances from family members to ensure their survival (Bushbuckridge LED Report, 2010). Also, the Bushbuckridge Local Municipal area where the majority of the Moletele reside is currently ranked as one of the poorest three places in South Africa (Bushbuckridge LED strategy, 2010) with very few prospects for an economic turnaround.

In this context, the promise of restitution would thus seem almost inevitably to provoke expansive expectations of land restitution. It is perhaps unsurprising that, restitution is perceived by many of the beneficiaries as an important gateway towards fulfilling their broader developmental needs, given their local municipality's proven inability to meet these needs. The Moletele restitution claim, since its inception, has been 'overloaded' with so much sentiment and such expansive expectations in terms of meeting a range of developmental need, linking up to assertions made by Walker (2012) referring to the "overloaded status" of the South African land reform programme in general prompting calls for a cautious re-assessment of what land reform can realistically achieve.

However, I also recorded comments reflecting what I would label delimited, or perhaps realistic, expectations that have also not been met heightening the sense of disappointment

amongst respondents. The following three quotes were particularly thought provoking. In the first instance, Mr Norman (the principal of a High School in Buffelshoek, commented:

My initial expectation was that at least some strides towards poverty alleviation would have been made by now, we expected at least a few people being trained and mentored by the strategic partners in terms of agricultural management so that they would be able to take the farms over, when the time came. We wanted to see new job opportunities opening up, not for everybody, but at least some. I think the idea of us as black commercial famers instead of our current 'land lord' status is what I expected. My excitement is gone and to tell you the truth I don't blame the strategic partners, without them those farms would probably have collapsed by now... we just needed them to plan things better on our behalf, that's all.

Secondly, Salina, a 35 year old female living in the Buffelshoek area, asked:

Why could they not just provide a plot of land for us to farm as food gardens? I was told the soil is good on that side, we could have arranged a women's co-operative. Those who would be interested we will go there during the day, they must just arrange some transport for us, and we can go there and tend our field for half of the day and then we would come back. Why was this not an option, we were told that there is 'too much land', so why don't they set aside some more for us to farm and feed our children. We are hungry all the time, but we can't access our land.

In the third instance, Anna, a 39 year old female, revealed:

I was initially so very excited, but I knew that they will not be able to satisfy us all. That is why I knew upfront that even a very small benefit would have been fine for me. Just a little cash payment would have been fine. I am thinking of even just R 2 000,00. But you know what makes me sad? It is when I walk and carry my grocery bags in both hands with my baby on my back and I am walking along this dirt road on my way home and it is very hot and very far to walk. Then I see the MCPA kombi driving past me in the same direction I am going and it is making dust in my eyes. That is when I think to myself, surely the kombi should not be empty? What about just stopping to give people along the way a lift? I mean the kombi belongs to us, right, all of the Moletele represented by the MCPA. So why not just give people a lift if you drive by in any case? Now that would be a benefit!

These three quotes reflect the varied nature of a more limited set of benefits that restitution was expected to provide. I selected these quotes from my archive of recordings precisely because they seem so enticingly logical and realistic. The first quote alerted me to the fact that some respondents did have much less expansive sets of expectations. This respondent's framing of his expectations in terms of jobs (not necessarily for all claimants, but at least for some), training and mentoring are consistent with what has been promised in terms of the strategic partnership arrangements. From his perspective these reasonable expectations have not been met and as a result disappointment has set in. The second quote challenges the "ownership without access" model as promoted by these partnerships. This respondent (unlike the others) does not express an interest in moving back on to the farms at

Hoedspruit, but she asks why land for food gardens (i.e. farming to help secure social reproduction) has not been considered as a possibility. Finally, the third quote was particularly revealing. Anna felt betrayed because her expectations were never very ambitious to begin with, and yet the process has left her feeling disappointed nonetheless. In this instance, the use of the MCPA kombi becomes the focus of her scorn. She argues that the kombi should not be used only for the benefit of some, but should be used to ease at least some of the daily struggles of the average Moletele community member. Her idea might or might not be realistic to implement, but it signals the fact that we need to think beyond the land access versus cash payment only framework to find workable solutions to the everyday dilemmas of restitution claimants.

5.6 Present-day livelihoods of Moletele land claimants

This part of the chapter provides a brief overview of the data collected by means of a livelihoods survey I conducted in the Buffelshoek area, in which questionnaires were administered to members of 50 households. Data from the livelihood survey, in combination with broader findings in the literature, allowed me insights into the present-day economic and livelihood status of claimants living in the Buffelshoek area. Ntsholo (2010: 67) asserts “the socio economic status of Buffelshoek, like in most villages in South Africa is a manifestation of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, a constant reminder of a past still engraved in people’s memories and a reflection of the dire state of rural livelihoods in South Africa”. Here I explore the extent to which this is true.

I was particularly interested in the significance of agriculture within the livelihoods of land claimants, given the possible influence of this factor on their expectations of the claim. I suspected that the introduction of inclusive business models within the South African land restitution programme clearly favoured the framing of agricultural ‘viability’ in terms of criteria informed by the hegemony of the large-scale commercial farming model. Claimants are thus often not allowed direct access to their land because it is assumed that the large-scale commercial farming activities on the land would be disrupted. As mentioned above, however, several respondents, especially adult women (25-59 years old) asked about the

availability of land for food garden production purposes (“consumptive reproduction”), while men expressed a desire to get involved in the commercial production activities. I therefore wanted to gain some insights into the nature of farming being practiced by Moletele claimants in the Buffelshoek area and a basic understanding of the contribution of farming to their livelihoods.

5.6.1 Wider debates about agricultural livelihood strategies in South Africa

It is generally accepted that cash from urban areas and government’s social grants is the mainstay of the rural economy in many former reserve areas. Westaway (2012: 118) observes that prevailing conditions in these areas, which he deliberately chooses to call ‘Bantustan areas’, are characterised by: (1) most residents who live below the poverty line; (2) household incomes are primarily derived from welfare transfers, while the contribution of employment, remittances and agriculture is negligible; and (3) woefully inadequate provision of sanitation, water, education and health infrastructure and services.

Statistics SA (2012), reporting on agriculture and food security between 2002-2011, concludes that less than a quarter of households in South Africa are involved in agricultural activities, including those practising agriculture as a hobby. Findings from this study confirm that less than 2% of households in South Africa practise agriculture as smallholders (i.e. households which rely primarily on ‘small-scale’ farming activities as their main source of income) while the report confirms that ‘subsistence farming’ is much more prevalent, with 18,4% of households reporting that they practice this form of agriculture. In terms of a provincial break down, households in Limpopo (49,4%), Eastern Cape (33,2%) and Mpumalanga (30,8%) are most likely to engage in this type of farming activity (Stats SA, 2012).

Cousins (1999) cautions that the multiple and diverse nature of the livelihoods of rural households is often not recognised. Shackleton *et al.* (2001) argue that evidence of some agricultural endeavor is generally visible in any village in the communal areas of South Africa, suggesting that agriculture still plays a significant role in terms of rural livelihoods (*ibid.*: 590). As a result of flawed conceptual and methodological approaches often used in

livelihood related studies, the contribution of land based livelihood activities are often underestimated, especially in terms of yields and the value of farming for consumption (ibid.: 590). The productive capacity/ importance of land based activities in terms of securing rural livelihoods is therefore often underestimated or misunderstood.

Hebinck and Shackleton (2011: 3) contend that the notion ‘livelihood’ has proven to be a very useful concept because “it brings together the many ways people construct a living”. More importantly, these authors assert that the concept of ‘livelihoods’ has mostly been applied to the rural areas, and as such, livelihood analysis usually includes a focus on farming, but at the same time farming is clearly not the only way that rural people make a living (Hebinck & Shackleton, 2011: 3). Ellis (2000) suggests that the poor quality of natural endowments in some rural areas compels many rural people to move away from land-based livelihoods towards more diversified livelihood strategies. Perret *et al.* (2005: 9) observe that the poor quality of natural resources in some areas has resulted in low and uncertain income being generated from farming activities. Research conducted by Francis (2001) reveals that there is in fact great variation in terms of the importance people assign to agriculture in South Africa. Twyman *et al.* (2003) cite the question “*where is the life in farming?*” posed to them by a smallholder farmer during an interview they conducted with him in the Eastern Cape to highlight the struggle to making a living through farming in the South African context. Walker (2012:4) concludes that numerous studies have documented, that land-based livelihoods are not the major source of income for the average household in the communal areas – remittances and social grants are generally more important, but access to land and to communal natural resources are important in rural livelihood strategies. This brief review of the literature reveals that it cannot be simply assumed that all rural households engage in farming or that it is an important source of livelihood for all.

5.6.2 Rural livelihoods in Buffelshoek

The purpose of the livelihood survey reported here was to understand the diversified nature of the livelihood strategies of the Moletele people, and the place of farming within these, not to generate a statistically representative dataset for intensive analysis. The findings

reported here are thus indicative and exploratory in character. The respondents were selected at random while walking around Buffelshoek. In a few instances respondents also referred me to other people they thought my fieldwork assistant and I should interview, especially when we enquired about people's involvement in farming activities (i.e. we used a snowball sampling technique). As already mentioned in chapter 2, the sample was thus somewhat skewed towards households in the Buffelshoek area who were in fact engaged in farming of some kind. We interviewed a total of 50 homestead members and 33 of these respondents indicated that they, or members of their homesteads, were engaged in farming activities. Table 5.2 provides a summary of key data on sources of livelihood for this sample.



Table 5.2: Summary data of livelihood sources of respondents (n = 50)

INCOME SOURCES	FREQUENCY (n =50 households)	% OF THE SAMPLE
Number of homestead members in permanent jobs	32 households = 0 members 15 households = 1 member 2 households = 2 members 1 household = 4 members	64% had not one member employed. 30% had only one household member employed 6% had more than one member employed
Number of homestead members in temporary/contract jobs	43 households= 0 members 4 households= 1 member 3 households = 2 members	86% not one member employed. 14% had 1-2 members employed
Number of homestead members in casual jobs	41 households = 0 members 7 households = 1 member 1 household = 2 members 1 household = 3 members	82% no one employed 14% one member 4% more than 2 members employed
Number of homestead members engaged in some type of farming activities.	17 households = 0 members 19 households = 1 member 12 households = 2 members 2 households = 3 members	34% not involved in farming 38% had 1 member involved in farming 24% had 2 members involved in farming 4% had 3 members involved in farming
Number of homestead members self- employed (own businesses)	43 households = 0 members 6 households = 1 member 1 households = 4 members	86% no one involved 12% had one member involved 2% had 4 members involved
Number of homestead members with own business, employing other people.	46 households = 0 members 4 households = 1 member	92% had no one involved 8% had one member involved).
Number of homestead members involved in income generating projects	49 households = 0 members 1 household = 1 member	98% had no one involved 2% had one member
Number of homestead members unemployed looking for work	11 households = 0 members 17 households = 1 member 11 households = 2 members 9 households = 3 members 2 households = 4 members	22% had 0 members unemployed. 34% had at least 1 member unemployed. 22% had 2 members unemployed 18% had 3 members unemployed 4% had 4 members unemployed
Number of homestead members unemployed not looking for work	0 = households	0%
Total number of Grants	9 households = 0 grants received 12 households = receives 1 grants 12 households = receives 2 grants 17 households = receives more than 3 grants	18% received no grants 24% received at least 1 grant 24% received at least 2 grants 34% received more than 3 grants 82% received grants.
Number of homestead members receiving remittances in cash.	0= households	0%
Number of homestead members receiving remittances in kind	48 households = 0 members 1 household =1 member receiving 1 household = 2 members	96% received nothing 2% received contribution from 1 member 2% received contribution from 2 members
NC Davis Data Collected 2010-2011		

The most important sources of income in the sampled households are social grants (82% of households), farming (66%) and permanent jobs (36%). The high incidence of unemployment at Buffelshoek is evident, with 64% of the sampled households not having anyone employed in a permanent job, 86% with no-one employed in contract positions and 82% with no-one involved in casual jobs. The heavy dependence on social grants is also quite evident with 82% of the households indicating that they are receiving some type of social grant (i.e. either an old age pension, a child grant or a disability grant). In the case of one household I recorded six social grant payments being received, where all the household members were unemployed. The high dependence on social grants was also highlighted when 85 % of the respondents ranked grant payments as their most important source of income.

Table 5.3: Cross tabulation indicating tendency of respondents to farm both at the residential plot and on fields.

farming on the fields * Do they grow crops at their residential plot Crosstabulation

Count

		Do they grow crops at their residential plot		Total
		No	Yes	
farming on the fields	No access/Not farming field	6	25	31
	Yes farming field	1	18	19
Total		7	43	50

From Table 5.3 it is clear that those respondents with access to land at their homestead plots as well as plots at the fields do cultivate both types of land (n=18, or 36% of the sample). Only one respondent reported that her field was not being used, because she was unable to walk there. The data suggests that these respondents are probably part of the group of people in Buffelshoek who are fairly heavily invested in farming activities. The fact that fields are generally not left uncultivated provides a useful hint about the value they place on access to productive land. The majority of the respondents (n=34, or 68% of the total) indicated that the *Kgoshi* allocated fields to them after they had already started to cultivate the land. In this regard proximity to the land was a key consideration, because these respondents indicated that they had no resistance when they started to cultivate the

land because they were the closest to it. The respondents reported that the renting out of land or its sale is not common in Buffelshoek. One respondent explained that land suitable for cultivation is very scarce, so that if you have access to it, you tend to hold on to it and to use it.

In relation to agriculture, I was able to identify the following groupings of respondents:

- Group 1: people farming at their homesteads and on additional fields, with one or more homestead members employed or self-employed, and producing enough produce to sell, (n=7, or 14%)
- Group 2: people farming at their homesteads and/or on additional fields, receiving only social grants as an additional source of cash, and producing very small amounts of produce they are able to sell, (n=2, or 4%), This group basically involved two households with more than 3 members involved in farming activities.
- Group 3: people farming at their homesteads and additional fields for consumption purposes only, with a variety of other income sources, (n=24, or 48%)
- Group 4: people not farming at all (n=17, or 34%).

In this sample, 66% (n=33, or 66%) of the homestead members reported that one or more members within the homestead were involved in farming related activities. Of the 33 households, the majority (n=24, or 73%) of these households indicated that farming was predominantly for household consumption purposes, and as a supplement to other sources of food.

From the 33 households, there were a small number of households who use agricultural activities mostly as a livelihood strategy of last resort (Group 2). Respondents from these households explained that they started intensifying their focus in agricultural production activities because everyone was unemployed and they realised they needed to do something to survive. This implies that it was only once their access to non-agricultural sources of income was already limited that they opted to engage in agricultural production. The wider literature reports that households often treat agriculture as a residual activity to be engaged in only when needed (e.g. Aliber, 2009). This was clearly the case for the two households

in Group 2 who confirmed that “nothing else” was available to them. These two households reported that they sold very small amounts of their produce to their neighbours. The households indicated that they were selling spinach and beetroot at a cost of between ZAR 3,00 -ZAR5,00 a bunch (depending on its quality) at least 4-5 times a year. Both households did not have an exact estimation of the amounts of spinach and beetroot sold. One of the respondents said that she was able to buy bread and even small amounts of meat from these sales. She also indicated that during the months when the spinach and beetroot crops were good she would be able to buy bread for at least 10 consecutive days, which really helped the homestead. These respondents also reported selling small packets of beans for ZAR5,00 to the neighbours and pumpkins were sold more or less twice a year at between ZAR8,00-ZARR10,00 per pumpkin, depending on the size. The respondents asserted that these sales somehow helped to keep them afloat and one respondent mentioned that there was always “at least something to eat” in the homestead.

The Group 1 respondents (n=7, or 14%) who reported that they were producing enough to sell, were particularly interesting to me. These individuals are all involved in a combination of diverse livelihood strategies. They all mentioned measurement of their produce in terms of “truck loads”, as opposed to the 50 kg bags or buckets that were mentioned by other respondents. These respondents also expressed a desire to expand their agricultural activities, but mentioned lack of access to sufficient land, high transport costs and insufficient water as variables that limit their potential to expand.

Two of these respondents are teachers, who have decided to invest some of their wage income in farming activities. Both of these respondents teach during the day, both own bakkies and sell their produce to local vendors. One mentioned that he was even able to sell and deliver his produce as far afield as Pretoria. The other teacher is also diversifying her income sources; she had a few kombis she was using as taxis, and has used some of her “taxi money” to install a make-shift irrigation system. She also mentioned that she is saving money from her farming enterprise, to buy some of her neighbour’s land, in order to extend the already impressive orchard in her backyard, planning to plant 20 more fruit trees. A third respondent in this group runs a small business fixing shoes, and sells his produce to

clients coming to his homestead to collect or drop off their shoes. A fourth respondent is permanently employed by ESKOM and helps his wife over weekends to harvest and sell their produce to neighbours. The final three respondents reported their engagement in the brewing and selling of traditional liquor.

In this grouping, the link between other income sources and being able to engage profitably in farming was clearly evident. The respondents in this group are clearly not “smallholders”, in the sense that their main income is not from farming, but the fact that they are producing enough to sell indicates that the need for land for own production expressed by some claimants cannot simply be ignored. Perhaps this grouping of individuals could begin to engage in “accumulation from below” (Cousins, 2011)?

Regarding the link between present day livelihood strategies and expectations, the following was noted. The respondents in group 4 (who had no members involved in farming, n=17) included households who invested in businesses or petty commodity production activities (such as spaza shops, shebeens, etc) and also the households who had a family member or two engaged in some form of employment, such as a governmental post. Unsurprisingly, 7 of these respondents articulated their expectations in terms of cash compensations. However, the other 10 respondents articulated an expectation in terms of access to land, exactly because they did not have this option in Buffelshoek. The respondents from groups 2 and 3 (n= 26, 72% of the sample), who had members already engaged in farming in Buffelshoek, anticipated that productive land would be made available for small-scale production activities. These respondents mentioned that they thought their proven ability to farm would have improved their chances of being allocated a plot of land. They expressed a sense of disappointment because they realized that no options for such small-scale production activities were even being considered. The respondents in group 1(n=7) who were already farming enough to sell and who were very keen to expand their production activities really anticipated new avenues for access not only to land but also to support services that would have allowed them to expand their activities further. One of these respondents was particularly frustrated with the lack of

options for expansion complaining that “the government is not taking my type of farming seriously; I will need to continue dividing my time between teaching and farming.”

5.7 Conclusion

The process and experience of dispossession had profoundly detrimental consequences for the Moletele people in general, as a “collective”, but there also seem to be distinct differences within that general experience in relation to timing, spatiality and age. Additionally, recollections of the process of dispossessions allowed me to gain some insights into some aspects of class-based differentiation both before and after dispossession.

The majority of the beneficiaries had very limited knowledge of the strategic partnership arrangements that have been put in place. They refer to “rumors that they have heard” or “friends who mentioned these ideas of the partnership initiatives” to them. Expectations of restitution varied even amongst individuals who voluntarily belonged to the same affiliation (members of Dissident Group 1). Expectations tended to range from highly-charged and expansive sets of expectations infused with notions of material wealth and symbolic restoration, to more delimited and perhaps more realistically framed expectations that have also been left largely unfulfilled.

The livelihood survey reveals highly diversified income sources amongst community members, a high incidence of unemployment, high dependence on social grants and the fact that some people still farm, even if it is against the odds, in the Bushbuckridge area. More importantly, I found a few people who farm enough to sell. This group of individuals is intriguing as it represents a small but important sub-group within the community, with distinctively different expectations, motives and interests. The survey data, however, also reveals that the majority of the Moletele people, as is the case for most residents in the Bushbuckridge area, tend to use farming only to supplement very meagre other income and food sources. The chapter thus highlights the disjuncture between the expectations of restitution articulated by certain groupings within the Moletele community regarding land use and access, and conditions in the former reserves where the majority of the Moletele people are currently still residing, six years after portions of their land have been transferred back to them. Despite expectations to return to the land of “milk and honey” (as

articulated to them by the then Minister of Land Affairs in her speech at the land handover ceremony) the majority of the Moletele are still trapped on the dry and barren land of the former Gazankulu and Lebowa reserves, where they eke out a rather desperate living, in stark contrast to conditions on the profitable and lavish fruit-bearing commercial land they now own.



Chapter 6: **Strategic partnerships in the Moletele land claim: interrogating inclusivity**

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter of the thesis, I analyse the nature of the partnership arrangements established between the Moletele” community” and private sector interests. I briefly explain how these partnerships have been set up, and explore the contractual agreements and the nature of different actors’ expectations of the partnerships. I also discuss how the partnerships have evolved over time. Finally, I briefly present the challenges, obstacles and opportunities perceived by the partners. The framework suggested by Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) for the assessment of the inclusivity of these business models is applied to the case material. This framework is used to critically consider risk, voice, ownership and rewards within the Moletele partnerships.

The term “business model” describes the manner in which a company structures its resources, partnerships and customer relations in order to create and capture value – in other words, a business model is what enables a company to make money (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:13; Vorley *et al.*, 2009:188). In terms of the relationship between agribusiness on the one hand and local land holders and operators on the other, Vorley *et al.* (2009:187) define inclusive business models as “the types of models which do not leave behind small-scale farmers” and as models in which “the voices and needs of those actors in rural areas in developing countries are recognised”. These models have also been labelled “mutually beneficial partnerships” (FAO, 2002), “collaborative business” (Cotula & Leonard, 2010) and “ways to do business with the poor” (BIF, 2011; Wach, 2012). Hart (2007: xli) refers to the approach behind these types of arrangements as a form of “*inclusive capitalism*”, aiming to “incorporate previously excluded voices, concerns and interests” in pursuit of capitalist-driven imperatives. From this broad range of definitions, it is surmised that inclusive business models are partnership arrangements between actors that should result in positive impacts for poor people or the environment, through the

integration of these people into value chains and environmentally sustainable practices (UNDP, 2008; Vorley *et al.*, 2009; Wach, 2012).

Some scholars are doubtful about the distinction between non-inclusive and inclusive business model arrangements. The Business Innovation Facility (BIF) of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) states that "inclusive business" needs to go further than non-inclusive business model arrangements by creating new economic opportunities for people living in poverty, perhaps as workers or as consumers of affordable goods and services ..." (BIF, 2011:1). Vermeulen and Cotula (2010:14) assert that "business models are considered to be "inclusive" if they involve close working partnerships with local land holders and operators and if they share value among the partners". Despite these assertions, doubts about real "inclusivity" in terms of these arrangements persist (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Hart, 2007; Vorley, *et al.*, 2009).



6.2 Inclusive business models/partnerships: prospects and challenges

Robertson and Pinstrip-Anderson (2010) posit that "inclusive business models" could offer better opportunities for local communities and for sustainable development over the longer term. In the agricultural sector, inclusive business models are also widely seen as a means of providing access to capital, information and markets for smallholders and communities who might otherwise have been marginalised from the economic mainstream (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:9). Howard *et al.* (2005) report an increase in a wide variety of partnership arrangements in the agricultural and forestry sectors, and observe that these arrangements are promoted not only on the basis of agricultural efficiency, but also as a route for poverty reduction. The assumption is that vertical integration into supply chains can provide small-scale producers and local landowners with better market access, plus a host of spin-offs for their wider community (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2006:2). These types of partnership arrangements are therefore seen by many as an effective means for promoting multistakeholder cooperation and broad-based development (UNDP, 2010; Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010).

Criticism or reservations about these types of arrangements are, however, also emerging. Cotula and Leonard (2010:2) point out that these arrangements, often involve “partnerships between players with different negotiating power, resources, information and skills”. Franco and Borrás (2010:11) warn that these notions of partnerships are usually based on “a depoliticised and unrealistic vision of engagement between various actors that strips them of possibly conflicting interests and attempts to place them on equal footing”. They caution “imagining equal footing and complementary interests where none exist is more likely than not, to lead to the poor losing out” (Franco & Borrás, 2010:11). Brinkerhoff (2008) warns that the often envisaged “win-win” outcomes in terms of these arrangements often do not materialise, given the power disparity between the types of actors involved, while other critics warn that partnerships are often promoted by governments and companies as part of their neoliberal orthodoxy aimed at increasing the share of control over production held by corporations (Vermeulen *et al.* 2006:2; Spierenburg, *et al.* 2012). Some scholars are also concerned with the tendency to promote partnerships as a way of “shedding responsibility” (White, 2001; Howard *et al.* 2005), while others worry about giving a “social licence to operate” to previously mistrusted players brought into the partnership arrangement (Utting, 2000).



From this brief review, it is apparent that there is a pressing need for a better understanding of the specific details and context of inclusive business model arrangements. The specific terms and conditions of these agreements could result in better local control of businesses on the one hand, but inappropriately designed, they could deliver only nominal influence over key decisions and little or no dividends as profits to the land holders (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:6). It is also clear that notions of “inclusivity” should be interrogated and not assumed, while the unequal power relations between the relevant actors in these partnerships merit very careful consideration.

6.3 Inclusive business model arrangements in terms of South African land restitution

Aliber *et al.* (2008:289) contend that the drafters of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 were “overly optimistic and believed that anything replacing the

agricultural status quo of South Africa in 1994, could only be for the better”. Aliber and his co-authors motivate this assertion by referring to the section in the RDP policy document, where it is stated that an improved quality of rural life must “entail a dramatic land reform programme to transfer land from the inefficient, debt ridden, ecologically damaging and white dominated large farm sector to all those who wish to produce incomes through farming in a more sustainable agricultural system” (ANC, 1994:s4.3.8). By the end of 1999, less than one million hectares had been transferred to land reform beneficiaries, but the direct transfer of land back to restitution beneficiaries resulted in what many commentators perceived as equally bad conditions and subsequent “failures”. According to Aliber et al. (2008:289), the usual suspects for “failing” restitution projects included lack of money and equipment, shortage of skills (both technical and managerial), lack of post-settlement support, lack of appropriate legal structures and infighting among the beneficiary groups. Ultimately, the failure of restitution projects was identified as the struggle of restitution beneficiaries to perform in terms of commercial agriculture and their lack of management and marketing skills (Aliber & Maluleke, 2010:3).

By 2004, the initial pre-occupation of the post-apartheid South African government with the virtues of small-scale farming was replaced by a new drive to ensure the transfer of land from white to black people, without damaging commercial agriculture (Aliber *et al.*, 2008). According to Spierenburg *et al.* (2012:167), “the land reform programme stagnated and eventually a shift took place towards greater dominance of the market and commercial farming”. These authors observe that the strategic partnership model was presented as the vehicle that would foster the transformation of the South African agricultural sector into a more equitable one. On the other hand, the models are also seen as an expression of the state’s belief in the large-scale commercial farming model, especially in terms of citrus export in Limpopo (Spierenburg *et al.*, 2012:167). For Derman, Lahiff & Sjaastad (2006), the establishment of strategic partnerships in restitution was the result of an important policy shift in emphasis from land *access* by claimants towards the *maintenance of agricultural productivity*.

Fraser (2007) labels the introduction of strategic partnership models as “hybridity emerging” showing the extent to which government would impose structures to promote their neoliberal and large commercial farming rhetoric. He also asserts that strategic partnerships allowed the South African government to transfer their post-settlement support responsibility over to the commercial partners (Fraser, 2007). Spierenburg *et al.* (2012: 173) point out that most of the white commercial farmers generally welcomed the introduction of these models, as it allowed them the opportunity to access government funds in one of the least subsidised agricultural environments in the world. There are also those among the white commercial farming groups who assert that these partnership initiatives were seen as a possible “bail out” for already failing white commercial farmers¹⁸.

6.3.1 Review of outcomes in terms of strategic partnership models

The model for strategic partnerships set up in terms of a joint venture was presented as *the* solution that will offer justice to the landless and contribute to poverty alleviation while still maintaining high levels of production on the transferred land. The intended outcomes and assumptions of these models are however, increasingly being questioned (Spierenburg *et al.*, 2012). Concern about the underlying assumptions of these models have been emphasised by Mayson (2003), Derman *et al.* (2007), Lahiff *et al.* (2012), Aliber *et al.* (2008), Greenberg (2010) and Anseeuw and Ducastel (2013).

The first assumption questioned by Spierenburg *et al.* (2012) refers to the notion that strategic partnerships are “real” partnerships in which all partners are equal and have mutual goals. These authors caution that the unequal power relations between private sector and commercial farmers cannot be “assumed away” and poses a real threat to the long-term viability of these arrangements (*ibid.*: 164). Fraser (2006; 2007) highlights his own concern regarding unequal power relations and posits that inequality also translates into challenging power dynamics *within* “communities”. James (2007) is therefore concerned with the role of “brokers” in communities who are able to step in and dominate both the process and its outcomes when restitution projects are negotiated. Power disparities within beneficiary

¹⁸ This view was communicated to me during an interview I conducted in August 2011 with the chairperson of the white Commercial Farmers’ Group, who were resisting the Moletete land claim.

“communities” could thus result in local elites presenting themselves as the legitimate voice, while this might not be the case.

Secondly, Aliber *et al.* (2008:290) contend that the uncritical promotion of the strategic partnership model could be construed in terms of the South African state’s assumption that commercial farmers possess the skills necessary for restitution communities to be successful in agriculture. By the same token, they find it problematic that the strategic partnership model is transmitting the idea that current commercial farming practices should be regarded as the benchmark for the kind of agriculture the restitution beneficiaries should be aspiring to (*ibid.*: 290).

Thirdly, commentators seem to share a concern regarding the nature and extent of the assumed benefits to reach the communities involved. The stipulated or intended benefits in terms of receiving rental for their land, job opportunities, profits or dividends are often linked to business plans, which in some instances are not in place (Lahiff *et al.* 2008). In addition, Spierenburg *et al.* (2012) question the ability of beneficiaries or, in fact, the Community Property Associations (CPAs) or trusts to negotiate contracts with private sector partners in the best interest of restitution communities. They question the capacity of an already beleaguered CPA as a landholding entity to ensure that training and benefits, as stipulated in terms of business plans and contracts, are in fact implemented. The ability of the CPA to put pressure on the commercial partner is thus regarded as highly questionable or assumed (*ibid.*: 171). The nature of job opportunities also raised suspicions and it is anticipated that these partnerships might inflate the extent of job opportunities available on commercial farms, while old relations of production would most likely result in a limited number of only low-paid jobs available for a segment of the beneficiaries (*ibid.*: 171).

In the fourth instance, the assumed benefits of the introduction of rural communities into existing value chains are also increasingly being questioned. Spierenburg *et al.* (2012:172) argue that engaging in the partnership could expose restitution beneficiaries to the highest risk potential in the value chain. The strategic or commercial partners, on the other hand, are seemingly able to benefit in terms of a management fee, a share of the company’s profits and exclusive control of upstream and downstream activities with potential access to

benefits that could outstrip those of the farming enterprise itself (Hellam & Derman, 2009:135).

Finally, in line with large-scale commercial farming rhetoric, the partnership model often results in the consolidation of land parcels opening up the avenue for strategic partners to consolidate and rationalise production in a way that was previously not possible. Critics thus warn that these types of joint ventures could become ways for commercial farmers and companies to spread the risk of engaging in an increasingly complex and capital-intensive sector, while gaining political credibility (Mayson, 2003).

From the discussion above, it is apparent why some commentators observe that the introduction of these strategic partnership arrangements might have led to maintained production on restituted land, but there are a myriad of complexities and problems that undermine the credibility of the strategic partnership model as a long-term strategy for post-settlement land restitution (livelihoods.co.za). Lahiff (2013:8), however, concludes that strategic partnership models have been the most ambitious and, arguably, the *least unsuccessful* model in South African land reform to date.



6.3.2 Introducing new commercial models in the context of land restitution

In many instances where the strategic partnership models have collapsed, restitution communities have opted to introduce straightforward management or lease contracts on their land (Lahiff et al., 2012). In some instances, such as in the case of the Moletele restitution claim, Community Private Partnership (CPP) arrangements were introduced. These CPP arrangements are based on a negotiated, commercial and lease-based contractual arrangement between the landowner and a private investor. The community enters the partnership with its land and the private investor brings resources that will ensure the financial sustainability of the business. Private partners provide financial investment and technical expertise to develop, operate and maintain assets on behalf of the community (landowners). In addition to the upgraded and commercially functional assets that are transferred back to communities at the end of the lease, the community partner receives guaranteed revenue, as well as preferential employment and training opportunities

(Business Trust, 2011). The CPP model is seen by many agribusiness entities as a profound improvement on the complicated structure of the strategic partnership model. Geoff de Beer of the Business Trust, one of the entities promoting the implementation of these models, confidently explains this perspective:

The Community Private Partnership model ensures low risk, regular incomes for communities through lease agreements with investors. Unlike some joint ventures that have been implemented, where communities must wait for 'profits' prior to receiving revenue (which often takes years), these revenue streams commence at the start of the partnership. (Geoff de Beer, Mabedi Transaction Advisor, 2011:11).

The CPP model differs from the former strategic partnership or joint venture model in that the operating company is controlled entirely by the commercial partner. The community receives a share of the profits and is released from any requirements to match the capital invested by the partners, as was previously stipulated in terms of the strategic partnership model. For the community partner, the CPP model allows a retreat from investment and production risk, and the withdrawal from issues pertaining to the daily management of the land. The corporate partner is in sole control of all activities on the land, but also needs to ensure that the necessary finance is in place to ensure continued production. This approach takes the dependence of the commercial partners on grant payments from the state out of the equation. From the quote cited above, the need for “*patient capital*” in terms of investment returns to the community is seemingly also removed. Communities no longer need to wait for dividends to be declared. They can benefit fairly soon after the partnership is in place because now the agreements give them access to a share in the profits.

More importantly, this new approach signals the need for a different type of commercial partner. This type of partner should be able to handle the type of risk and investment required. The contention is that, in terms of the CPP, risk and responsibility should be allocated to the partners according to their relative strengths (Business Trust, 2011). The type of partner that would thus realistically be able to manage this type of risk and investment will very likely not include what could be construed as the “traditional commercial family farmer”. The CPP model appears to be less complex than a strategic partnership and less risky for the community, but Lahiff *et al.* (2012) observe that it might be too early to say whether this model is capable of delivering a sustainable stream of

benefits to community members. The introduction of the CPP model raises some contentions and questions regarding the trajectory of the commercial farming sector in South Africa.

6.4 How these deals are structured: The Moletele partnership agreements

The remainder of this chapter details the types of arrangements and agreements in place on Moletele land. I unpack some key considerations regarding each of the partnerships in place and comment on these observations in terms of the inclusive business model framework of Vermeulen and Coltula (2010). I commence this part of my discussion with a brief overview of key aspects I would like to highlight from my review of the lease agreements and the shareholders' agreements applicable to Moletele land before moving on to discuss each of the individual partnerships. It is important to bear in mind that at the time of writing this dissertation, two of the partnerships (New Dawn and Dinaledi) are still strategic partnerships. In terms of the third partnership, attempts in 2010/12 to replace the collapsed Batau strategic partnership with a CPP arrangement between the Moleteke and Bono-SAFE, the initiative has failed and a new CPP agreement is in the process of being negotiated (2013) with the Maduma Farming Group. In addition, a CPP arrangement between the Moletele Community Property Association (MCPA) and Boshoff Citrus is also in place on the Richmond farm, transferred to the Moletele people in 2009.

6.4.1 Overview of the lease and shareholders' agreements in place for the strategic partnerships

The New Dawn, Dinaledi and – initially – the Batau settlement agreement indicate that the claimants represented by the MCPA entered into a combined shareholding and lease agreement with selected strategic partners. In terms of these arrangements, suitable strategic partners with the capacity to attract operational capital and the entrepreneurial expertise to enter into the partnership arrangement with the MCPA were identified and selected. An operating company was established with the MCPA the strategic partners as the shareholders. The operating company then entered into a lease agreement with the MCPA, which was determined at an agreed market-related rental cost. It is important to

note that the settlement and lease agreements stipulated that land can only be leased by the operating company and can therefore not be used as collateral to obtain loans. This became an important stipulation when the Batau partnership faced liquidation, an issue to be discussed later in the chapter. The signed stipulations specified that the MCPA would act on behalf of the claimant “community in forming part of the operating companies with the strategic partner. In terms of these arrangements, the allocation of shares varied, but the claimant community in all instances was the majority shareholder. As part of the strategic partnership contract agreement, skills were to be transferred to the MCPA and farm workers. It was also agreed that the shareholder proportions of the companies would depend on the equity contributions of each of the shareholders, thus what could be considered a “conventional” partnership” where risks, investment and dividends would be allocated in terms of each partner’s share in the company.

The responsibilities and specific rights of the newly established operating companies are written in the shareholders’ agreements and vary from case to case. Stipulated in all of the Moletele shareholders’ agreements is the fact that dividends that the operating company declares will be paid to the shareholders proportional to their shares. In the case of New Dawn, the original shareholders’ agreement stipulated that the MCPA would have a 51% share in the company; the strategic partner would hold 47%; and 2% was originally reserved for a workers’ trust. The 2% allocation to a workers’ trust has in the meantime been revoked. The MCPA currently holds 52% of the shares and the strategic partner holds 48% of the shares. The 2% of the shares that would have been allocated to the workers have thus been split between the MCPA and the strategic partner. The following reasons were given for cancelling the workers’ trust shares. Mr Mashile, the chairperson of the MCPA, stated that the workers’ trust arrangement would have added to cumbersome and protracted processes with limited benefits to the workers. He asserted that a decision was made by the MCPA to rather give bonuses to workers. He said that the MCPA concurred that these workers were earning salaries and were therefore already benefiting from the partnership arrangements.

In terms of the original Batau shareholders' agreement, once again, the strategic partner, Chester, held 48% of the shares and the MCPA held 52%, with no shares reserved for a workers' trust. The Dinaledi partnership agreement entails a 51% MCPA and a 49% Boyes Group shareholders' agreement. The absence of shares reserved for a workers' trust in all the updated shareholders' agreements is strikingly evident. Shares in the business would undoubtedly have been a very useful incentive for the workers. The consequence of removing the 2% shares allocated to a workers' trust is currently not contentious, simply because a very small percentage of the workers are actually from the Moletete "community", but perhaps the issue of shares for the workers might resurface once more members are employed.

In terms of the strategic partnership arrangements that are still in place, the MCPA and the strategic partners are each represented by three directors on the shareholding boards of the two operating companies (New Dawn and Dinaledi). On these boards are also representatives from government (the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform or the Regional Land Claims Commission) and a representative from the main financier of the enterprises. Government is not a shareholder, but these representatives are on the boards to safeguard the MCPA's interests, while they acquire sufficient capacity to engage on an equal basis with the strategic partner (Strategic Partnership Guiding Principles, Limpopo Department of Agriculture, 2008). The shareholders' agreements also stipulate that, in addition to shares in the company, claimant communities should receive rental payments for the use of their land from the operating company. The shareholders' agreements that are still in place for the New Dawn and Dinaledi partnerships indicate that the rent for the land is set at 1.25% of the land purchase price (transfer value of the land) and is supposed to be paid on an annual, monthly and even quarterly basis. The New Dawn and Dinaledi operating companies are thus owned jointly by the claimants and the strategic partners, but the day-to-day operations and management of the company are vested in the hands of the strategic partner, who has full control of financial and operational matters. Although the directors of the operating companies also include members selected from the MCPA, for now, the experience and knowledge of the market conditions of the strategic partners make them de facto decision-makers in the partnership.

As in the case of strategic partnerships in the rest of Limpopo, it is evident that, even though the majority shareholding is with the MCPA, the executive administration and management decisions still rest with the strategic partners. For this responsibility, the strategic partner then charges the operating company administrative fees. In terms of the New Dawn and Dinaledi shareholders' agreements, this fee, when combined with the salaries of key managers provided by the strategic partner, should not exceed 8% of the turnover of these operating companies. The strategic partners are also tasked with obtaining machinery and all the necessary equipment on behalf of the operating company.

6.4.2 Overview of the lease agreement in place for the CPP arrangement on Richmond farm

The lease agreements in place for the CPP arrangements between Boshoff Citrus and the MCPA also require some interrogation. In both instances, the Business Trust (now known as Vumelana) assisted the MCPA in drafting the lease agreement. I was only able to get a copy of the CPP agreement on the Richmond land because the Bono-SAFE deal did not materialise and the Maduma deal is still being negotiated. Bono-SAFE was, however, also appointed by the MCPA in a caretaking capacity so some of the issues in terms of the caretaking arrangement will be mentioned later in the chapter. The following discussion is, however, only applicable in terms of the lease agreement of the CPP deal for the Richmond farm.

In terms of this lease agreement, the 53-page document certainly underscores the MCPA chairperson's assertion that "the only way to deal with a powerful giant is with a very strong contract". This was his response when I asked him about the MCPA now having to deal with a far more imposing agribusiness partner and the potential distortion in terms of power dynamics this disjuncture in stature might have. The lease agreement was signed by the MCPA and Global Frontier Citrus (GFC), which has subsequently ceded the lease to Boshoff Citrus. The original agreement was signed for a 16-year term, but a rather nice innovation has been added in the form of a 36-month "probation" term. After the 36-month period, both parties agree to get together to reassess the terms and conditions of the lease

agreement and to plan a way forward “in good faith”. Fairly significant portions of the lease contract focus on the planned commissioning of a sugar cane project (seedcane or cane for the processing of ethanol) to cover approximately 240 ha of the estimated 2 434 ha of the Richmond land. Significant provisions have also been made for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing orchards, with an agreed schedule for the replanting of orchards with specified cultivars. It is agreed that the lessee “at its sole expense shall expand, replant, plant, construct, rehabilitate, equip, operate and maintain the land, orchards (both existing and new) and all assets it has been granted access to”. The lessee should also be doing all this “according to good agricultural practice” (Richmond lease agreement, 2010).

More importantly, a clear skills development plan is included in the lease agreement, an exit strategy is in place and an agreement for phasing in the preferential employment of Moletele is also detailed. MCPA members were very excited when they successfully concluded the CPP deal for the Richmond farm. They all claim that valuable lessons were learned from the failed implementation of the strategic partnership deals. Their optimistic view of the new agreement stemmed from the fact that “guaranteed and variable lease fees that will include income from fruit production activities on the land” are also included in the agreement. The contract stipulates that these guaranteed and variable lease fees are expected to range from R1.6 million per annum in 2010 to R10 million per annum in 2025. The agreement stipulates that these payments should now be made into the MCPA’s bank account in monthly instalments and, at the end of each financial year, a negotiated percentage of the profits would also be paid to the MCPA. The deal that has been concluded on the Richmond property is valued at R64 million, with R27 million that had to be leveraged by the commercial partner (Business Trust, 2011).

6.5 Moderate success: The New Dawn strategic partnership

The first strategic partnership agreement of the MCPA was with Strategic Farm Management (SFM), in terms of which the operating company New Dawn Farming Enterprises was established. New Dawn now manages 17 of the 28 (Phase 1) properties restituted to the MCPA. These properties largely produce mangoes, citrus, seed maize and

sweetcorn. The properties are well-established with efficient irrigation systems, pack houses, easy road access, a mango atchaar processing plant and two mango drying plants. The properties on the New Dawn farm cost the government about R44 million to buy from previous owners. It should be noted, however, that R18 million of the R44 million was paid in terms of infrastructure: pack houses, houses and facilities, which translates into a land value of only R26 million.

A key aspect of the New Dawn agreement is that the strategic partners must embark on and devise a programme that will ensure the speedy transfer of skills to suitable candidates from the Moletele “community who will receive training to prepare them for the eventual takeover of the company. The strategic partnership agreement is for a period of 15 years, after which the MCPA should buy out the 48% ownership stake from the SFM. It is assumed that after 15 years of this partnership, enough members of the “community” would have been sufficiently trained and capacitated to take over the management of the farms. In order to ensure that benefits accrue to the members of the Moletele community, it has been agreed that at least 30% of the workforce on the farms managed by New Dawn should be appointed from the Moletele community. But it was emphasised that this job quota can only apply to new jobs created and should not in any way be seen as a threat to the existing workforce who may not be members of the Moletele community.

Another way of channelling benefits to the members of the community is that the MCPA will use revenue from the business to initiate projects for the benefit of the community. The business plan of the strategic partner commits to the following:

“A shareholders’ agreement and a management contract that will regulate reciprocal obligations and privileges; ... incentives for ensuring that relationships between the management structures prosper; ... and a focus directed at maximising value generation, growing the enterprise to create the optimum job opportunities, participation in decision-making and management, and finally sharing in wealth creation (New Dawn Business Proposal, 2006:16).

6.5.1 Planning, transfer and other related challenges

The very first issue mentioned by both the New Dawn strategic partner and other key informants interviewed relates to concerns regarding the valuation process, which left strategic partners with some “inherited problems”. The fact that crop value was not included in the sales agreements with the previous farmers is regarded as being particularly problematic for the New Dawn partnership. The assets included in the valuation included associated water rights, on-farm irrigation infrastructure, including shade netting and fixed improvements, such as packing sheds, stores and houses. The crop on the land was not valued or included in the sales agreement. This approach led to unintended financial consequences for the New Dawn joint operating company, because it implied that even though the company started operating in 2006, it missed the income from two harvests (one citrus and one mango harvest) in 2007.

A representative of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture explained that crop value is generally not included in the valuation process. They maintain that the “inclusion of crop sales in the valuation process would be extremely difficult and costly, especially given that a few years might lapse between valuation and actual transfer, during which time market prices for the crop could have varied significantly, for which the Commission would need to compensate either the new owners or the willing sellers”.¹⁹ From the Commission’s perspective, it is therefore regarded as “too risky” to include crop value on restituted land in the valuation process, but, as illustrated in the case of New Dawn, this decision might have some domino impacts in instances where new partnerships are established.

In addition to crop value being omitted during the valuation procedure, there are also some concerns regarding the criteria used for items that form part of the valuation process. Valuation procedures in terms of restitution are also queried in other studies (Hall, 2004; Lahiff, 2008) and concerns in this regard are not only applicable to the New Dawn strategic partnership. The strategic partners complained that the valuation process did not distinguish between the different types of varieties in the existing orchards. The joint ventures now required significant cash input to remove outdated, less resilient varieties and replace them

¹⁹ Interview with Regional Land Claims Commission officer, June 2010.

with more commercially viable varieties. In addition, Mr Mike Scott and other key informants observed that the valuation process failed to take the conditions of irrigation systems on the farms prior to transfer into account. These findings support Spierenburg *et al.* (2012) in their assertion that high levels of productivity and the quality of the land and assets being transferred to restitution communities are assumed rather than ascertained. It also affirms the concern of Hall (2004:18) regarding the lack of quality and productivity levels of land being made available in terms of the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle.

The second recurring concern mentioned during the interviews with key informants linked up to the “fragmented” nature of land use practices. The RLCC decided to transfer the land portions as they became available from willing sellers. They would deal with farmers contesting the claim at a later stage. The representative from the RLCC maintained that the sheer size of the land claim ultimately necessitated this “portion-by-portion” approach. It was also seen as a strategy to prevent the deterioration of farms, while negotiations were still taking place. In some instances the scope for land use planning was limited because, as different portions of land became available, it would be “clustered” into a “consolidated productive unit” that did not necessarily reflect the proximity of these portions of land to each other.

The scope for proper land use planning was further compromised by the Commission’s own failure to conclude transactions with farmers who were, in fact, willing to sell their land at some stage. In an interview with the chairperson of the group of white commercial farmers resisting the Moletele claim, he said that a number of the farmers forming part of their group were actually willing to sell their land. When government, however, started to “drag their feet”, these willing sellers decided to join the resisting group. This observation is confirmed by the MCPA complaining that “there are willing sellers currently on the land, yet the endless delays in government processes result in willing sellers becoming frustrated and confused and ultimately withdrawing from the process, despite all our efforts to go and convince them to sell the land (Moletele Bulletin, October 2008:2) ”.

In the third instance, the New Dawn strategic partnership was, and still is, heavily dependent on cash flow from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to ensure its economic feasibility. The strategic partner is convinced that the transfer of the grants from the state, as agreed in terms of the New Dawn Business Plan, would have ensured a very successful partnership. To date, the promised Restitution Development Grant payment has not materialised. This development grant from the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) was calculated at 25% of the transfer value of the land (R44 million). The R11 million (25% of R44 million) anticipated in terms of this agreement has just not been paid to date; and the strategic partner points out that this R11 million was factored into the agreed business plan to ensure competitive citrus and mango production rates.

New Dawn therefore approached the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) in 2008 for funding to “replace” the anticipated grant payment. After a very lengthy and complicated negotiation process, a loan of R24 million, from the DBSA was approved in 2010, but at the time of the write up it has not yet been transferred. The parties involved still need to agree on a list of new terms and conditions that have suddenly been attached to the granting of the loan. In terms of new requirements from the DBSA, measures have been put in place to ensure that the strategic partner do not abandon the community, leaving them in debt and unable to repay the loan. In this instance, R5 million was transferred to the New Dawn operating company in 2013. Negotiations are, however, continuing for the remainder of the loan amount required by New Dawn to expand its operations. In principle, the loan negotiation process is driven by an uncompromising intention to safeguard the community and the land they own. The conditions attached to these loans do, however, give the strategic partner the distinct impression of “being trapped to the community” with these fairly stringent loan requirements. The strategic partner is also concerned about the very high level of risk it is facing in terms of its own financial position.

In the final instance, there are rumblings of discontent amongst Moletele community members regarding the lack of benefits from this, the now longest-running partnership on Moletele land. A few members of the MCPA acknowledge the financial difficulties of New

Dawn as outlined above, but since production is continuing on the land, suspicions are surfacing. By 2010, New Dawn has made a tremendous effort to pay some of the rental income owed to the CPA, but not all of it has been paid (MCPA Portfolio manager, July 2010). The income statement for the MCPA (2009/10) reflects a rental income from New Dawn of R451 203, which is in fact less than the anticipated R550 000 as stipulated in terms of the lease agreement. The income statements also reflect that rental income for 2007 and 2008 has not been paid. During 2013, New Dawn's managing director acknowledges that most of the rental is now paid, but not all of it. He explains that making rental payments is very challenging, given the financial difficulty faced by the joint venture. He also counters allegations regarding a lack of benefits to the community by pointing out that management fees owed to the strategic partner have still not been paid, and his investment in the joint venture has not yet been matched by the community's contribution.

In terms of benefit flow, the New Dawn shareholders' agreement stipulates that dividends will be paid out as agreed by a representative quorum at a scheduled shareholders' meeting. To date, no dividends have been declared for the New Dawn partnership. It is generally acknowledged that dividends take a bit longer to materialise in this type of farming operation (need for patient capital), but with annual turnovers of the New Dawn partnership ranging from between R3 million and R23 million, explaining the lack of dividends to the rest of the community is very difficult. One of the ex officio members of the executive committee of the MCPA, Prince Jan explains:

It was decided at one of the shareholders' meetings that a pack house should be built for New Dawn as this will ensure better long-term viability, but for me the big concern was how we will explain this decision to the rest of our community who are barely able to feed themselves?

Understandably, poor, unemployed community members waiting for any form of financial gain have very little interest in being explained about creditors, interest rates and loans that have to be paid before dividends can be declared. The distinction being made between concepts such as "profit", "dividends" and "turnover" are clearly part of a business discourse that would understandably be difficult to grasp for most of the community members. Yet, in terms of this business model, the MCPA (representing the community),

were expected to participate as an equal business partner that should be able to defend the rights of a marginalised community.

To conclude this part of the discussion of the New Dawn partnership, the following is surmised. In terms of the lease agreements, 1.25% of the land value at time of transfer was expected to be paid by the strategic partner in the form of rent. Some of the rent has been paid, but the lease agreements have not been honored in full, because only half of the investment contribution from the MCPA side (the Restitution Development Grant estimated at R11 million) has been paid to date. The partnership is, however, implementing some innovative approaches to ensure that community interests extend beyond just production in terms of the citrus value chain (discussed in Chapter 7), thus informing my reflection on this partnership as a moderate success.

The moderate success of the partnership is clearly driven by a very tenacious strategic partner who stubbornly refuses to cave in to all these pressures. He almost defiantly states: “We are still here, it has taken a lot more in terms of our personal, financial and emotional investment than we originally intended, but look at us, we are still here and we will continue to see this thing through.” He is supported by a new MCPA chairperson who is clearly also impressed by his unwavering commitment.

6.6 Moderate success: the Dinaledi strategic partnership

On 30 July 2008, the MCPA signed its third strategic partnership agreement with the Boyes Group. The Boyes Group is a farming enterprise owned by the Boyes family (three brothers involved in farming initiatives in Mpumalanga and Limpopo). The joint venture that was established has been named the Dinaledi Farming Enterprise and includes the Glencoe, Southhampton, Grovedale and Boshoff farms. The Dinaledi operating company is still waiting for the transfer of grant money as the community’s investment. The company depended on the Development Grant to extend its citrus production, but in the meantime, it the Boyes group has been able to invest private capital, which has been used to build a new pack house and to expand some of the orchards. This partnership is generally perceived to be the more successful strategic partnership on Moletele land. Its success has been linked to

its ability to source external funding, and the large hectares of land it currently has under citrus production. There is already 320 ha of land under citrus production. This was expanded by an additional 310 ha of citrus at the end of 2011. It is interesting to note that the partnership's production strategy in terms of value chain-related demands has been to focus on diversifying in terms of only citrus varieties (one type of commodity). The New Dawn strategic partner is seemingly focusing on producing a range of different commodities, asserting that "if the citrus is not doing well one year, the mangoes and avocado harvest will carry us through".

The perceived "success" of the Dinaledi partnership has also been explained in terms of the physical configuration of the land that has been clustered together. A key informant explained that three of the farms forming the cluster already belonged to the Boyes Group and the fourth farm was just an add-on to the cluster. The strategic partner therefore knew exactly what was on the farms prior to transfer and did not have to deal with faulty irrigation systems or poor quality hybrids before production could commence. The assumption is therefore that the transition for this partnership was much smoother as so many things were already in place. Added to this advantage, it has also been mentioned that these farms are not spatially as dispersed as in the case of the Batau partnership (Figure 4.3 depicting the spatial spread of the farming units). Dinaledi has also seemingly made a consistent effort to pay the rent, which has once again been set at 1.25 % of the land value on the date of transfer (R31 702 324). According to the MCPA chairperson, the Dinaledi partnership has also shown a better commitment to its skills development and training promises compared to the other two partnerships. The Boyes Group donated 16 computers for the basic computer literacy training of young people in the Moletele "community in possession of a Grade 12 certificate. The training courses are run over ten days and trainees receive a certificate of attendance upon completion. Learners are also offered free transport to the training centre situated at Scotia farm where the offices of the MCPA are based. There is a firm belief that this training will go a long way in assisting community members to apply for jobs. In addition, the Boyes Group invested money to improve the MCPA office building, which now boasts very well-equipped offices, a reception area and a functional boardroom.

Despite being regarded as the more successful partnership, there are still claims of underperformance in terms of this cluster. In response to this perception of underperformance, the MCPA has issued an ultimatum to the Boyes Group to increase the land currently under citrus production. The Dinaledi strategic partners, however, indicated that they were still waiting on the community's contribution into the loan account of the operating company. Mr Martin Mentis, the Manager appointed for the Dinaledi farms, also highlights some planning challenges they inherited with the fourth farm, which was added to the Boyes-owned farms. He asserts that four sublease agreements (some with the options up for renewal) were still effective on this land upon transfer, thus limiting their scope for citrus extension because these parcels of land were being used for other purposes. When the valuation was done for this portion of the land, a right of access agreement on land suitable for farming was not taken into account and the previous farm owner neglected to disclose this information. Rental income from these sublease agreements are being paid to the MCPA, but in terms of extending the farming operations of the Dinaledi farms, this was becoming problematic as some of the lease agreements provide the option for renewal.

Since the start of this research, the relationship between this strategic partner and the MCPA seems to have soured somewhat. Initially the strategic partner of the Dinaledi partnership was labelled as the "good wife" by members of the MCPA executive committee because of all the tangible investments that were being made. Recently, however, scepticism crept in when the Dinaledi strategic partners were mentioned. Members of the MCPA Executive Council are not keen to talk about it, although they do hint that all is seemingly not well with this partnership. There are some questions about the real extent of benefits this strategic partner has been able to generate from the land, while very little has been flowing back to the Moletele people. An assumption is "that numbers can be manipulated to paint a certain picture in terms of dividends" and there is just a genuine uncertainty about what is really happening. From the perspective of the Boyes Group, they also seem a bit more apprehensive. The Boyes Group's input in the loan account of the partnership, which should be balanced by the inputs from the community as stipulated in terms of the shareholders' agreement, has not been matched. Yet, it is expected to invest even more money to expand production.

Since the election of the new MCPA committee, the genuine uncertainty about what is actually happening in the partnership has resulted in a few changes in terms of reporting back to the community. The MCPA appointed two individuals to start “shadow” management with the Dinaledi manager. These two individuals have a monthly report-back session to the MCPA and, instead of quarterly board meetings, they now conduct monthly meetings. The new MCPA chairperson asserts that this partnership deal will terminate when the committee’s term comes to end (they are not even considering renewing the partnership). The MCPA wants to see the Moletele people taking up the management of the land. They are working in full force on the “exit strategy” of the Boyes Group. This is an interesting turn of events. At the end of 2011, the idea of converting this partnership into a CPP arrangement was widely welcomed, but, in 2013, the new MCPA chairperson communicated that the MCPA is very keen to see this deal coming to an end.

6.7 A cycle of failure: The Batau strategic partnership

The second strategic partnership signed by the MCPA was with Chestnet (Pty) Ltd, resulting in the Batau Farming Enterprises partnership. The agreements signed for this partnership were very similar to the ones signed with SFM, with minor differences. The more pronounced of the differences is that this partnership was for a relatively smaller number of properties. This partnership included 11 properties of the first phase property transfer (the first 28 portions mentioned earlier) at a total value of R25 million.

Since inception, however, the Batau partnership was plagued by rumours of “poor performance” and even discreet whispers of “poor management”. No rental income, profit and especially dividend payments have been forthcoming from this operating company. A meager two years after the operating company was established, it had to be liquidated. The farmhouses that were previously part of the main lease contract have subsequently been placed under the management of the MCPA and it is now being leased to tenants. From April until end of June 2010, the net income from the rental of the Batau houses was R45 102,00. This payment reflected on the MCPA’s financial statement is seemingly the only

recorded income ever received from the Batau partnership in terms of its original agreements.

The failure of the Batau partnership by 2010 was explained by the following two reasons. Firstly, the properties in question were seen as too small and dispersed, resulting in a very scattered spatial arrangement that impeded their scope for economic viability. The scattered nature of the properties, without pack houses, complicated management decisions, and the movement of tractors and other machinery between these properties became not only costly, but also a logistical challenge. Secondly, and most importantly, the Batau partners were unable to bring money into the partnership themselves. In fact, the common perception is that these partners seemingly entered the partnership exactly because they needed to access money in the form of the grants.

The Batau strategic partners were liquidated by the end of 2011. This process was a massive ordeal for the MCPA. The management of these farms by the strategic partners commenced in 2007, but by 2010 the Batau cluster was unable to meet its obligations in respect of its trade creditors, wages, escalating water usage cost and asset maintenance. Batau's inability to maintain the assets resulted in the deterioration of the houses, shade nets, orchards and irrigation equipment on these farms.

The MCPA then appointed Bono-SAFE as the caretaker of the Batau farms for a period of one year, with the prospect of signing a CPP agreement with them at the end of the one-year term. A major difficulty was that Bono-SAFE commenced as the caretaker of these farms without a formal agreement. In 2010, the directors of Chester Farming Enterprises (the strategic partners of the Batau partnership) challenged the legitimacy of the MCPA agreement with Bono-SAFE. The directors of the strategic partnership claimed that the cancellation of the lease agreement was a breach of contract. These Batau directors argued that they had never resigned and that the benefits Bono-SAFE was able to reap from the farms (crop production and export) were as a result of their inputs and investments into the farms. The Batau directors felt that they needed to be compensated for the investments they had made. In a counter claim, Bono-SAFE argued that it in fact had to invest almost R3 million to restore the deteriorated state of orchards and property that was being managed by

the Batau partners. Bono-SAFE maintained that it had to replace shade nets, prune trees and provide double applications of fertilizers to restore productivity on these farms.

In the middle of this unfolding legal battle with claims, counter claims and allegations, was a somewhat battered MCPA that had to engage with both parties and decide on a way forward. The lack of clarity regarding the legitimacy of the MCPA's agreement with Bono-SAFE was particularly problematic. The MCPA was hoping to devise a plan for Bono-SAFE to make up the R3 million in terms of a CPP agreement over the next 15 years. The problem is that, after three years of protracted negotiations with Bono-SAFE, the prospect of setting up a CPP agreement has also collapsed and now the talk of the R3 million owed to the partner is surfacing once more.

As events unfolded in the Batau partnership, the complicated, technical, grant-dependent and poorly structured design of the strategic partnership model became very evident. Despite all the agreements that had been signed, there was still uncertainty and confusion. The prospect of strategic partners resigning or being "released from their contracts" has proven to be a something of an uncharted territory. At times, the complicated legal and technical exchanges and the elaborate business discourse clearly overwhelmed the MCPA members and caused a high dependence on outsiders for technical support.

6.8 Community private partnership

In April 2009, the farm Richmond, as a full portion, was transferred to the Moletele community. At the time of transfer, the 2 434 ha farm was valued at an astounding R63 million. Between April and October 2009, a company named African Reality Trust (which was also the previous owner of the land) was appointed by the MCPA to remain on the farm and manage the farm on behalf of the Moletele community. During this time however, conditions on the farm had deteriorated to such an extent that the MCPA had decided to terminate the lease arrangement with the African Reality Trust group. The farm required a cash injection of R500 000,00 to restore the damage incurred during this period. Subsequently, the MCPA decided that a company named Golden Frontier Citrus GFC (an affiliation of TSB) should manage the farm under a caretaking arrangement for the period

between October 2009 and June 2010. On 22 June 2010, a lease agreement was signed with GFC based on a business model negotiated along the line of what has been called a community private partnership. The signing of this lease agreement has resulted in a high level of expectation among some of the members of the MCPA. Other observers seem a bit more reserved, but still cautiously optimistic about the prospects of this new business model. A firm conviction is expressed that this model will perform better than the strategic partnership model because there is much less of a dependence on cash injections and grants from government. With this model, the focus has shifted to a private partner with the ability to farm profitably, provide for the development of the farms, and train prospective MCPA members in farming. Needless to say, Richmond also seems structurally better geared towards success with a well-equipped pack house (180 tons throughput) available on site and a large area of land already under established citrus production (400 ha). Plans are also in place to extend the citrus production by another 115 ha (young citrus trees have already been planted), and 240 ha of land has been earmarked for sugar cane plantations to be channelled towards ethanol production.

A few concerns should, however, be noted regarding outcomes of the CPP model thus far. A very different type of agribusiness partner is clearly involved in these types of ventures. It is anticipated that the nature of disparity in terms of the power dynamics between these two very unequally matched actors could end up being far more pronounced than in the case of power relations in the strategic partnership model. To contextualise, Spierenburg *et al.* (2012) questioned the ability of CPAs and trusts to negotiate and enforce contractual agreements with private-sector partners who, in terms of the strategic partnership models, used to be the previous white commercial farm owners (traditional family-based producers and exporters). In terms of the CPP model, however, agreements are being signed with agribusiness entities and even large corporations in some instances. These agribusiness entities have enough money and the necessary legal and technical skills to invest and maneuver as they see fit. Additionally, their motives are clear: they need access to the land to expand their export activities with the scope for their expanded reproduction. The “strong contract needed to control the giant” could thus turn out to be a toothless tiger. I would think that the leverage of the MCPA in terms of these arrangements becomes even more questionable.

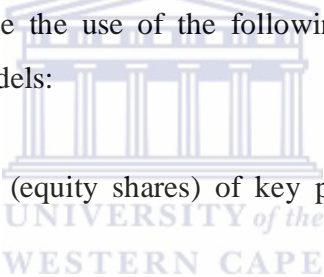
Just as an example, the lease agreement of the CPP on Richmond stipulated that the contract was to be signed between GFC and the MCPA. The contract agreements also clearly stipulated that the lessee is not allowed to sublease or cede its contractual agreement with the community to a different entity, without prior notice or negotiation with said community. Yet, GFC was allowed to relinquish its contractual arrangement with the MCPA to Boshoff Citrus as soon as it decided that it would be too costly to travel between Hoedspruit and Malelane on a regular basis. The MCPA members seemed equally astonished about the speed at which the change of partners occurred, but decided to “go along” with the new partner.

The other vexing issue showing the difficulty in trying to control a large agribusiness partner is of course the now collapsed negotiation process with Bono-SAFE. This deal took almost three years to be concluded (2010–2012). The MCPA had several rounds of negotiations with “very intimidating looking lawyers” and other legal representatives of Bono-SAFE, and for almost 24 months, these stipulations had to be reworked. Finally Bono-SAFE walked out in any case. It is now commonly speculated that the legal representatives of Bono-SAFE might have been using delay tactics to allow the company to continue production on the terms and conditions of a far more favourable caretaker arrangement, while the intention to sign the more stringent CPP arrangement was never even entertained. The “negotiations” thus kept the MCPA busy while some “loopholes” were available to the agribusiness partner. For example, it was discovered that Bono-SAFE was exceeding its water allocation quotas during this time and failed to disclose the matter to the MCPA, who only noticed a rapid increase in water usage for sections of the land they did not even know were already under production. The consultation with Bono-SAFE has thus ended and the MCPA decided to terminate the caretaking arrangement. The MCPA is, however, engaging in negotiations with the Maduma Farms Group with every intention “not to repeat the same mistakes we made in the Bono-SAFE deal”.

6.9 Comments in terms of the assessment framework

This part of the chapter highlights some key observations in terms of the different partnerships made in the context of the inclusive business model framework of Vermeulen and Cotula (2010).

Sonia Vermeulen and Lorenzo Cotula introduced a framework for assessing value-sharing in the context of inclusive business models. In terms of this framework, it is accepted that economic viability should be regarded as a precondition for agricultural investments to benefit the local population, and that the choice of business model needs to be grounded on solid economic analysis (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:5). These authors do, however, assert that business models should also be assessed in terms of how value is shared between the different partners, particularly between the agribusiness investors and local landholders and operators (Ibid:5). They propose the use of the following four criteria in terms of the assessment of these business models:

- 
- Ownership: of the business (equity shares) of key project assets, such as land and processing facilities.
 - Voice: the ability to influence key business decisions, including weight in decision-making, arrangements for review and grievance, and mechanisms for dealing with asymmetries in information access.
 - Risk: including commercial (i.e. production supply and market) risk, but also wider risk, such as political and reputational risks.
 - Reward: the sharing of economic costs and benefits, including price setting and finance arrangements.

Using these criteria, in terms of the inclusive business model arrangements on Moletete land, the following observations are summarised in table 6.1. The strategic partnership model was clearly informed by an “in good faith” approach. A key assumption of this approach was that strategic partners and the CPAs would all work harmoniously together for a common good and that rental incomes and dividends (rewards) would drive “win-

win” outcomes for all the parties involved. From the information mentioned in Table 6.1 it is clear that a very different tale unfolded. The Batau strategic partners were liquidated, the New Dawn partnership is just barely hanging on and the “voice” considerations of the community in these partnership arrangements are increasingly being challenged. The strategic partner for the New Dawn partnership feels that he has exposed himself to unnecessary risk, because he was forced to negotiate a new loan agreement tying him to the community for a longer time period. The risks and rewards for the Dinaledi strategic partnership initiative is becoming equally contentious with the Dinaledi partners concerned about the extent of the investment they already had to make. I reflect on these considerations (ownership, risk, voice, reward) more in chapter 8. To conclude this part of the discussion, the statement made by one of the key informants captures the Moletele scenario very well. He stated: “Outcomes to date might be a little bit of both (good and bad), but the one thing we know for sure is that strategic partnerships have failed monumentally, we have no doubts about that”

Table 6.1: Summary of Moletele “inclusivity” Assessment.

New Dawn and Dinaledi	Strategic partnership model observations
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated technical design of the strategic partnership model placed the community at a disadvantage. • The community’s “voice” was supposed to be represented by MCPA members forming part of the operating company’s shareholder committee. • Shareholder meetings were particularly difficult and strategic partners felt that they simply did not have the time to “capacitate” and run the business at the same time. • These meetings, which should be the platform to ensure community “voice” and influence in terms of decision-making, were therefore regarded as “token” meetings.
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the strategic partner’s perspective, a considerable degree of “risk” became evident when grant payments failed to materialise. • The New Dawn strategic partner has been forced to negotiate a very complicated loan agreement. • The Dinaledi partnership seems equally concerned about grant payments not materialising. Boyes Group is concerned that its partnership on Moletele land and the level of investments already made are placing considerable strain and risk on its other investments in Limpopo.

New Dawn and Dinaledi	Strategic partnership model observations
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure title is in place, but issue of access need to be considered.
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental incomes from the deals are not consistent or at the agreed terms because the grants from the state did not materialise. The strategic partners are waiting for the community's contribution to be paid into the loan accounts of the operating companies. Rental income in terms of these deals has been a major disappointment and not as substantive as initially envisaged. Dividends have not been declared as these partnerships have been underperforming, so evidently no dividend pay-outs have taken place. Training and skills transfer: The strategic partners mentioned some attempts at skills development. The one or two individuals who have been trained, however, found employment elsewhere, resulting in the strategic partners becoming very wary of these training endeavours. Outcome in terms of skills development and training was therefore, quite limited, the only mentionable highlight being the computer training centre for young people who had completed grade 12, sponsored by the Dinaledi partnership. Employment: The outcome in terms of employment as a potential reward and benefit was somewhat limited. Rewards for the strategic partners are more difficult to "read". They were very quick to point out the risks these partnerships have imposed on them, but on the reward side for them, one can speculate that they are staying afloat and that their export companies could be benefitting fairly well.
Richmond	Community private partnership
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power disparity between the two actors is even more pronounced. The model signals a distinct move away from involvement in the farming activities by rural restitution communities. By implication, the roles of these restitution communities are reduced to them becoming landlords or rent collectors with very little control over activities or produce on their own land. "Strong contracts" could still prove ineffective in terms of ensuring leverage for the MCPA to enforce contractual stipulations. Voice or ability to influence decision-making might therefore be even more questionable than in the case of the strategic partnership model.
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If contractual agreements are not honoured, agribusiness could be allowed to consolidate and farm with very little regard for the long-term environmental or productive sustainability of the land, thus compromising the long-term viability of the land, putting the community at risk. A major advantage of the CPP model is that the investment and production risk is carried by the commercial investor, not the community.
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities retain landownership and lease their properties to investors who pay rent, make capital investments and fully manage all farming operations without the landholder's input. The community members might therefore be able to call themselves

New Dawn and Dinaledi	Strategic partnership model observations
	landowners who have been “incorporated” into value chains, but they might end up with no decision-making or orientation power, based on the business model being used.
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPP model seemingly scored better than the strategic partnership model in terms of the envisaged rental and profit incomes from these deals. This is a strong possibility, as this time, the community members should receive annually increasing lease payments and an annually negotiated percentage of the profits from fruit production on their land.

It is evident that the new CPP models are not without challenges. It is also clear that the continued introduction of more of these models in terms of the settlement of rural restitution claims would have far-reaching implications for the South African agrarian structure. The perceived desirability of CPP models could contribute to an increase in the number of settled rural restitution cases. This would definitely effect a change in the racial profile of ownership of commercial farm land in South Africa. Hall (2004) refers to this process as the “blackening of the landownership structure”. At the same time, however, the model signals a distinct move away from involvement in the farming activities by the restitution communities. By implication, the role of these communities could result in restitution communities becoming landlords or rent collectors with very little control over activities or produce on their own land. The communities might therefore be able to call themselves landowners who have been “incorporated” into value chains, but they might end up with no decision-making or orientation power based on the business model being used. The “voice” of the community in this context is therefore highly questionable and I am also concerned that the “voices” of subgroupings *within* communities could be compromised or drowned out.

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter of the thesis, I analysed the nature of the partnership arrangements established between the Moletele community and private-sector interests. I started off by briefly exploring the concept of an inclusive business model and then moved on to examine the reasoning behind the introduction of these partnerships in the context of South African

land restitution. I also briefly explained some of the contractual agreements that are in place for the different partnerships. The nature of different actors' expectations, risks and challenges in terms of the partnerships were briefly mentioned.

I discussed how the partnerships have evolved over time, and the framework suggested by Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) for understanding the inclusivity of inclusive business models was applied to the case material. It was also used to critically consider risk, voice, ownership and rewards within the Moletele partnerships. From the application of this framework for inclusivity, it became clear that ownership in the instance of both models certainly did not ensure considerable "voice" for the landholding community. Comparing the two models, the increased disparity in terms of the power relations that these "new types" of commercial partners would introduce, raised even more questions regarding the community's ability to "voice or influence" decision-making. As far as "risk" is concerned, the CPP model mostly shifted responsibility and risk away from the community, which is regarded as a definite advantage over the strategic partnership model. In terms of the overall performance of inclusive business model arrangements on Moletele land, the CPP model would also score better on envisaged rental and profit income. This time round, the CPP model stipulates that the community should receive guaranteed and variable lease payments and a negotiated percentage of the profits from the fruit production on its land. This is seen as a definite improvement on the strategic partnership's envisioned dividend payments that would first need to be declared and rental incomes set, both of which never materialised. However, both models seemed equally unlikely to deliver significantly on "rewards" from the employment of Moletele people. The CPP model has certainly been received with great enthusiasm by the MCPA and other actors involved. This excitement clearly stems from some of the "improvements" that are envisaged. The reality, however, is that the introduction of this model raises some very real concerns regarding the very notion of "inclusivity", The ability of the CPA to manage these new commercial partners also remains questionable.

Chapter 7:

The South African citrus value chain: prospects and challenges for joint venture arrangements on restitution land.

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I reflect upon the prospects and challenges of inclusive business model arrangements as they are introduced on Moletele land, in the context of the South African citrus value chain. The first part of the chapter provides a detailed account of the deregulated, export oriented and buyer-driven nature of the South African citrus industry. I consider where ‘value is added’ along these citrus value chains based on key trends identified in the literature reviewed. I relate these key findings to the node where the Moletele “community” is inserted as producers. I then briefly reflect on some prospects and constraints regarding “benefit” distribution to the broader Moletele ‘community’ against the backdrop of envisaged benefit streams identified at the inception of these partnership arrangements. Evidence of innovative manoeuvring on the part of one of the commercial partners to ensure the better ‘capturing of value’ towards the broader community is mentioned. I then conclude the chapter using secondary data and information gleaned from the literature to affirm Vermeulen and Cotula’s (2010) argument that the insertion of impoverished rural communities into export oriented and buyer driven value chains through partnership agreements is often more challenging than originally envisaged. From this discussion Vermeulen and Cotoula’s (2010) warning of ‘the devil in the detail’ when it comes to the assessment of inclusive business model arrangements seems particularly relevant.

7.2 Description of the South African Citrus industry.

According to South Africa’s Citrus Growers Association (CGA) Annual Report (2007), the first orange and lemon trees were brought from St. Helena Bay in 1654. These trees flourished in the gardens of the Dutch East India Company and bore fruit seven years later, by which time over one thousand trees had been established. In 1907 an estimated 3 000 cases of South African grown oranges were sold in Britain and in 1925 a million cases of

citrus were exported from South Africa to Britain marking “the beginning of the citrus industry in South Africa” (Cole,1954:102). Since this humble beginning, the South African citrus industry has clearly grown in leaps and bounds with an estimated 60 000 ha of land currently under citrus production (Bureau for Agricultural Policy, 2010). The CGA (2010) reports that the industry is currently exporting over a million tons of citrus to every continent annually and during the 2008/09 production season, the citrus industry contributed R5.8 billion to the total gross value of South African agricultural production (CGA, 2010) and during the 2009/10 production season the Citrus industry’s contribution increased to R6.5 billion of South African agricultural production (CGA, 2011). These totals represented approximately 20% of the total gross value (R32.9billion) of horticulture during the same period. Currently, 33% of the country’s citrus fruit are produced in the Limpopo Province (DAFF, 2010). Major fruit produced in the Limpopo region (Hoedspruit, Letsitele, Tzaneen) include valencias, navels, grapefruits, mandarins, lemons and limes. It is also estimated that the Limpopo region contributes 30% of the country’s total citrus export and 45% of the country’s total Valencia export. Moreover, almost 70% of the citrus produced in South Africa is exported (DAFF, 2010). The citrus industry is therefore an important foreign exchange earner and currently the country is ranked as the 12th largest citrus producer and having just overtaken the USA, South Africa is now the second largest exporter of citrus globally (CGA, 2011). Ndou and Obi (2011:3) observes that this ranking highlights the importance of effective strategies aimed at maintaining and increasing the competitiveness of the industry. This high ranking does not only necessitate careful treading and consideration in instances where land has to be redistributed, it also provides new restitution entrants access to a competitiveness that could be tapped into.

Major export markets include Japan, USA, South Korea and Taiwan with new markets established in Thailand, Israel and China (CGA, 2010). It is estimated that 45% of South African citrus is exported to Europe and that South Africa continues to expand its access in the U.S. while breaking into new markets in the Far East and Middle East (CGA, 2010). In 2003, Louw and Fourie estimated that 2 000 commercial farmers produced the South African citrus crop with approximately 60 000 permanent labourers and another 60 000 casual labourers (total 120 000) employed in the industry who supported an estimated 300

000 dependents. Interestingly, the estimates of the CGA in 2007 (only four years later) shows that despite a decline in the number of employees in the citrus industry, estimated at “100 000 people employed in the production and packaging sectors”, the CGA figures shows a noticeable increase in the number of people now dependent on the South African citrus industry estimated at “over 1 million people” (CGA, 2007). Thus, despite a decrease in the number of those employed in the industry, an increase in the strategic importance of the industry in terms of broader poverty alleviation considerations, is estimated. To break down the employment figures in more detail: the Bureau for Agricultural Policy (2011) estimates that the employment requirement to produce citrus fruit is estimated at one worker per hectare and at an estimated 60 000 ha of land currently under citrus production, they estimate that approximately 60 000 workers are employed on citrus farms. Added to this, the Bureau for Agricultural Policy (2011) projects that direct downstream labour requirements for citrus are estimated at one labourer per 2 500 cartons. Assuming an average packing rate of about 100 million cartons per year, an additional 40 000 jobs is estimated. The total number of employment opportunities in the citrus industry is therefore consistently estimated at approximately 100 000 indicating a job loss total in the industry of about 20 000. Ndou (2012:109) postulates that “many farm workers in the fruit industry in South Africa lost their jobs as some inefficient farmers failed to survive global competition without government support in the form of subsidies”. Furthermore, Ndou (2012) in agreement with Mather (2008) contends that “while globalisation improves the overall competitiveness of nations and production efficiencies, resultant job creation and reduction of unemployment is mostly experienced only in the advanced nations” and thus by implication, not in the developed nations where production takes place.

It is deemed important to also briefly mention some of the competitive advantage opportunities evident in the South African citrus industry. Firstly, South Africa occupies a strategic geographical position. The wide range of climatic conditions (tropical, sub-tropical and Mediterranean) gives the nation an advantage of producing a vast range of citrus cultivars that may meet different consumer needs in different markets (Phillips, 2006). Secondly, South Africa enjoys a counter-season production system compared to its northern hemisphere rivals especially in Europe. This is a major competitive advantage

against the nation's northern hemisphere competitors but, ever increasing inland transportation costs, additional costs at harbours where there are serious congestions and operational inefficiencies (Van Dyk and Masperu, 2004) and longer northern hemisphere production seasons through technological innovations, might end up lessening the extent of the competitive advantage for South African citrus exporters. Thirdly, South African citrus exporters have a very strong and capable network of organizations that make sure that the country stays ahead in terms of production, research, extension, lobbying and market access efforts. Fourthly, the industry's efforts in popular variety adoption and quality-assurance management processes keep South African citrus strong in the increasingly competitive global market (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2010). Finally, at the heart of the South African citrus industry's competitive advantage is a strong buyer confidence translating into "buyers of South African citrus getting higher quality fruit which they are willing to pay for" (Partida, 2010:3). It is this "buyer confidence/reputation" that the CGA (2010) urges citrus exporters and producers to earnestly protect. Inclusive business model models aimed at the insertion of restitution claimants (often rural poor communities) into the South African citrus value chain would therefore not merely require mindfulness of the competitive advantage opportunities for South African producers, but every effort should be made to protect and even enhance this competitiveness.

Notwithstanding the competitive advantage opportunities, Freguin-Gresh and Anseeuw (2012:6) asserts that the South African agriculture and citrus sectors have undergone major evolutions in terms of production and trade governance patterns, which need to be understood and examined. Barrientos *et al* (2003) contends that pressures for change in the fruit production sectors of South Africa were coming from multiple directions where fruit is increasingly exported through a global value chain dominated by large supermarket buyers and their agents. The nature of control and dominance of supermarkets in terms of these value chains prompts Mzhitshi (2010:6) to describe their activities as 'oligopolistic' while other observers characterise these large supermarkets as 'lead firms' in the global fresh fruit value chains (Humphrey and Dolan, 2002). Additionally, global competition between southern countries exporting onto a tight world market is intensifying and deregulation of the fruit sector within South Africa has shifted the playing field from which growers and

exporters were operating (Louw & Fourie, 2003). It is therefore imperative that the insertion of newly restituted communities into the South African fruit industry (read citrus) by means of *inclusive* business model arrangements is contextualised in terms of (1) the consequences of liberalisation and deregulation of agricultural markets; (2) the role of private norms and standards applicable in these value chains and (3) the implications of oligopolistic tendencies of large UK and Northern European retailers dominating both production and trade in the South African citrus value chain.

7.3 The Citrus industry in the context of Liberalisation and Deregulation in South Africa

A study conducted by Ndou and Obi (2011:3), investigating the business competitiveness of the South African citrus industry; concluded that “changes in the South African agricultural sector, such as the deregulation of the fruit industry, land reform, microeconomic factors and stringent global food safety standards have radically shaped the competitiveness of the industry”. Since 1994, one of the recurring themes in citrus-related research in South Africa has been a focus on the consequences and impacts of market deregulation and liberalisation (Mather, 2008, Mather & Greenberg, 2003, Vink & Kirsten, 2003, Funtida, 2010). In terms of the South African fresh fruit value chains (citrus, table grapes and subtropical fruits), research from the political economy perspective exhibits a strong focus on the impacts and differential consequences of globalisation and market deregulation (Barrientos *et al.* 2001, Barrientos, 2002, Ewert, 2005, Funtida, 2010) while the plight of farm workers in the fruit production industry has also received considerable emphasis (Barrientos 2002, Barrientos *et al.* 2004, Du Toit and Ally 2003, Ewert, 2005). In addition, authors such as Gibbon (2003), Humphrey and Dolan (2004), Ponte (2003) and Bolwig *etal* (2010) tend to highlight the consequences (in terms of governance and labour) of the increasingly dominant nature of voluntary standards and requirements imposed by major UK based retailers on global fresh commodity fruit chains. The role of the South African land reform policy in terms of impeding or maintaining the market competitiveness of South African producers in global fresh fruit value chains has also been explored (Ndou, 2012, Ndou & Obi, 2011, Greenberg, 2010, Mzitshi, 2010). More recently, dynamics of “inclusion and exclusion” in these value chains are being challenged, especially in

instances where partnership arrangements have been negotiated (Du Toit and Ally, 2003; Bolwig *et al.* 2009 and Bolwig *et al.* 2010, Ponte, 2003); culminating into calls for more pro-poor alternatives to be investigated in the context of South Africa's fresh fruit value chains.

7.3.1 The Citrus Industry before Deregulation

Before 1940, South African citrus growers were able to export their produce under different labels attached to estate farms, groups of growers organised regionally and even individually (Mather, 2005). In 1914, the Fruit Export Act was passed by the Union Parliament to improve the quality of the fruit being exported and in 1925 the Fruit Export Control Board was established to coordinate shipping and reduce delays at the ports (Ndou, 2012). In 1926 citrus growers branched away from the Fruit Export Control Board and formed the South African Cooperative Citrus Exchange (SACCE). The impetus for forming the SACCE came from citrus growers who felt that the Fruit Export Control Board was giving preference to deciduous fruit export only (Mather & Greenberg, 2003:396). The establishment of the South African Cooperative Citrus Exchange (SACCE) is often described as the first attempt towards state regulation in the citrus industry.

The level of state regulation in the export of agricultural commodities changed drastically after the promulgation of the 1937 Marketing Act which caused stringent regulations in South African agriculture by means of statutory Control Boards. In the citrus industry, the Citrus Board was established with the power to set local prices and appoint a single channel marketing agent for domestic and overseas markets (Mather & Greenberg, 2003:396). When the Citrus Board was established in 1940 it elected Outspan as its overseas distribution and marketing agent. The ties between Outspan and the Citrus Board remained very close: most of the 12 Citrus Board members were also Outspan employees at some time and both organisations occupied the same building (Mather, 1999:63). Thus, in terms of legislative reform as initiated by the 1937 Marketing Act, citrus export between the 1940s and the mid-1990's, were controlled by a single desk exporter – the South African Citrus Exchange. Producer associations and apex single-channel export bodies typically

worked on the principle of rewarding volume rather than quality, with the same unit prices being paid to all growers. Prioritisation of quantity reflected one of the main arguments for their existence, namely, that commanding massive volumes protected their members by establishing heightened bargaining power vis-à-vis other players in the chain – including supermarkets. There is some qualitative evidence that better bargaining power was achieved (Mather and Greenberg, 2003). For example, before 1997 when the South African Outspan/Capespan export monopoly was scrapped, UK supermarkets were unable to impose any significant service demands on South African exporters. Most notably, they were unable to impose their desired product mix (Mather and Greenberg, 2003). The other main argument in favour of the single-channel system was the creation of economies of scale in the provision of services and credit to growers themselves, and recovery of credit at source. On this basis, the single-channel system had a strong inclusionary dynamic – albeit one limited in South Africa by apartheid discourses and laws (Gibbon, 2003).

Tregurtha and Vink (2002) note that more marketing changes came about in the early 1970s when control over the domestic marketing of fresh fruit by the state was abolished and export marketing power was delegated officially from the Citrus Board to Outspan in 1970. This meant that the local and regional cooperatives, large estates and individual farmers became integrated into a nationally organised citrus chain (Mather, 1999). South African citrus growers were forced to abandon their local labels and export fruit under the Outspan label. Mather (1999) contends that Outspan territorialised South African citrus, in that it presented South African citrus to the northern consumers as a ‘national product’ but this process also resulted in an internal deterritorialisation of citrus by erasing ecologically diverse citrus growing areas within South Africa. Interestingly, there seems to be a desire to move back to the marketing and branding of commodities in terms of its country of origin. The 2010 CGA’s Annual Report mentions that a number of grapefruit growers once again started to market their commodities using the country of origin slogan (CGA, 2010).

Outspan uniquely provided services to growers and exporters ranging from the seed and budwood, production, packaging shipping and final distribution and marketing of the products and distribution (Ndou, 2012). Outspan was able to exercise great control both

upstream and downstream from the farm and the company had full control of the distribution of fruit down to the first point of sale and later to the ultimate consumer (thus clearly a producer driven chain). Mather cites the chairman of Outspan who in the 1960's ambitiously declared that "while previously it was our policy to control the distribution of fruit down to the first point of sale... we are now adopting a policy which is designed to enable us to control the flow of our fruit right down to the ultimate consumer" (Cartwright, 1977 cited in Mather 1999:6). In order to achieve this stated mission, and strengthen their dominance and control of the South African citrus value chain, Outspan went on and established companies and amalgamated with other companies in the importing countries to become directly involved in the marketing and distribution of South African citrus fruit 'right down to the consumer'. Outspan International merged with Unifruco (the single channel exporter of deciduous fruit) to form the company, Capespan International Ltd that became the world's largest fruit exporting company during the late 1990's thus confirming Outspan's dominance in the South African citrus industry and affirming its position as one of the key drivers of the South African citrus value chain during the pre-deregulation era.

7.3.2 *Driving forces towards deregulation*

The reforms of 1996 came about primarily as a result of domestic and international political pressure along with influential economic analysis (Fourie and Louw, 2003). From the international front, during the Uruguay Round of multinational trade agreements (GATT 1994); South Africa committed itself to extensive tariff reductions to be implemented in 1994. The commitment to trade liberalisation in South Africa therefore coincided with the transition of the country towards a democratic government (Ndou, 2012:107). The World Trade Organisation Report of 1997 states that the deregulation of Agricultural marketing structures was part and parcel of the post- apartheid government's intention to restructure the economy. The historic arrangements in agriculture was perceived to be geared towards the interest of only a select white commercial farming sector which excluded and disadvantaged black South African producers. According to this report, the major driving force for agricultural restructuring in South Africa was therefore to address challenges associated with the historic emergence of "two agricultures" which was seen as the culminating effect of the 1937 Marketing Act, in addition to the role of agricultural

financial institutions and the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts (WTO, 1997). The Marketing of Agricultural Products Act of 1996 was promulgated and it is generally regarded as the major legal instrument in the deregulation of the agricultural industry.

In addition to major political and economic drivers towards reforms, drivers towards change in the citrus industry also included issues relating to access to information, market concentration, the diversity of grower interests, and legislative appropriateness (Scrimgeour & Sheppard, 1998). With regard to access to information it was noted that both the Citrus Marketing board and Outspan, initially did provide South African growers with information about European markets. But during the 1990s it appears that the boards have provided relatively less information to growers compared to information readily available from other sources (Scrimgeour & Sheppard, 1998). Scrimgeour & Sheppard, (1998) noted that the existence of a single marketing channel led to a concentration in secondary services such as in printing and transport that had to be provided to the board which reduced the overall competitiveness of the industry. They also observe that in addition to the different interests of emerging (black) farmers and established commercial farmers, the interests of all established farmers were not homogeneous and this resulted in the mushrooming of independent growers and independent grower organisations who also pressed the case for reform (Scrimgeour and Sheppard, 1998:63). These independent growers and their organisations argued that the remuneration procedures in terms of the single channel marketing approach restricted incentives for innovation with regard to product development and quality and threatened international market share. In addition, it was argued that resources were being wasted on inefficient producers who survived only on the basis of cross-subsidisation (Vink, 2003). In 1996, new marketing legislation was passed and despite vigorous attempts by the single channel exporter (Outspan) to maintain an export monopoly, exports were liberalised and growers were now in a position to choose an independent exporter (Mather, 2008).

7.3.3 Implications of Deregulation in the Citrus Industry

For citrus growers, the impact of liberalisation since 1997 has been mixed. On the positive side, deregulation initiatives have improved market feedback for those growers who were intent on producing good quality fruit. It implied a shift away from cost plus pricing procedures to more market based pricing and the end of a pooling system where all fruit went through a single marketing channel awarding an average income to all growers based on volumes exported, regardless of the quality of the produce. In general, the perception was that “growers were now properly recompensed for good quality fruit, and costs were regarded as more transparent” (CGA, 2007). Additionally, in 2007, the Chairperson of the CGA Mr Justin Chadwick enthusiastically pointed out that “deregulation has allowed growers to discover more exporters” and that “the development of new markets has meant that the citrus export volumes were being distributed to a wider array of markets reducing their vulnerability to market collapses”(CGA, 2007:30). Mr Chadwick also mentioned that export volumes have doubled over the past 30 years, from some 38m cartons before deregulation to more than 70m cartons exported in 2007 (CGA, 2007:30).

Growers might have been able to select an export agent, but Mzithshi (2010) warns that, “deregulation and liberalisation of the citrus industry have increased internal competition amongst growers for the same markets and it has also resulted in a downward trend in the real price of exports (see also Barrientos, 2002 and Ewert, 2005). Added to this, the chairperson of the CGA noted that the “big bang” approach to deregulation meant that many essential services were lost, and unity within the industry crumbled (CGA, 2007:30). Theron *et al.* (2007) contend that deregulation exerted pressure on the fruit export industry as it was coupled with eliminating subsidies, research support, price support, phasing out certain export and import controls and introducing import tariffs. Mather and Greenberg (2003) observed that the failure of the post-apartheid government to provide effective alternatives to replace the support provided by the apartheid era regulatory structures meant that the existing farmers had to face highly competitive markets from a decidedly more disadvantaged position. Ndou (2012) states, at a time when they were least prepared for it South African growers were caught between the impasse of rising quality standards and falling prices and found themselves in competition with their better subsidised counterparts

in developed countries. In the third year after liberalisation (2000), the fruit export industry as a whole lost an estimated R1 billion in export earnings and the industry declared itself in crisis. Poor returns were blamed on quality, oversupply and the existence of too many inexperienced export agents. Quality problems were being reported especially by UK importers and the perception was that the limited capacity of the Perishable Product Export Control Board (PPECB) in this “now expanded” export environment was to blame for the decline in quality.

Other observers blamed the inexperience of new agents for the perceived break down in quality control because they argued that these new agents’ failed to divert “distressed fruit” to less discerning markets of Eastern Europe or to destroy it, resulting in low quality fruit (especially in terms of size) ending up on UK markets (Mather, 2008). In late 2000, the industry responded to the disastrous 2000 season by establishing Citrus Southern Africa, a producer’s organisation aimed at regulating the activities of private exporters thus attempting to privately regulate several specific citrus ‘chains’. Citrus Southern Africa tried to impose voluntary measures on growers and implemented strategies to improve the quality of fruit being exported while preventing the oversupply of fruit to specific markets (Mather, 2008).

Deregulation, in tandem with the emergence of privately regulated standards and procedures in a transforming post- apartheid environment, also had noticeable implications in terms of labour in the fresh fruit industry. In addition to deregulation measures, producers also had to comply with a range of labour legislation that has been enacted since 1994, aimed at improving the employment conditions of farm workers. Adaptation to global markets combined with the changing legislative and commercial environment have thus resulted in a change in the employment strategies of many growers (Barrientos, *et al.* 2004). It is generally accepted that deregulation exposed the citrus producers to real market forces and as a result many farm workers lost their jobs and some inefficient farmers failed to survive global competition without government support in the form of subsidies (Ndou & Obi, 2011). Mather and Greenberg (2003) asserts that about 200 000 permanent and another 200 000 seasonal farm workers lost their jobs between 1986 and 1996 as a result of

the deregulation of the agricultural sector (Mather and Greenberg, 2003). Ndou (2012) asserts, that this decline in jobs may have impacted on productivity of the affected industries, in turn impacting upon competitiveness of the citrus industry against its rivals for the export market. The Women on Farms Project (2008) observed that the combination of the deregulation of agricultural markets and the introduction of new labour legislation has resulted in a scenario where agricultural employers were required to transform a labour market that relied on cheap labour and extensive state subsidy support for its competitive advantage, into a market with no state subsidies and adherence to labour legislation. In line with this type of research, the Women on Farms Project (2008) and Mzitshi (2010) investigated the impact of changes in the regulatory environment for citrus growers with a specific focus on women labour. Both studies concluded that market liberalisation has diversified the structure of labour in fresh fruit commodity chains into 'polarised' layers where there was a small core of permanent workers and a large periphery of casual workers consisting mostly of women labourers thus resulting in the feminisations of seasonal, temporary and casual labour in the context of fresh fruit commodity chains (Women in Farms Project 2008 and Mzitshi, 2010). The trend towards the informalisation/casualisation of farm labour is observed and it is generally surmised that the structure of labour in the South African fruit industry has changed significantly as a result of trade liberalisation, technological innovation and privately regulated norms and standards. A marked decrease in the overall number of employment opportunities seems to be evident, with preference being given to a structure characterised by a small core of permanent workers (skilled labour) and a larger portion of seasonal and/or contract workers (mostly unskilled labour) employed to help with pruning and harvesting.

7.3.4 Private Norms and Standards

The export of citrus is regulated by mandatory product standards set by the SA government regarding the quality of citrus and requirements for packing, marketing, and labelling (Dorroch, 2010). According to Urquhart (1999) and Dorroch (2010:1) however, most voluntary product standards in place for SA citrus exports, currently exceed the mandatory standards set by the SA government, and include compliance with private sector standards

such as “Natures Choice” from the United Kingdom retail group TESCO, and the European Retailers Produce on Good Agricultural Practices (EUREPGAP) protocol (now known as GLOBALGAP) (EUREPGAP, 2005; GLOBALGAP, 2009). Henson and Humphrey (2009) explain that private and voluntary standards could be regarded as an extension of control along the value chain beyond the scope of public regulation. Du Toit (2001) conceptualises private and voluntary standards as a complex process of re-regulation and Mather’s (2005) opinion is that this is a form of private regulation (limited to certain chains) that serves private interest.

Consumer trends are changing, with constant demands for new cultivars, linked to increasing quality standards (technical, environmental and ethical) in the production of fruit (Louw & Fourie, 2003 and Funtida, 2010). In addition to National Safety Regulations, local citrus farms and processing units must meet specific standards regarding food safety (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points – HACCP) and agricultural good practice standards (the Good Agricultural Practice standards adopted by European fresh produce importers and retailers – EUREP/GLOBALGAP). Two different classes of prerequisites are highlighted for exporting fruit. The first prerequisite has to do with the physical state of the fruit when it arrives in the importing country and aspects that impact on the actual quality of the fruit (Henson & Humphrey, 2009). This involves phytosanitary aspects (such as whether there are certain insects or diseases present in the fruit that could contaminate it); chemical residue levels which are present on the fruit (due to pesticides - pesticides refer to insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, acaricides, nematocides and rodenticides); and the cleanliness of the fruit, which is influenced by the hygiene of workers who have come into contact with the fruit. The second class of environmental requirements concern the production process used in the growing and packing of the fruit. This involves the environmental sustainability of the production methods used, the destruction of ecosystems due to the production process, labour issues and food safety (Humphrey & Memedovic, 2006).

At present, only the largest marketing export agents have been able to meet many of the standards and requirements set by stricter exporting markets such as Japan as it is generally

observed that the smaller marketing agents have not yet created the infrastructure to ensure that their farmers meet all the requirements. It is in this instance, that intricate standards and requirements are often regarded as entry barriers or restrictions for, in particular new emerging farmers and ‘smallholders’ or small scale producers in South Africa’s citrus industry. Views on the legitimacy and impacts of private food safety standards vary widely, at one extreme they are seen as potentially eroding the competitiveness of developing countries and/or excluding smallholders from value chains that present potentially significant opportunities for livelihood enhancement (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000), while at the other extreme, they are considered catalysts for necessary processes of upgrading and the enhancement of competitiveness (Henson & Humphrey, 2009). Ndou (2012) postulates that some of these requirements and standards certainly has legitimacy and is important prerequisites, but she cautions that it is important to bear in mind that there is a fine line between those requirements that are necessary and legitimate and requirements and standards that are “intentionally and even unintentionally” being used to restrict and control trade relations. In line with this reasoning, Vagneron *et al* (2009) contend that standards and norms are increasingly becoming instruments of chain governance enabling lead firms to control the activities of all the actors in the chain thus ultimately influencing who participates in the market and under what conditions.

7.3.5 Concentration in the citrus value chain.

Linked to the increasing complexity of these privately regulated and vigorously enforced standards and norms, the next important characteristic of the South African citrus industry, identified by authors such as Mather, (2008), Mzitshi, (2010) and Freguin-Gresh and Anseeuw, (2012), is a trend towards the increasing integration and transformation of the citrus value chain through which they export, especially to UK supermarkets. Bearing in mind that the top six supermarkets in the UK now command three-quarters of the global sales in fresh fruit and vegetables (Humphrey *et al.* 2004), one of the greatest challenges for Southern hemisphere citrus growers is therefore a need to adapt to the quality demands of these retailers who are labelled as “oligopolistic” actors or “lead firms” in these fresh fruit value chains (Louw & Fourie, 2003; Mather, 2005 and Freguin-Gresh and Anseeuw, 2012).

Lead firms in value chains are able to make key decisions about inclusion and exclusion of particular suppliers, the distribution of particular activities between different actors in the chain and even about the structure of production (Humphrey & Memedovic, 2009). Dolan and Humphrey (2000) explains that retailers in Europe and North America [now] play an increasingly central role in driving citrus producers and exporters to produce higher quality and new varieties of fruit. Furthermore, Dolan and Humphrey, (2000) points out that the largest UK supermarkets are acting as powerful lead firms (supermarkets) who govern supply networks that span several African countries and who are now in the position to “define not only what is to be produced but also how and under what conditions it is to be produced” (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000).

Mather (2008:80) maintains that retailer-based fruit sales have displaced wholesale markets and small corner stores especially in England and that these large retailers have been able to position themselves so effectively within fresh fruit commodity chains, that they have in fact become very powerful agents -if not the most powerful actors- in these value chains. Fresh fruit suppliers to the largest UK supermarkets are required to grow, harvest and prepare products on the basis of new health legislation-stipulated process standards (as well as supermarkets’ private standards concerning appearance and shelf-life), to package and bar-code them, and to dispatch them in specified volumes and in an ‘into delivery centre-ready’ form on a call-off basis (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000). This implies access to a cool chain and high volumes of working capital, as well as possession of an advanced system for assuring quality which in some instances acts as entry barriers for many growers and also export agents (as also explained in section 7.3.3 of this chapter). The result has been a combination of upgrading and differentiation amongst suppliers.

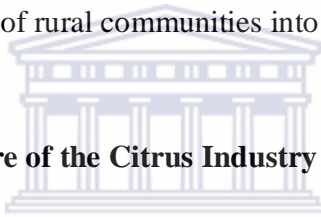
As a result of product innovation, enhanced product variation, improved quality, faster delivery to market and higher levels of consumer safety through traceability standards, developing country producers are now required to take on new tasks by their buyers (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000). This includes storing, preparing, processing, packaging and bar coding of individual fruit, in strict conformance with regulatory standards on food safety in the country, logistics, air freighting and in some cases even distribution. Hence,

supermarkets now work with fewer, but more tightly integrated preferred suppliers (Dolan and Humphrey, 2000 and 2004). It is observed that, as the retail end of the chain consolidates, competition among supermarkets leads to tighter organisation of the chain. Concentration among buyers (retailers in this instance) in the value chain has also led to concentration in production, where economies of scale can be obtained, and in this instance buyers will seek out low cost producers, favouring those with large scale operations (Webber and Labaste, 2010). In the case of South African citrus, a shift towards vertical integration in the value chain to ensure quick responses to quality and volumes demands has resulted in preference being given to large estates (and estate labour) with small exporters being replaced with very large ones. Mather (2008:80) and Funtida (2010) asserts that new norms and standards, higher levels of retailer concentration and processes of deregulation has removed whatever powers producers might have had in the past against retailers and international buyers.

Gibbon (2003), uses the single channel marketing approach to South African citrus export (implemented before deregulation) as one of his case studies to argue that the single channel approach could be, and has been, used in ways that could intentionally or unintentionally, mitigate supermarkets' power as they continue to restructure value chains to their own advantage and to small-scale producers' disadvantage. Gibbon (2003) and Mather and Greenberg (2003) asserts that the previous single channel marketing approach was at least allowing growers some negotiation power in their interactions with larger retailers. In response to these types of concerns regarding a loss of negotiation power amongst producers, Webber and Labaste (2010:33) contends that producers may decide to consolidate in producer or marketing associations in order to regain market power in response to concentration among suppliers or buyers. Similarly, Ndou (2012) asserts that an increase in the concentration of fruit growers in for example the form of cooperatives, could improve negotiation power and better coordination of grower activities.

From the discussion in this section it is evident *why* the implications of deregulation, the increasingly stringent nature of private standards and norms, and the documented concentration and dominance of global retailers in terms of the fresh fruit value chains need

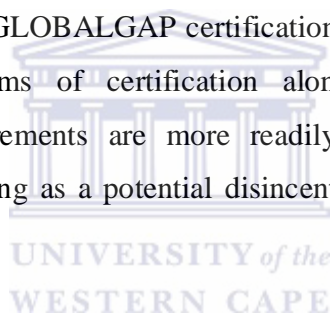
to be taken into account when inclusive business models are negotiated on land currently under fruit production. In the case of the South African restitution programme, the stated intention of these business models is the ‘successful’ insertion of rural restitution communities into existing value chains as ‘producers’ with beneficiaries being labelled as emerging farmers and in some cases even ‘exporters’. As Cotula and Vermeulen (2010) asserts, the very nature of the commodity and its value chain, i.e. how it is structured and the accompanying power relations in these chains, are certainly going to influence to what extent the inclusive business model is viable and to what extent it allows for a balance in terms of rewards/risk/voice and ownership. Also, through inserting rural communities into these value chains they are subjected to certain terms and conditions (norms and standards and the concentrated nature of the value chain). The critical issue of which actors in the chain control these terms and conditions in the value chain would certainly have a bearing on the outcomes of the insertion of rural communities into these chains.



7.4 Understanding the structure of the Citrus Industry

As stated earlier on in the chapter, by 1994 the South African agriculture sector was characterised by a high level of inequality, an ‘apartheid legacy’ which excluded black farmers from resources, market oriented food markets and mainstream agriculture (Freguin-Gresh & Anseeuw, 2012). The end of apartheid led to great pressure to destroy the “two-tier agricultural” structure, evident at the time. But, some producers and exporters (well-resourced white commercial farmers) have been able to ride the restructuring/transformation waves successfully, while others have been left struggling or going out of business. Mzitshi (2010) asserts that despite the stated intention of the Post-Apartheid government to deregulate and restructure the historic emergence of “two agricultures”, i.e. commercial (white) and subsistence farming (black), deregulation actually ended up *improving* the status of some large scale white commercial farmers while small scale and emerging black farmers could just not compete in this fierce market environment.

Mather (2008) and Mzithshi (2010) confirm instances in the citrus industry where emerging black commercial farmers, less strategically placed white commercial farmers and especially black smallholders were forced to either diversify their citrus farming to include game, cattle and vegetable farming while others were forced to abandon citrus farming completely. Gibbon and Ponte (2005) asserts that the increasing, domination of retail giants, posing stringent demands on quality, traceability, timeliness and even 'social responsibility' thus resulted in only a minority of dynamic farmers able to meet these requirements. The Women on Farms project (2008) for example, argue that the enforcement of phytosanitary measures has increased the overall production cost of citrus fruit on South African farms so tremendously that it has in fact translated into a scenario where only well-resourced white commercial farmers have been able to capitalise. Moreover, Dorroch (2010) concluded from his study on the perceptions of benefits and costs in terms of EUREPGAP/GLOBALGAP certification in the South African fresh fruit value chains, that these forms of certification along with other certification in environmentally related requirements are more readily afforded by relatively larger commercial farmers, while acting as a potential disincentive for smaller farms (Dorroch, 2010).



It is in this context, that Mzithshi (2010) and Freguin-Gresh and Ansueew (2012) reports that processes of deregulation and restructuring, in tandem with increasing commercial pressures, have in fact entrenched the dualistic structure in the South African citrus industry with approximately 1 400 large scale (0,5 ha-500ha) mostly white commercial farmers producing for the export market who are still controlling 80% of the volume of citrus in circulation. On the other hand, they report a meagre 2, 200 smallholders (mostly black producers) with averages of less than 100 trees, producing for the local market (Freguin-Gresh and Anseeuw, 2012, Mzithshi, 2010). The South African citrus industry is thus characterised by a distinct heterogeneity in terms of the producers, ranging from large commercial producers to resource poorer producers. Ndou and Obi (2011:5) asserts that this fragmentation results in a clear market segmentation (export market, supermarkets, local retailers, and local markets) along different farm size groups with each group serving a certain market along the lines of quality and affordability.

Somewhat worryingly though, Ndou and Obi's (2011) and Freguin-Gresh and Ansueew's (2012) observation of a 'clear market segmentation' is not always evident. During field visits for this study, it was often observed that even the local informal markets are now also being flooded by informal road stall and 'bakkie sales' with produce coming from the large farm estates. On the days that social grant payments are made in the former reserve areas where the Moletete claimants reside, it is not unusual to see bakkies (small trucks) loaded with citrus which did not meet export or domestic retail requirements, lining the streets for sales at the social grant collection points. This trend is also being confirmed in other studies. Genis, (forthcoming) for example also identified instances where large scale commercial farmers flooded these informal markets with their products thus encroaching on the very market segment that is often regarded as a viable avenue for local small scale fruit growers.

It is also important to note that higher levels of retailer concentration, private norms and standards and deregulation of the South African fresh fruit and vegetable markets have resulted in existing and new actors in these value chains now being placed in a position where they need to take on responsibilities which were previously fulfilled by government agencies (e.g. Control Boards). This shift in terms of functions and positions thus implied a fundamental change in the structure and responsibilities of actors in the chain and certainly opened the citrus value chain to actors who were able to use the new liberalised structure to their own benefit. But the continued role and involvement of the state in this context should not be underestimated. The role of the state in terms of agricultural production and export, after deregulation, should not be interpreted as a complete withdrawal of state involvement, a more informed conceptualisation of the state's role should rather be an interpretation of the *transformed* role of the state in terms of regulation. 'The state' is seemingly fully aware of the importance of its now transformed regulatory role. In this regard, national regulations are frequently amended to enhance traceability from farm level, in an effort to increase the probability of satisfying both local and international food quality and phytosanitary requirements (Jooste *et al.*, 2003). The South African government has also continued to mandate the Perishable Product Exporters Control Board (PPECB) to provide quality inspection, to monitor handling, storage and maintenance of the cold chain services to the

perishable produce industry. More specifically, in the citrus industry, PPECB representatives are sent to check the quality of citrus pallets in packing sheds which are certified for exports. The nature of the South African government's continued involvement and regulatory responsibility in the fresh fruit value chains is simplified and captured in Figure 7.1.

To conclude this part of the discussion regarding the structure and dynamics in the citrus industry the following is noted. The citrus industry is an environment that could be characterised by a growing disparity in terms of winners and losers, an evident decline in employment opportunities, rising volume and value of exports and the increasing

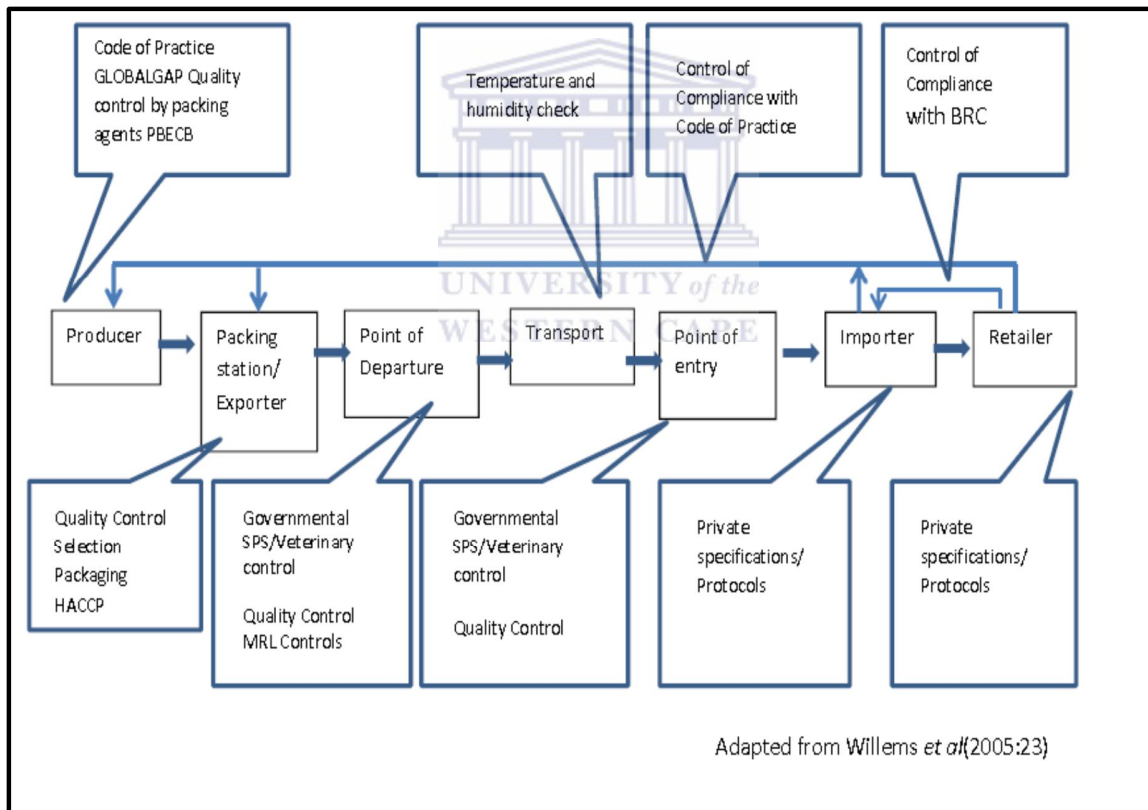


FIGURE 7.1: FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY CONTROL IN THE FRUIT, VEGETABLE AND FISH SUPPLY CHAINS

7.5 Value chain analysis considerations

From a political economy perspective, value chain analysis seeks to examine not only the linkages between the different agents and their functions in the production of the commodity in its different stages but also the social relations and institutions which are characterised by unequal power relations between the different agents. Vagneron *et al* (2009:438) maintain that a focus on the *governance structure* within a value chain allows an analysis enabling one to question the notion of power in the value chain, how this power is exercised and the consequence of the distribution of power in the chain.

Kaplinsky (2004) asserts that the concept of governance and the distinction between different types of chains is a major contribution that was made by Gereffi (1994) to our understanding of the workings of the value chains. According to Kaplinsky (2004), a focus on governance issues highlights those factors determining the nature of the insertion of different producers into the global division of labour. For as it has been observed before, “it is not just a matter of whether producers participate in the global economy which determine their returns to production, but also how and on what terms they do so” (Kaplinsky, 2004:12).

Value chain analysis according to Kaplinsky (2000b) includes an analysis of the organisation, production and delivery of products from inception to use and recycling. Kanji *et al.* (2005) describes a value chain as “a set of activities through which a product passes from the initial production or design stage, to the final delivery of the product or commodity to the consumer”. Generally it is also accepted that the worth of the commodity increases at each stage as processing, packaging and alteration of the product adds value. Value chain analysis would therefore give an indication of how the significance of revenue is being distributed along the chain (Kanji et al, 2005). Since the mid-1990s, a literature has emerged on value chains, which has explored how firms and farms in developing countries are integrated in global markets (Bolwig et al, 2010). In many export chains, governance has shifted from producers to buyers, with important implications for producers, exporters and farm workers in African countries (Mather, 2008).

7.6 The Vision: Inserting the Moletele as producers into existing citrus value chains.

According to Kaplinsky (2004:74) globalisation processes have been associated with increasing inequality not only between countries but also within countries, linked to a persistently large population still living in poverty. He argues, “if the ‘losers’ were those excluded from the global economy, the solution would be clear – join the rush but, when (as is often the case) the ‘losers’ include those who have participated in the global processes, “the challenge is much more daunting” (Kaplinsky 2004:74). The full extent of this challenge - to ensure the productive and meaningful integration of poor rural communities into existing value chains - becomes apparent when we examine some of the outcomes of citrus production activities on Moletele owned land. The initial expectations on the part of the South African government were enthusiastically articulated by the then Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, Ms Lulama Xingwana at the land handover ceremony to the Moletele community²⁰. The Minister framed a vision for the Moletele people asserting:

This land that we are restoring today has some of the best oranges and mangos this country has ever produced. As from today the people of Moletele are now exporters. You are going to be operating from the well-equipped pack-house that we have included in the purchase of this land”. ... This deal will also accelerate value-adding in the produce coming from this land of milk and honey. This will ensure participation of the Moletele Community in the entire value-chain. These partnerships give credence to economic empowerment because the community will not only receive hand-outs in the form of lease rentals but will be participating in the day-to-day management of the farms.

The reality is that the intention of turning the Moletele community into exporters did not materialise. The transfer of the land and pack houses did not automatically translate into the community becoming exporters of the fruit being produced on their land. In fact, looking at production and export activities of citrus produced on Moletele land, it is evident that very little community involvement is in fact evident along the value chain. The shift towards the CPP model by the Moletele community could also be interpreted as a risk aversion tactic by the community to move even further away from the daily concerns and riskiness of production activities.

²⁰Speech for the land handover celebration for the Moletele community claim delivered by the Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs MsLulamaXingwana, Limpopo ,1 July 2007

Discussion of key value-chain related aspects

The following section is a descriptive summary of key dynamics and considerations as citrus produce from the Moletele land moves along the export oriented citrus value chain (Additional data are presented in APPENDIX A).

Input –supply considerations

Land preparation and Irrigation:

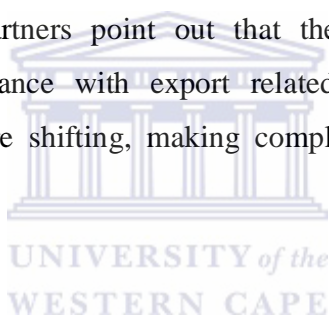
The Moletele land was transferred back to the community as land portions became available from willing sellers. These portions were consolidated into four different entities, or operational farming units. Consolidation of land into newly defined operational units required new inputs. More cost-effective irrigation systems had to be installed on some of the newly acquired land, that had to be consolidated into continuous farming units. In some instances older, less resilient cultivars had to be replaced with more marketable cultivars with a longer lasting shelf life. For example, in Hoedspruit, the representative for the CGA explained that farms exporting to Japan in particular shifted production to ruby grapefruit because the younger generation in Japan prefer the red flesh of the star ruby grapefruit, compared to the older generation Japanese consumers who prefer eating the white flesh grapefruit. Citrus producers in Hoedspruit are keen to meet the preferences of these consumers and have actively been adjusting their activities accordingly.

Additional inputs were also required because of the piecemeal approach to land transfers. While the new partnership model was negotiated, the lapse in time resulted in some of the farms deteriorating and orchards becoming overgrown. In a telephone interview cited by Partida (2010), Mr. Justin Chadwick, of the CGA observed:

Since land reform policies began to be instituted, some farmers have developed a short-term outlook on their farms, "shorter-term than farming should be." Mr. Chadwick has noticed that many farmers who feel threatened by land reform (especially those whose farms are in the land claim process) are neglecting their trees and neglecting proper pest and irrigation practices.

This was certainly the case when the strategic partnerships were introduced in Hoedspruit and a great deal of money had to be invested to clear newly acquired land and prepare it for new trees to be planted.

Land preparation and proper drainage required sound planning, considerable investment and clearly defined implementation strategies. Cost of land preparation and irrigation is estimated at approximately R 50 000/ha (information provided by the CGA representative in Hoedspruit). In terms of the partnership arrangements, it was also mentioned that even at the point of land preparation (use of fertilisers, number of trees per hectare, availability of wind breakers), norms and standards should already be taken into account because the use of some practices might result in “growers disqualifying themselves from exporting to certain markets”. When partnerships were set up to ensure the continued production on Moletele land, commercial partners point out that they needed to make significant investments to ensure compliance with export related norms and standards, which according to their accounts, are shifting, making compliance increasingly difficult and costly for producers.



Seedlings:

The overall number of citrus nurseries in South Africa declined from 160 to 17 between the pre-deregulation period and 2002 (Mather and Greenberg, 2003). In the Hoedspruit and Letsitele areas, citrus producers have only two options. They can either buy nursery trees that are already certified and registered from one of the only two CGA approved nurseries in the area, or they can buy seedlings and bud wood for which they have acquired their own certification, to be grown into seedlings. Timing and planning in terms of ordering the new seedlings turns out to be fairly critical as an 18 month waiting period is required to obtain seedlings.

The New Dawn strategic partner, Strategic Farm Management, with Mr Mike Scott as the director, has been pro-active in this regard. Scott has started a nursery on one of the Moletele properties where they are currently growing their own seedlings, targeted for new orchards on Moletele land. At present, the nursery is growing approximately 25 000 new

seedlings that will be planted on newly cleared Moletele land once a Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) loan for the New Dawn partnership is transferred. The benefit of this approach is that the 18 month waiting period and the cost to source the seedlings from a designated service provider would be nullified. The nursery is turning into a very attractive endeavour, and other farmers from the surrounding area are now also approaching the MCPA and the strategic partner to explore the possibility of the nursery growing seedlings for the surrounding farms. This pro-active approach to market demands by the New Dawn strategic partner illustrates Greenberg's (2010:17) assertion that "the role of individual actors as active agents, who shape their own reality ... and thus alter or reinforce the function and structure of existing value chains" should not be downplayed, as is often the case in a value chain approach focusing only on the structure and functioning of a commodity chain. Initiating the nursery on Moletele land and allowing the community to manage and benefit from its operation (from sales of seedlings to the surrounding farmers) would thus allow the community to become involved and benefit from upstream activities in the citrus value chain. This approach could contribute to a previously underexplored benefit stream within the partnership agreement, and allow the community more strategic positioning in terms of citrus value chains in Hoedspruit. In this instance, at least on a superficial level, the interests of the strategic partner, the Moletele CPA and other growers in the area certainly seem to be aligned.

It also seemingly suggests that improving the conditions for weak actors in a value chain will necessitate the identification of 'action points' where action in relation to (and often against the interests of) more powerful actors further downstream in the chain is feasible. 'Action points' in this context are organisations, institutions, private or public regulatory frameworks, the media and other 'sites' where what goes on inside value chains can be modified or regulated (Ponte, 2008). An action point also has a temporal dimension, and may be thought of as a moment or period where there is an opportunity for change or leverage in a particular place in the chain. Action points can be used to promote the restructuring of existing value chain linkages in ways that increase the stake of more powerful actors in the conditions of weaker ones (Bolwig *et al.* 2008), but it can also be

used to improve the positioning of weaker actors in the chain as the case of the Moletele nursery demonstrates.

Labour

The farms were transferred to the Moletele as going concerns. Existing employees therefore needed to be retained, leaving very limited scope for new employment opportunities of community members. At the time of land transfer, less than 50% of the workforce was in fact from the Moletele community. Agreement was reached between the MCPA and the strategic partners and also in terms of the CPP contracts, that Moletele people would be given preferential employment options should new positions become available on the land. Major challenges in this regard, however, quickly surfaced. The majority of Moletele community members reside between 40-60 km outside of Hoedspruit and the limited transport options and escalating transport costs are a major hindrance for community members to take up positions on the farms even when they become available. Strategic partners and CPA members also observed that community members tend to prefer working in the pack houses and are generally reluctant to do labour-intensive “work on the land”. This perceived bias towards pack house employment rather than working in the fields, is also evident in other fruit production sectors (Farmers Weekly July, 2012).

The Boyes Group, the strategic partner in the Dinaledi partnership has recently signed an “eco-label accredited” agreement with a Japanese company for the production and export of grapefruit. As part of this agreement, a Japanese delegation was sent to the farms to investigate the working conditions of farm workers. After this visit investments were made to improve the living quarters of farm workers. A lounge equipped with a very large flat screen TV has been made available for farm workers to use during their breaks and an area for a soccer field has been cleared. The irony is that, a very small portion of the workers are in fact Moletele people and these ‘perks’ are therefore available to workers who are not necessarily Moletele. This is however evidence that the need to comply with new norms and standards could be used to ensure some ‘value addition’ in the lives of those who have often been rendered ‘powerless’, but the scope of benefits in terms of these “fair trade”

types of norms and standards should not be exaggerated or overestimated as they often involve relatively small volumes of export fruit.

In terms of the partnership agreement, skills transfer and employment were earmarked as key benefit streams for the Moletele community. In reality, this has not materialised to the extent that it was originally envisaged (*pers. communication with the chairperson of the MCPA*). As in the case of the broader citrus industry, the informalisation and also what Barrientos and Krinzinger (2004) calls the ‘feminisation’ of farm labour are also evident on Moletele land. The community resides too far away from the farms to make employment benefits viable. In terms of the partnership agreements, the irony of owners of the land becoming the “workers on the land” is proving to be somewhat challenging and the jobs which have been earmarked as a benefit stream in terms of the partnership arrangement is increasingly being viewed as an expense that should be limited.

Production

Profitable production of citrus only begins in the 8th year after planting. From the third year some fruit would be available, but this would mostly be for juice production. Substantial fruit bearing is only evident from the 8th year. This long waiting period is a fact that has to be taken into account in terms of planning and projections, especially where new orchards have been planted. The waiting period needs to be communicated and anticipated in terms of projected benefits and profits, and most importantly expectations on the part of the community in this regard need to be managed. Use of additional fertilisers, pest control, irrigation practices and even the working conditions of farm labourers need to comply with a variety of accreditation requirements, amongst many others: Fair Trade, Field to Fork, and Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPCEB) accreditation. The scale of production at New Dawn, Richmond and Dinaledi farms allowed economies of scale benefit to be achieved. I was able to verify that all the cartons produced on Moletele land could be delivered to the ports at less than R50/carton (translating into costs below the industry norm). Despite achieving this competitive edge, secondary data discussed later in this chapter shows that the profit margin for the citrus producers is still much lower (between 9-15%) than the profit margin made by the exporting company and the UK and European supermarkets (23 -26%).

Processing

Processing involves harvesting, washing, sorting and waxing the produce in accordance with stipulated and agreed requirements and procedures. Representatives from various governmental organisations, lead firms and other regulating authorities visit the pack houses to ensure compliance with a range of export standards, other regulations as well as accreditation specifications. In previous years inspections were conducted at the ports before shipment, but now representatives from all these regulating bodies come to the pack houses on the farms thus ensuring a measure of ease in terms of validating compliance and also limiting transport cost in instances where fruit are rejected. As in the case of the other exporting entities in Hoedspruit, procedures and quality control at the pack houses on Moletele land need to comply with a range of agreed standards and regulations applicable to the countries they are exporting to.

Depending on the quality of the produce on Moletele land, 20-30% of the citrus is channelled towards juice production. There is therefore very little community involvement or benefits from processing as fruit earmarked for juicing is sold to a different company in the case of the two strategic partnerships. But both the CPP partners in the case of Richmond and BONO Holdings are able to use one of their subsidiary companies to do the juicing, thus enabling them to increase their profit margins compared to the strategic partners, who outsourced this function completely.

Export

The Minister anticipated that the Moletele would become exporters in the citrus value chains just by virtue of owning the pack houses (see excerpt of the then Ministers speech cited above). This was certainly not the case. In fact, some commentators caution against the idea of communities becoming exporters in the global agro-commodity chains, claiming that it might open impoverished rural communities to unnecessary risk. Perhaps there is a golden middle ground or workable compromise to be reached in this instance? The following approach could certainly be explored; the New Dawn strategic partner has once again been fairly innovative. This strategic partner (Strategic Farm Management under the directorship of Mike Scott) made an offer to the community to purchase 10% of the shares in his export company at a discounted rate. This seems quite feasible, as 10% of the shares

would provide the community with at least some income from export related activities as well as some of the considerable rebates these companies are qualifying for, without opening them up much risk. It would also allow members in the community to be mentored in this regard. Industry specialists tend to agree that the lion's share of the profit is not in production or processing of agricultural commodities on the land, but in the export of these commodities. Perhaps allowing communities partial involvement in export activities might be considered as a more feasible option, than narrowly focusing all community involvement on production and processing activities in the value chain. The profit margin for exporters in the citrus value chain is estimated at between 5% and 10% (DAFF, 2010), which could be translated into a profit margin for the benefit of the owners of the land (the restitution "community").

Value estimations along the Citrus value chain

<p>Table 7.1: Value estimations of citrus produced on Moletele land as it moves along the Value chain.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvested value: The value of a carton of citrus (Valencia oranges) from the land (just after harvesting) was estimated at R 18,00/carton during 2012. The value of the crate at R18,00 just from the land is an estimation of what the crate can be sold for at this stage in the value chain. Once the produce has been washed, sorted, waxed and packed, the value of the same carton of oranges is estimated to have increased to approximately R 25,00/carton. This translates into the value of the crate when the community as producers still have an interest. However, as the carton is loaded onto the truck for transportation to the port, the value of the carton is estimated at R 33,00/carton. • Value during Supply and Distribution: Cold storage and transport add R 10,00 = R43,00 • Price on the ship = R 50,00 (Free on Board FOB) and DIP = Delivery in port = R 60,00, thus translating into freight costs estimated at R10/carton. Once cartons reach the export agents at the ports all actors in this value chain stop using calculations in terms of ZAR per carton, but a figure of R 120,00 per box could be anticipated. <p style="text-align: right;">Estimations provided by the CGA representative Hoedspruit, 2012</p>

Given that commodities at the ports are sold in both US and European currency and given that export agents are allowed a 180 day waiting period to 'read trends in terms of exchange rates' it is evident from the estimations in Table 7.1 that: (1) most of the profit is not captured at the production or even processing stages of the citrus value chains (where there

is still the semblance of community involvement); and (2) that exporting companies are better positioned to capture value in the citrus value chain compared to the growers. For some observers, this fact highlights a key concern with strategic partnership initiatives on restituted land. It is often argued that the private sector or strategic partners might only decide to get involved in these inclusive business model arrangements with this ulterior motive in mind. In fact, Fraser (2005) reported that a strategic partner in Levubu admitted that his main incentive for getting involved in these partnership arrangements was to secure a steady supply for his downstream business ventures, where most of his profit would be generated. The chairperson of the white commercial farmers group at Hoedspruit also questioned other white commercial farmers' intentions in getting involved in these partnership arrangements, citing ulterior motives as the impetus for these farmers to set up partnerships with restitution communities.

As highlighted in the literature review in this chapter, dynamics within the citrus value chain beyond those in which South African exporters are directly involved should also be considered. Secondary data cited by Dodd (2008) shows that profits and costs incurred by logistics companies, importers and marketing agents in the importing country, further processors, retailers or other market channels, and imposed by the state in the form of tariffs, levies and taxes, also need to be accounted for. If these variables are excluded, it would seem as if exporters capture most money in the South African citrus value chain, when they in fact do not (pers. comm. by Greenberg, 2012). The data cited in Dodd (2008) illustrates this point very well. The cost structure of the citrus value chain provided in Dodd (2008) shows that the largest profit margins for fresh fruit tend to be captured by supermarkets and retailers in the importing country, estimated at between 23-26% compared to the profit margin for the risk taker (the producer) estimated at between 9-15% (Table 7.2). Also very apparent from this cost structure analysis is how sensitive and risky things are for the producers of citrus where their profit margins are crucially influenced by retail price and exchange rates (reflected in Table 7.3).

Table 7.2: Analysis of cost chain for Citrus (15kg) Week 27. Sales price of ZAR 159,25.			
Analysis of cost chain for Citrus (15kg) Week 27. Sales price of ZAR 159,25. Figures compiled by Reinhardt Siegrund of Outsource and Cited by Dodd (2008)	Cost Item	Rand Value	% Value
	Retailers Profit	42,97	26,98
	European Transport	10,59	6,64
	Importers Commission	5,60	3,5
	European Logistics	13,00	8,16
	European duties	-	-
	Freight	25,93	16,28
	Insurance	0,63	
	Exporters Commission	5,36	3,3
	Port Costs	5,00	3,19
	Cargo dues	0,23	
	Transport to port	1,91 (per km)	1,1
	Finance charges	0,90	
	CGA Levies	0,32	
	PPBEC	0,22	
	Packing Material	11,08	6,95
	Packing Charges	18,06	11,06
	Farm cost	9,82/80 tons per ha/ 11,85 at 60 tons per ha	
	Net farm Income	R 15,78	9,9%

Table 7.3: An example of a citrus cost chain compared between week 27 and week 43 in ZAR.		
Cost Item	Week 27	Week 43
Sales Price	R 159,25	R 113,75
Retail Profit (remains at between 25%-26%)	R 42,97	R 29,32
European Transport	R 4,81	R 4,81
Free on truck	R 18,60	R 18,60
Freight Cost	R 25,93	R 25,93
FOB Cost	R 10,59	R 8,04
Delivered in Port	R 3,35	R 3,35
Packing Charges	R 18,06	R 18,06
Farm cost	R 16,01	R 16,01
Net farm Income	R 15,78	R 10,36

Figures compiled by Reinhardt Siegrund of Outsource and Cited by Dodd (2008)

The data captured in Tables 7.2 and 7.3 was obtained from a study conducted in 2008 by the Post-Harvest Innovation Programme, which wanted to analyse the cost structure of different fresh fruit supply chains in order to identify areas for cost reduction and energy saving . Using these calculations, the implications of different selling prices for citrus producers during week 27 and week 43 are particularly interesting (table 7.3). Calculations for week 27 in 2008 translated into an estimated profit margin of 26 percent for retailers (R42,97 from the R159,25 selling price) and in week 43 the profit margin for the retailers dropped very slightly to 25% (R29,32 from the R113,75 selling price). For the producers of the citrus the scenario was far more dire, since calculations for Week 43 translated into an estimated production cost of R124,12 but a selling price of only R113,75 was obtained which resulted in a loss of R10,36 incurred on the production level. It should be noted, however, that the type of citrus commodity is not referred to, neither does it specify the origin of the commodity, which is somewhat problematic. The data are also somewhat superficial in terms of dealing with the role of the export agent, who would certainly also need to carry some percentage of the risk/loss incurred and it does not make provision for whether or not a Minimum Guaranteed Value for production delivery was agreed upon prior to shipment. Apart from these inconsistencies, the data clearly demonstrate the vulnerability of profit at the farm income level, as cost at each node in the chain remains constant while retail price might vary, which will ultimately influence profit on farm production level.

7.7 Key value-chain related observations

Pritchard observes that a traditional political economy approach to the agri-food chain sees capital accumulated through controlling the tangible means of agricultural production: land, labour, nutrients and chemicals, water, genetics and seeds, feed, equipment, and capital (Pritchard, 2000). He then continues to state that it is equally important to acknowledge the fact that ownership and control of intangible assets, such as information, brands and patents, rather than control of the tangible means of production, can also allow the concentration of capital from a supply chain and the conversion of that capital into mobile financial capital (Pritchard, 2000). He concludes that “the governance of supply chains hinges on controlling the means of co-ordination rather than the means of production”. In

the case of citrus production activities on Moletele land, it seems that control and ownership of the ‘tangible means of production’ (land, pack houses and water rights) are not delivering many benefits to the restitution members. The commercial partners are clearly in a better position to capture value in existing chains because they have more know-how and control, not only of upstream and downstream activities, but also in terms of their understanding of intangible assets (i.e. mechanisms of ‘access control’).

The New Dawn and Dinaledi partnerships did show attempts at better horizontal integration/community involvement along the value chain. New Dawn set up the nursery on Moletele land, explored the feasibility of supplying seedlings for Moletele land and to neighbouring farmers, and gave the community the option to purchase 10% of shares in the export company. Dinaledi invested significantly in skills development programmes and their eco-label accreditation, indicating that they have tried to ensure adherence to basic conditions and minimum wage legislation for farm workers.

The price estimations in (Table 7.1) demonstrate that the profit or benefit accrued by the exporting company could potentially outweigh what the community gains from the mere production of the commodity on their land. In this instance, it should also be noted that the “180 day waiting period” to read market trends as mentioned by the CGA Hoedspruit representative, is regarded as a considerable advantage for “well-resourced farmers registered as export agents”, who can afford to wait for payment and play the exchange rate game. Farmers in the lower income segment and farming on smaller scale would, however, not be able to sustain such a long waiting period, and Mzitshi (2010) reports instances where less-resourced farmers opted to rather produce for local markets in order to avoid these long waiting periods.

To conclude this part of the discussion, the figures clearly show the differentiated nature of power relations in the value chain, where UK based retailers are effectively the drivers of the chain, dictating what should be produced (through norms and standards), when it should be produced (just in time, year round supply) and by whom it should be produced (large scale commercial farming enterprises) in order to ensure the best profit margins (between 23-26%) for themselves, the retailers. The calculations also confirm that exporting

companies are better positioned to capture value in the citrus value chain compared to the producers.

Five years after the transfer of land, commercial production on the land is continuing, a functioning management structure in the form of a business-orientated CPA remains in place and functioning, and it has an impressive bank balance. The way forward for the Moletele community seems a bit more precarious. Production on the land might have continued but disillusioned community members are increasingly asking “where are the benefits?”

7.7. Conclusion

From the South African perspective, since deregulation and market liberalization during the late 1980s and early 1990's and the move away from single channel marketing boards, success in the citrus industry is now predicated on the ability of citrus growers to meet stringent requirements in terms of quality, quantity, branding, marketing, traceability and year-round product supply. While liberalization delivered a new found freedom to exporters and producers, this new era of independence brought with it a unique set of challenges and imperatives. On the one hand, the volume of citrus supplied to the market has increased, and quality and price have become important tools of diversification. On the other hand, deregulation has resulted in the structural differentiation of citrus growers who are able to take advantage of this deregulation, and those that are not. In this instance Oya (2010b) asserts that liberalisation in the African countryside has not only left ‘losers’, it also produced ‘winners’ who were able to reap the opportunities opened by a liberalised environment with declining state regulation. Deregulation also impacted on labour on farms and in pack houses in complex and challenging ways. Additionally, the increasing power of global retail chains as a result of higher levels of concentration and consolidation has also contributed to the increasing casualization of labour. As a result, the citrus fruit market has effectively evolved from a producer-driven to a consumer (buyer)-driven market with challenging consequences in terms of the negotiation power of South African growers and exporters.

It is generally observed that the direct insertion of rural producers into global value chains has delivered 'mixed results' and a significant proportion of the literature focuses on the challenges and complexities of introducing rural producers into these value chains. Similarly, it can also be concluded that the more indirect 'inclusion' of a restitution community into the global value chain via inclusive business model arrangements, particularly in the case of the Moletele community, seems to have resulted in what can also be labelled as 'ambiguous outcomes'. The quiet discontent that has been observed during fieldwork conducted in 2010 is also currently surfacing into an open challenge from community members asking "in whose interest is production on the land?" The MCPA seems to be committed to ensuring continued production on the land, but until they come up with viable strategies of distributing benefits from the production and other value chain related activities to the communities, their efforts only seem to be promoting corporate interests, rather than community interests and expectations. Outcomes to date in the case of Moletele partnership initiatives thus suggests that the insertion of community interests in upstream and downstream activities could potentially deliver more benefits than a narrow focus on employment, skills transfer and farm production only, as initially conceptualised within strategic partnership arrangements. Outcomes to date also lead one to question the unwavering belief of the South African government in the hegemony of large scale commercial farming as the only viable option in terms of the restitution of commercial farmland.

Chapter 8:

Great expectations and ambiguous outcomes: Moletele partnerships as an arena of struggle.

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I synthesize key insights from my analysis of the field data presented in part in previous chapters. My aim here is to provide a causal account of the links between processes and outcomes within the strategic partnership arrangements currently operative on Moletele land. I propose that these processes and outcomes have been deeply influenced and shaped by: (1) dominant conceptions held by ‘the state’ and other key actors regarding the type of agriculture that should be promoted within South Africa’s land reform programme, (2) the nature of, the local land governance structure introduced by ‘the state’, as well as the character of state support for that structure, (3) the design of the strategic partnerships, (4) the differentiated character of the land-claiming “community” and (5) the character of relevant citrus value chains. These key factors are also conceptualized as ‘arenas of struggle’, representing “social events between different groups with diverse interests who wield competing strategies aimed at furthering their own claims and rights to resources” (Crehan & Von Oppen, 1988:113). The “event” of initiating strategic partnership initiatives on Moletele land thus generates processes of struggle and contestation, as well as negotiation and compromise, between differently positioned actors, who strategize to acquire and secure access to resources, and in so doing seek to exclude others from such access.

In the case of the Moletele land claim, a differentiated pattern of access to and control of resources has emerged over time. The theory of access pioneered by Ribot and Peluso (2003) was a useful analytical lens for identifying: (1) the different sub-groupings and institutions within the Moletele claimant group which have been able to benefit from the claim; and (2) those subgroupings which have been excluded from access to resources. Ribot and Peluso’s (2003) conceptualization of “webs of power” is another valuable conceptual tool for understanding the nature of the strategic alliances that were formed

between different groupings, and the contestations and shifts in power relations that transpired over time.

In the first part of the chapter, the strategic partnership initiatives introduced in the Moletele land claim are framed as “arenas of struggle”. The second part of the chapter reflects briefly on the nature of unequal access and control of resources in the Moletele context. I then apply Ribot and Peluso’s (2003) notion of “webs of power”, to uncover the underlying causal processes at work by focusing on alliances, compromises and contestations, assessed via key diagnostic events. I conclude the chapter by discussing the key outcomes to date of partnership initiatives on Moletele land: (1) the re-structuring of partnership deals on Moletele land (i.e. the emerging CPPs), (2) MCPA changes and continuities, and (3) continuing tensions and ongoing struggles.

8.2 Arenas of struggle

According to Olivier Sardan (1998:240) an “arena of struggle” is “a place or event of concrete confrontation between social actors interacting on issues of common concern”. In line with this conceptual framing, I propose that the strategic partnership initiatives introduced on Moletele land epitomize “arenas of struggle”, and briefly highlight important observations regarding each of the identified “arenas of struggle”.

8.2.1 Conflicting conceptions held by “the state” regarding large-scale commercial farming

It has been observed that “state” induced interventions are rarely implemented by a coherent bureaucracy (Elwert & Bierschenk, 1988, Mitchell, 1991, Van Leynseele, 2013). Ideological struggles between competing forces within the post-apartheid state have been identified as causing some of the bureaucratic incoherence evident in its land reform policies (Lahiff, 2007b, Hall, 2004b, Aliber *et al.*, 2009). Greenberg (2010) urges us to understand these struggles “in the context of open class contestation *within* the state” (emphasis added). From this perspective, the post-apartheid state could thus be regarded as

an arena of struggle between actors driven by the industrial working class (and their commercial farming allies) versus proponents calling for a smallholder farming approach to address the needs of the poorly resourced and mobilised, in the South African society. These contestations within the South African state apparatus are particularly evident in the contradictions between the rhetoric accompanying land reform policy that promises both a “pro-poor” and a smallholder focus, and an implementation reality that is somewhat different (Hebinck and Shackleton, 2011).

In the first instance, findings from the Moletele case suggests that ‘struggle’ within the state-apparatus in terms of ideological convictions about the preferred type of agriculture in South African land reform policy, is dominated by proponents supporting the large-scale commercial farming narrative. In strong contrast to the ANC’s National Conference resolutions at Polokwane in 2007, that called for supporting a modern and competitive smallholder sector (Greenberg, 2010), chapter 5 of this thesis confirmed that options for a diverse range of small scale production activities on Moletele land were not seriously considered. For the Moletele claimants, a policy that favoured large-scale commercial farming has translated into a model that allows very limited scope for alternative scales of agriculture that could be practiced on the newly acquired land. The striking neglect of additional livelihood alternatives for the Moletele claimants, perhaps in the form of small scale agricultural production options on some of the vacant plots of land, is illustrative of the hegemony of the large-scale farm rhetoric, despite broader policy commitments stating the contrary.

In the second instance, the poorly understood roles and responsibilities of different arms of the post-apartheid state in relation to land reform, as articulated by officials from the RLCC, the Limpopo provincial office of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture and the Maruleng Municipality, is also evidence of bureaucratic incoherence. During interviews I conducted in 2010 with representatives from these different government departments, their explanations of systems and procedures and their understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to these partnerships seemed fragmented and *ad hoc*. Officials elaborated on their difficulties in accessing funds to assist partnered restitution

communities because it was assumed by key decision-makers elsewhere that private sector strategic partners would be tasked with such post-restitution support. When the grant payments failed to materialize in budgetary allocations to the provincial offices, these officials were left with very limited room for manoeuvre, yet they were the ones held accountable by the restitution communities (Interview with the Limpopo Regional Land Claims Commissioner, 2010). The bureaucratic discord of “the state” is thus quite evident in the contradiction between its ambitious attempt to pioneer these partnership initiatives, on the one hand, and its defaulting on the financial commitment (in the form of discretionary grant payments) originally made to help ensure the partnerships’ success, on the other.

In the third instance, explanations provided by state officials for their failure to provide grant payments to the community also reveal bureaucratic incoherence. In 2008 the MCPA was informed by a representative of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform that full grant payments would be made in the subsequent financial year, but no such payments were made. During 2011, the MCPA was informed that the South African government were under severe budgetary constraints and that the “government wanted communities who already received land to show that they can use the land successfully, before more investments would be made” (MCPA AGM Report, 2011:3). In 2012, the MCPA was informed by yet another official from the Commission’s office that “according to their estimates the Moletele has already received ‘fair and just’ compensation, estimated at R 184 million (the value of the transferred land to date in 2012) and that there is a pressing need for the Regional Land Claims Commission to move on to resolving other claims” (Interview, Former chairperson of the MCPA, Mr Mashile, 2012).

The dominant reasoning for institutionalising these partnerships is thus driven in practice by the normative framing of ‘viability’ in terms of a large-scale commercial farm model, despite rhetoric in favour of smallholder farming. The level of bureaucratic incoherence and discord which accompanied the introduction of these partnerships could perhaps be seen as the symbolic expression or the cumulative outcome of continuing struggles amongst contradictory forces, within the post-apartheid state apparatus.

8.2.2 Conflicting conceptions held by ‘the state’ regarding land governance structures

At the time of the land transfer in 2007, the lack of clarity created by the post-apartheid state regarding the roles and authority of traditional leaders became apparent when the Moletele CPA was set up. As a result, the “democratically elected” CPA executive committee felt pressured by the state (through its officials) and its ally (MABEDI) to accommodate the interests of the traditional leader. Under the supervision of state officials, two of the fifteen members on the CPA executive committee were appointed as *ex-officio* members to represent the interests of the Moletele traditional leader. This arrangement included a requirement that the traditional leader attend all public events hosted by the MCPA. The traditional leader’s attendance of these events was a crucial concession made to the MCPA by the *kgoshi*, as it was meant to communicate the “unity” or alliance between these two entities. In return, the MCPA needed to ensure a sufficient flow of benefits to the traditional leader. From 2007, benefits received by the traditional leader include a luxury apartment on one of the development estates in Hoedspruit, valued at over R 2,5 million, the transfer of Scotia farm (1270 ha) to the *kgoshi*, and a “very significant” sum of money (the informants did not feel comfortable to disclose the exact amount to me). This channelling of benefits to the traditional leader was aimed at enrolling his support and thus legitimizing the authority of the MCPA.

Despite being instituted by “the state” as the formal land-holding institution, the MCPA thus felt compelled to ensure a steady flow of benefits to the *kgoshi*. Resistance from the traditional leader and his supporters persisted, however, and it was clearly fuelled by conflicting messages transmitted from “the state”. The traditional leader argued that his position of authority should have been re-asserted and legitimized precisely because the post-apartheid “state” allowed a land claim to be lodged and settled in terms of membership of a Moletele “tribe”, yet, with the settlement of the claim, a ‘new’ land holding institution was suddenly imposed on them (Interview Moletele Traditional Council member, November 2010).

The implications of these conflicting messages from “the state” also became a particular cause for concern in relation to the governance authority of the MCPA. During my field research the questionable nature of the MCPA’s authority surfaced often, especially in the

instances when Moletele “community” members and the MCPA members made reference to “Scotia farm belonging to the *kgoshi*”. The CPA offices are located on the farm Scotia, where the *kgoshi* graciously “allows” them to occupy “his land” (Interview with MCPA member, 2011). I assumed that the restitution of land back to the traditional leader contradicts land reform policy directives, in which the ownership of restituted land should have been transferred to the Moletele “community”, with management decisions being made by the MCPA. The general acceptance of the fact that Scotia farm was considered to “belong to the *kgoshi*” was, however, allowed and even encouraged by the officials. The contradictory stance by “the state” once again probably reflects internal struggles and confusion *within* the “state” concerning the roles and responsibilities of traditional authorities in the post-restitution context.

8.2.3 Arrangements within the partnerships

Currently, there are only two strategic partnership initiatives still operative on Moletele land: New Dawn (a partnership with Strategic Farm Management) and Dinaledi (with the Boyes Group). The design of the strategic partnerships was conceptualized as a “conventional partnership”, where joint ventures were established between the MCPA and different strategic partners in the form of operating companies. As described in chapter 6 of the thesis, shareholder agreements for the operating companies stipulated that the MCPA would hold 51% of the shares and the strategic partner 49%. It was anticipated that “the state”, on behalf of the Moletele as the majority shareholder, would make the largest investment in the company, in the form of restitution discretionary grants. This payment was supposed to be matched by contributions from the respective strategic partners into the accounts of the operating companies. The shareholder agreements also indicate that the dividends that the operating company declares should be paid to the shareholders in proportion to their share holdings. Once again, these provisions are congruent with conventional partnership arrangements where risks, investment and dividends are allocated in proportion to each partner’s share in the company.

In terms of the Moletele strategic partnerships, problems emerged fairly soon when the envisaged grant payments from the state failed to materialize, while contributions from the strategic partner to ensure production activities on the land continued. This implied that the majority shareholder (the MCPA) was unable to match the contributions of its business partner. This had devastating impacts on the envisaged benefit streams to the “community”. Land rentals that were supposed to be paid by the operating company into the MCPA account have generally not been paid, and where some payments have been made, they have been intermittent and partial. Income statements for the MCPA to 2012 reflect no rental income for 2007 and 2008. For the 2009, 2010 and 2011 periods contributions from both strategic partners adding up to only R451,203 are reflected, which is much less than the anticipated R550 000 per annum stipulated in only one of the partnership lease agreements. The management fees that were supposed to be paid to strategic partners also failed to materialize. Additionally, dividends have not been declared and therefore nothing has been paid out to the community.

The envisaged benefits in terms of employment opportunities for Moletele people turned out to be grossly overestimated. As in the case of the broader citrus industry, an informalisation or casualization of labour (Barrientos and Visser, 2012) is also evident in the export-oriented citrus production activities taking place on Moletele land. The lack of formal employment opportunities, in tandem with the long distances that community members would need to commute if they were employed on these farms, has invariably limited the number and types of employment opportunities available to Moletele “community” members. Added to these constraints is the fact that the farms were transferred to the Moletele as “going concerns”, i.e. the Moletele inherited non-Moletele workers already on the farms. According to the MCPA chairperson (Mr Mashile) and two of the strategic partners, these limitations on employment opportunities for Moletele members are exacerbated by their own “fussiness”, with members preferring employment in the pack houses as opposed to “working on the land”.

The irony of owners of the land becoming “workers on the land” is also proving to be a somewhat contentious issue. On the one hand, a steady flow of employment opportunities

has been framed as an important benefit for the community. On the other hand, from the perspective of a business partner, the community as the owner of viable commercial farm ventures should be concerned with implementing strategies that maximize profit and limit expenses such as labour costs. The strategic partnership model is therefore casting the “community” in contradictory roles - being both the majority shareholding business partner and as “employees” working for these ventures. These contradictory roles require the “community” to represent and articulate inherently diverging sets of interests.

Production on Moletele land is continuing, but there is increasing tension between the strategic partners and the MCPA regarding the flow of benefits and the long-term prospects of continuing the partnership. Borrowing from Elwert and Bierschenk’s (1988: 146) chess game analogy, the current situation between the strategic partners and the MCPA is almost like a “stalemate scenario” but players are contractually not allowed to “leave the game”, because their capital is tied up. The strategic partners are not willing to leave their investments behind without being compensated for them, while the MCPA continues to hold the strategic partners accountable for providing a share of (assumed) profits from production activities on Moletele land. The tone of the MCPA treasurer’s report for the 2011 AGM reflects the intensity of this “restrained” struggle: *“It is noted with grave concern, that some of our joint venture partners are not willing to disclose relevant financial information regarding their profits. This deviates from our formal agreements. We suspect that the community is losing while they benefit. This will not be left unchallenged”*.

The fact that the design of the strategic partnerships is an “arena of struggle” becomes even clearer when considering Vermeulen and Cotula’s assessment framework for inclusive business models. In terms of this framework, key assessment criteria include ownership, risk, rewards and voice. These assessment indicators have been discussed in detail in chapter 6, and are only briefly summarised here:

- *Ownership*: The Moletele community is regarded as the legitimate “owner” of the land. Borrás and Franco (2010: 32), however point out that “the key to understanding

the dynamics in terms of changing land property relations is to rather focus the inquiry on rural poor people's *effective control over land resources* (i.e. *effective control* over the nature, pace, extent and direction of surplus production, distribution and disposition) regardless of the form of formal property rights" (emphases in the original). For rural restitution beneficiaries, guaranteed property rights are a necessary first step. The ability to act on these newly acquired rights depends, however, on the negotiation of a number of complementary *access mechanisms* (Ribot and Peluso, 2003), which in the context of large-scale, export-driven commercial farming, is not always available to restitution communities.

- *Voice*: the voice or the interest of the "community" is supposed to be represented by members of the MCPA executive committee, who attend monthly board meetings with strategic partners. Despite some efforts by MABEDI to capacitate these community representatives, the reality is that "community" members join commercial partners at a boardroom table and are expected to make sure that their *de jure* (legal) rights are protected and translated into "effective rights" in a power-differentiated context using a discourse and a setting they are not familiar with. In terms of this "arena of struggle", it is clear that the discourse used to articulate and enforce rights, and the lack of business acumen amongst the community representatives in this predominantly agri-business arena, is likely to sway the *cumulative outcomes* from these encounters (i.e. struggles) in favour of the strategic partners. For example, the new pack house built by the Dinaledi partners is a highly contentious issue. Community members are asking why the R 3,5 Million investment made by the Dinaledi strategic partners for the construction of the pack house could not be used for something that would benefit the "community" more directly. The strategic partners insist that the pack house belongs to the community and that it was built with the community's long term business interest in mind. Members of the MCPA, however, argue that only the strategic partner is benefitting from the pack house, used for *their* export activities, while the construction cost for the pack house has also now been loaded onto the loan account of the company (i.e. the community now seemingly owe the strategic partner for the investment that was made). The strategic partner is quick to point out that the decision to build the pack house was agreed upon

by all the members of the management board, and that community representatives also cast their votes “in favour of the long term business benefits that the pack house would ensure” (Interview, Dinaledi Farm Manager, 2011). The new “state of the art” pack house is therefore viewed as the outcome of a negotiation process between the strategic partner and community representatives on the management board. It is clear that the strategic partner deployed a convincing business discourse that decisively swayed the decision-making processes.

- *Rewards and Risks:* As already explained, the flow of benefits from the strategic partnerships to claimants has been fairly limited to date, causing a great deal of unhappiness amongst Moletele “community” members. Members of the MCPA executive committee insist that the Moletele are “running out of patience” with the lack of benefits coming from the two remaining strategic partnership initiatives. The strategic partners, on the other hand, are warning the MCPA that the profits they are consistently being accused of capturing are in fact quite “marginal”. They also point out that most of the risks of the farming activities on the land are being carried by them, the strategic partners. The New Dawn strategic partner, in particular, has been facing great difficulty in sourcing a loan from the DBSA. The conditions for awarding the loan have finally been agreed to in 2012, but these conditions will tie the strategic partner to Moletele land for the next 15 years. Finally, in terms of the design of the strategic partnerships, reliance on external funding has created a degree of vulnerability for both the strategic partners and the “community”, and has also cast the strategic partners and communities in adversarial roles, where each entity appears to need to compete for access to “state” resources.

8.2.4 Differentiated character of the “community”

The non-unitary and complex character of the construct of a “restitution community” is a key factor shaping processes and outcomes in strategic partnership arrangements. Portraying restitution “communities” as unified, coherent bodies is highly problematic (Walker 2008). Analytically, one needs to disaggregate the notion of a Moletele “community”, as discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation. The findings from my analysis

there highlighted the need to understand different structural groupings within the “community”, their relations with each other, and how these influence the range of outcomes in these partnerships. Before unpacking the nature of these relations in more detail in the next section of this chapter, it is important to briefly reflect on some of the observations already made in chapter 5. Of particular interest regarding the livelihood survey data, is the fact that there are people amongst the Moletele who articulate their need for land to farm for consumptive purposes (specifically, the younger women I interviewed), while others want to farm as small-scale commercial producers. But the subdivision of farms and access to land for these purposes has not even been considered. It is therefore observed that the strategies employed in pursuit of commercial farming activities, as envisaged in terms of these partnership arrangements, tended to discount the interests of those among the Moletele who would prefer to engage in small scale land-based production activities.

The desire of some community members for access to land for other, non-productive land use purposes is also being disregarded. A notable characteristic of the Moletele claim is the large proportion of land that is earmarked for commercial production activities, but not yet cleared for cultivation. Table 4.2 provides an indication of the land that is being managed by the different partnership initiatives. The table also contrasts the hectares of land under cultivation, compared to the parcels of land for which investment is still required before commercial production activities can commence. These plots of ‘vacant’ land in the Hoedspruit area have recently been focused on by a distinct sub-grouping amongst the Moletele, who articulated their interest in gaining access to and use of this land. This Moletele subgroup consists of unemployed men and women between the ages of 25 and 60, who stated that they did not recognize the authority of the MCPA as the legitimate land holding institution, but they did pledge their support to the *Kgoshi*. This sub-grouping is questioning the reasons given by the MCPA for these “empty” plots of land not being used. They are also asking why these parcels of land cannot be made available for different uses to the “community”, especially while investment for commercial production is not yet forthcoming.

During 2011, approximately 20 of these families representing this sub-grouping decided to move onto one of the open plots of land to “collect firewood”. They ended up occupying the plot for a few days²¹. After first issuing a warning, the chairman of the MCPA (Mr Mashile) had to call the police to have them removed. This incident caused a great deal of tension and resulted in these “community” members raising questions about who should be allowed to “benefit” from *their* land and whether the MCPA chairperson had the right to phone the police to escort them from their own land. These “community” members were extremely irate at being removed from the land especially because it was not “even under production”²². This incident is therefore indicative of conflicting interests and different conceptualisations of ownership and ‘access’ and who should be able to benefit from restored land. It also highlights the need of Moletele “community” members for alternative land uses. James Ferguson’s (2013) seductive conceptualisation of “*How to do things with land*” comes to mind. Ferguson (2013:166) argues that producing agricultural goods is really only one of a variety of uses for land, and not necessarily the most important (ibid.: 166). He suggests that we need to direct attention to the broader question of land’s multiple uses and meanings to explain why land is valued and desired in ways that agricultural utility alone cannot (ibid.: 168). Ferguson suggests that we need an appreciation of the multiple meanings, value and uses of land for Southern African rural dwellers which include a host of apparently ‘non-productive’ uses of land that makes a crucial but often undervalued contribution to enabling and sustaining rural livelihoods (ibid.: 167). Thus, illustrating Ferguson’s (2013) concern, the narrow focus on commercial farming activities of the strategic partnership approach, clearly also discounted other non-productive related uses of the land that could have benefitted different strata of the Moletele people.

²¹ These members seemingly articulated their interest in terms of “harvesting natural resources from open plots of land” belonging to the Moletele, but they remained on the land for a period of five days and started to erect structures for shelter. It is therefore possible that this “contradictory interest” (i.e. an interest articulated in opposition to the hegemonic commercial farming interest) could in fact not be about firewood collection, after all. These members had the clear intention to “stay on the land” which could be interpreted as a need for settling back onto the land where they would be able to travel from in order to find jobs in the Hoedspruit area implying shorter commute distances. The occupation of the vacant plot of land could thus reflect a ‘contradictory’ interest in terms of access to land framed as an interest in land for non-productive purposes.

²² Interview conducted with Mr Thandios Mashile, December 2011

8.2.5 Value chain-related concerns

It is generally observed that the direct introduction or insertion of rural producers into global value chains has tended to deliver ‘mixed results’ (Mather, 1999; Greenberg & Mather, 2003 & Freguin-Gresh & Anseeuw, 2012). The information gleaned from the literature, secondary data sources and limited empirical data I managed to collect by means of interviews, illustrated the fact that the insertion of the Moletele ‘community’ into the privately regulated, stringently controlled and UK-retailer-dominated citrus value chain, by means of the strategic partnership initiative, has resulted in decidedly ambiguous outcomes.

The strategic partners, in the case of both the New Dawn and Dinaledi joint ventures, are compelled to share the dividends (once declared) derived from production activities taking place on Moletele land, but they are not compelled to share profits from their own export companies. While the strategic partners lease the land from the community at a small fraction of its worth (1,25% of the value of the land at the time of transfer) they could potentially gain a significant proportion of the profits from production while also capturing the lion’s share of value through their export companies. On the other hand, the New Dawn partnership is trying to implement some innovative ways of inserting “community” interests in the citrus value chain, both upstream and downstream of production. The strategic partner, Mike Scott, is offering the “community” the opportunity to buy a fifteen percent share in his export company at a discounted rate. He has also established a “community owned” nursery to grow 25 000 seedlings to allow for expansion of production on New Dawn land. It is reported that the nursery is “running smoothly”, and in 2013 they began to grow seedlings for expansion on the other Moletele farms. The intention is that the Moletele “community” would continue to operate the nursery and eventually sell seedlings to other farmers in the Hoedspruit area, thus benefitting from the expertise and certification of the strategic partner. To date, the shares in the export company have not materialized and the “community” is still heavily reliant on the strategic partner to run the nursery. In terms of cumulative outcomes it is thus concluded that despite the “good intentions” and innovative maneuvering by the New Dawn partnership, “community” members generally do not really benefit from their produce being sold in supermarkets in the UK, as their interest ends at the farm gate.

Apart from the new pack house that was built, the ownership and control of the older existing pack houses on Moletele land are also contentious. At the land handover ceremony for the Moletele claim, in 2007, the then Minister of Land Affairs referred to the transfer of pack houses to the “community” as a progressive move to ensure that the “community become a part of the value chains they are producing for”. Comments made at the Annual General Meeting of the MCPA in December 2011 had quite a few members echoing a concern that these pack houses were really just supporting the overriding interests of the commercial partners with very little regard for other interests. At this meeting a very disappointed member asked:

“If I were to produce enough oranges, why can’t I go and pack my oranges at the pack houses to sell to people in Hoedspruit? Why can’t we all do that?”

The pack houses might therefore belong to the “community”, but members’ access or ability to benefit from the asset they own, is quite limited.

8.2.6 “Ownership without access”

Processes and outcomes in the Moletele strategic partnership initiatives to date suggest that the strategic partners are the entities most likely able to capture the lion’s share of benefits from production on Moletele land. However, in terms of the broader value chain, the largest proportion of profits (with estimated margins at between 23% and 26%) from the South African citrus value chains, are being captured by UK and western European retailers (Dodd, 2008 Post Harvest Innovation). On the other hand, South African citrus producers (the node in the chain where the Moletele community are inserted) are required to carry most of the risks of production, which in any case has much smaller profit margins (9-15%), as shown in chapter 7 of this thesis. With most of the value within citrus value chains being captured beyond the farm gate, the Moletele are thus clearly confronted with a scenario where they are owners of the land, the pack houses and even the produce from their land, but they have very limited scope for *effective* control of, or access to (i.e. the ability to benefit from), the resources they own.

The Moletele case study also illustrates that the design of the strategic partnership model does influence processes and outcomes. It is clear that the strategic partners are being favoured in terms of *rewards*, contrary to stated policy intentions aimed at benefiting the land reform beneficiaries. Real power in decision-making and thus “*voice*” regarding the partnership activities are clearly vested in the strategic partners. Additionally, the model is not showing much evidence of contributing to the transfer of skills or contributing to the empowerment of beneficiaries, raising questions about the framing of these models as *inclusive business models*. In terms of land reform policy, it is also apparent that strategic partnership arrangements are allowing *ownership* to vest with the restitution “community”, but the need to ensure commercial productive activities on the land is restricting options for the “community” to fully access the resources they now own. In this case, preference for the large-scale commercial farm narrative, the nature of the value chains the community is being inserted into, the choice of and support for the governance structure put in place to implement and enforce decisions, and the design of the partnership model, all created multi-layered barriers to effective access and control by the Moletele restitution “community” — even when the Moletele hold secure rights to the land.

It is also noted that the narrow focus on commercial farming activities in terms of these strategic partnership arrangements clearly tends to discount access to land for small-scale production activities, whilst also neglecting options for non-productive related uses of the land, thus underscoring the sense that ownership is not translating into access or effective control of the land’s resources. I therefore frame the partnership approach as one that ends up promoting “*ownership without access*” from the perspective of the restitution “community”. The Moletele case also demonstrates that there are instances where a limited degree of “access” has been granted to distinct sub-groupings amongst the Moletele. I discuss the nature of this “access pattern” in the next section of the chapter. In terms of my reference to “*ownership without access*”, the nature and benefits that have been captured by these sub-groupings amongst the Moletele is acknowledged. But the *cumulative* (i.e. a combination of frequency, extent and direction) configuration of access supports my conceptualisation of the partnership approach as promoting *ownership without access* for the overwhelming majority of the members in a restitution “community”.

8.3 Uneven Access to and Control over Resources

In order to understand the differentiated pattern of access to resources, I focus this part of my research and analysis on the question *who got what?* in terms of Moletele strategic partnership arrangements (Bernstein, 2010:22). This involved asking questions about (1) who was granted access to the land for their cattle to graze at Scotia farm?, (2) what informed the process of selection for the now collapsed women's farming group?, (3) how are employees selected to work on Moletele farms?, (4) how were individuals selected to gain access to the land set aside for 'estate type housing'? and (5) how was it decided that some members in the community received cash payments of R 1 300,00 from the Restitution Land Claims Commission at the end of 2011, in terms of Section 42 provisions, while others were told that they would need to wait?

As already mentioned in chapter 5 of the thesis, the stated entry requirements for Moletele members to belong to the cattle grazing scheme at Scotia were seemingly not the only *access control* mechanism. Two respondents hinted that there were those amongst the Moletele who formed part of a "select" group with connections to either the MCPA or the traditional leader. During my discussions with other respondents, the "select" nature of the group which was allowed to move their cattle to Scotia became a recurring theme. In response to these types of assertions, the MCPA insists that the only criterion used was the requisite 20 head of cattle. Judging from the feedback provided by the respondents, however, the perception that some preferential access practices might be in place cannot be discounted. The Scotia farm cattle grazing scheme is perceived to be only for the benefit of the "somewhat more affluent", or those amongst the Moletele who have favourable relations with members of the MCPA or with the traditional leader. Likewise, the selection of members of the now collapsed women's farming group was also biased in terms of favoring "the more affluent", as most of these women (6 of the 10) were in fact already employed as teachers, and they were also related, in some way or another, to either a member of the MCPA executive committee or the *Kgoshi*.

Despite being fairly limited in extent, the availability of employment opportunities on Moletele land also tends to be subject to "*access control*". The strategic partners would

notify the MCPA when employment opportunities arose. The MCPA would in turn communicate these openings to selected “labour recruiters” amongst the Moletele. These “recruiters”, according to one of the MCPA members, are generally well-known elderly Moletele who “know people in the community very well”. It is therefore assumed that the recruiter’s knowledge would give them the necessary insights in terms of knowing who should be appointed for which positions. The process of selecting who is allowed to work (and also who gets to do what type of work) on Moletele farms is thus clearly configured by connections between the recruiters and the MCPA and between the recruiters and those they select to work on the farms.

The disbursement of grant payments at the end of 2011 provoked suspicion amongst Moletele members. Some received the payments, while others were told that they would need to wait. Those who did not receive their payments were informed by the CRLR that their names were not on the beneficiary lists and these lists were still in the process of being updated by the MCPA. These members complained that the MCPA was intentionally stalling their payments, because they were not regarded as “important” or “strategic” enough. Five of the respondents I interviewed raised their suspicions about the timing of the payments, as payments occurred just before the MCPA election was scheduled to take place. These respondents felt that MCPA only ensured payments to those households they “knew” would support them in the upcoming election, whilst the others were left to “wait”.

In terms of the estate-type housing that is currently being developed at Scotia, the explicit target group is seemingly once again the “more affluent” amongst the Moletele, given the requirement of a cash payment (R 5000) that had to be made to the *Kgoshi* (because Scotia is regarded as his land) within a given period of time. These estate-type houses are in the process of being built, but despite the MCPA’s assurances of regular announcements and open communication channels, the majority of the respondents (n=73) I interviewed, knew nothing about this initiative. The seven respondents who knew about it, again hinted that entry requirements for this estate type housing clearly favored those in alignment with the traditional leader. One respondent said: “It is the *kgoshi*’s land after all, so he should be the one deciding who gets to be his neighbors, right?” This quote also very aptly articulates the

nature of the social relations that have to be in effect for individuals amongst the Moletele, to gain access to the plots of land. The process of developing the housing project might have been conceptualized and driven by the MCPA, in collaboration with the Maruleng Municipality, but the ultimate decision-making power regarding “*who gets what*” was still predicated on the nature of social relations with the Moletele traditional leader. The irony of choosing to accommodate the “more affluent” Moletele on Scotia farm versus the possibility of building houses to accommodate Moletele farmworkers, thus reducing their commuting cost between Hoedspruit and Buffelshoek, is quite striking.

Additionally, some respondents (six in total) voiced their unhappiness regarding the selection of children allowed to attend computer skills classes held at Scotia farm. These classes are aimed at improving the computer literacy skills of young people who have already completed grade 12. A recurring theme amongst the unhappy respondents was that some were just told that their names would be placed on a waiting list, while “others” were allowed to enrol soon after matriculating. One interviewee mentioned that her daughter has been waiting for three years since matriculating. This respondent was outraged that her daughter’s name has been kept on the waiting list, yet they knew of individuals whose children were allowed to enrol immediately after matriculating. This interviewee insisted that it was “who you knew or who your parents knew” which ultimately determined your access to resources on Moletele land.

In terms of understanding how access to resources was configured on Moletele, the neglect of options for those amongst the Moletele “community” who articulate a need for land to engage in small-scale farming activities, either for consumption or for the market, is once again apparent. The MCPA did make some efforts to procure funding from the Department of Agriculture with the stated intention of starting some small-scale farming initiatives, but after the women’s farming group experiment “failed”, nothing similar has materialized. The interests of members of the Moletele “community” voicing the need to engage in small-scale production activities on Moletele land (for example, the views of the 10 young female interviewees discussed in chapter 5), and those among the Moletele who have already proven a rather admirable ability to farm profitably on a small scale (the 7 homesteads I

interviewed in Buffelshoek who were farming enough to sell), have thus clearly not converged with the overriding interests of the “core power alliance” who are ultimately focused on continuing large-scale commercial production on Moletele land.

Dissident groups amongst the Moletele “community” initially rejected the idea of commercial farming, insisting that they wanted to move back on to the land with their cattle to pursue their own productive activities. Subsequently, however, these dissident groupings decided to change their tactics and discourse (discursive repositioning). They felt compelled to also engage within the commercial farm production narrative, “otherwise nobody would listen” to them and decided to enrol the support of an independent attorney. It is, however, important to recognize the fact that the dissidents initially did represent the interests of a subgrouping amongst the Moletele who articulated the need “to move back on to the land”, which their perception of what restorative justice should have meant in practice (as highlighted in chapter 5).

I conclude that what drives the allocation of resources and benefits is the nature of the relations between sub-groupings amongst the Moletele, and in particular their connections with either the MCPA or the traditional leader, the *Kgoshi*. Those sub-groupings perceived as less “connected” to these entities or those articulating “conflicting” interests are left on the fringes. A useful lens to view the relations between different sets of actors that profoundly shape the distribution of resources and benefits is the notion of “webs of power”, as suggested by Peluso and Ribot (2003)

8.4 Webs of Power

“Access” has become an important analytical lens of late, as many scholars have noted that property rights alone, i.e. socially recognised rights to objects of value, are insufficient for delivering benefits (Osborne, 2011: 862). As discussed in Chapter 3, Ribot and Peluso (2003) contrast the common formulation of property as a “bundle of rights” with their conception of access as a “bundle of powers.” Sikor and Lund (2009) distinguish between access and property in terms of their association with power and authority. The access

approach highlights the role of power relations, emphasizing that many people gain and maintain access to resources and benefits *through others* who control such access.

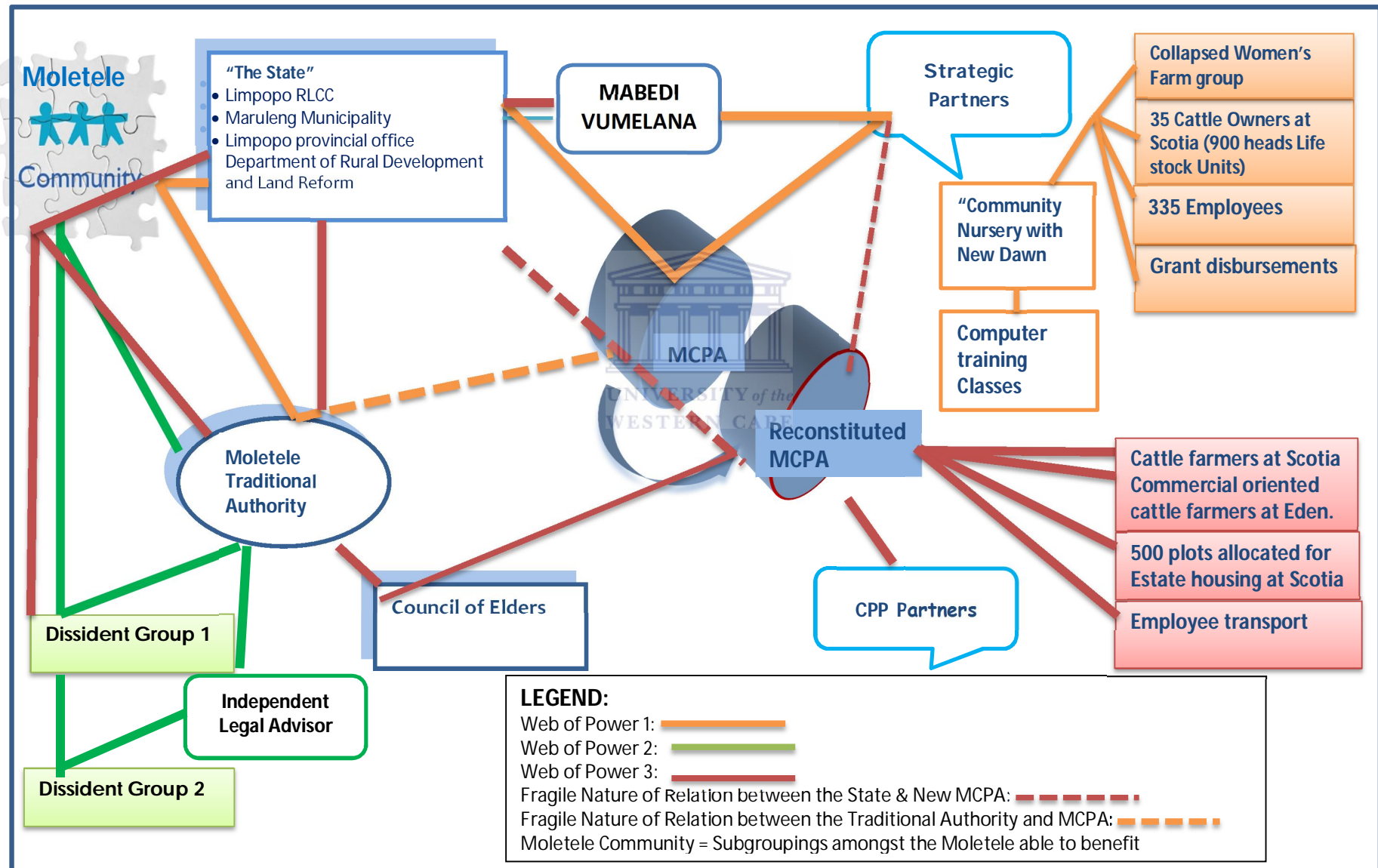
As discussed in chapter 3, analysis of “access” in terms of a political economic framework allowed me to focus my inquiry on circumstances in which some people/actors were able to benefit from particular resources while others were not (Bell, 1998:29). The political economic aspect of the concept ‘access’ becomes even more evident when social action is divided into access *control* and access *maintenance* (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:158), and social relations and differentiation are analysed as they emerge from both cooperation and conflict over benefits within particular moments and “webs of power” (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:160). The strands in these webs of power and the bundles of power assigned to different actors are thus regarded as the means, processes and relations by which actors are enabled to gain control of and maintain access to resources.

I distinguish three distinct “power webs” within the Moletele partnership arrangements (see figure 8.1):

- *Web of Power 1*: This web comprises relations and converging interests between “the state”²³, the strategic partners, the MCPA, the Moletele Traditional leader and MABEDI (now known as Vumelana).
- *Web of Power 2* : This web refers to “dissident groups” 1 and 2, the lawyers they hired, and the Moletele Traditional Council.
- *Web of Power 3*: (The new alliances web): This web includes the new alliances formed between the dissident groupings, the traditional leader grouping, and the new MCPA structure elected in 2012.

²³ The “state” perspective is represented by the involvement of the DRLR, CRLR and Maruleng local municipality.

Figure 8.1: Conceptualising Power webs in the Moletete land claims



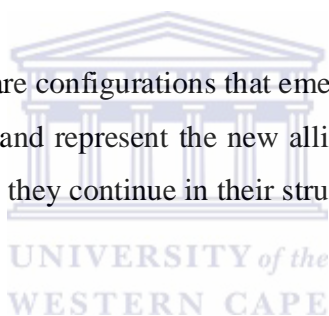
8.4.1 *Web of Power 1*

The interests of “the state”, the Moletele Communal Property Association and the Maruleng Business Trust (MABEDI) clearly converged in relation to ensuring continued commercial production on the land. MABEDI in particular, played a key role in promoting and interpreting “the state’s” vision for continued commercial production on Moletele land. To this end, MABEDI was appointed to build the capacity of the MCPA in terms of management skills and was tasked with assisting MCPA members to acquire the necessary skills to sensibly engage with the agribusiness discourse. MABEDI eventually dissolved and its successor, also funded by the Business Trust of South Africa and known as the Vumelana Advisory Fund, was introduced to continue with these responsibilities. The interests and strategies of “the state”, Vumelana and the MCPA thus converged in terms of what they wanted to achieve on Moletele land. Based on the overriding strength of this convergence, the interests represented by this alliance are conceptualized as a “core power alliance”. The extent and strength of the convergence of interests between this “core power alliance” with the interests of the other actors in Web of Power 1 (the strategic partners and the traditional leader) was however, subject to change.

For the strategic partners, the converging nature of their interests with those within the “core power alliance” is evident in the agreed vision of ensuring continued commercial fruit production on Moletele land. In practice, the strategic partners are focused more strongly on ensuring continued *export oriented* production for *their export companies*, on Moletele land. But suspicions about the nature and extent of the benefits the strategic partners are in fact able to reap from export activities continue to impede complementarity between the interests of the strategic partners and the core power alliance. In addition, the prolonged defaulting in terms of grant payments, on the part of the state, continues to weaken the alliance. This became evident in increasing levels of distrust between the commercial partners and the state and between the commercial partners and the community. As already mentioned, the MCPA increasingly questions the limited extent of benefits being transmitted back to the community. On the other hand, one of the strategic partners is feeling trapped, while the second strategic partner feels let down by the state.

The converging nature of the interests between the core power alliance and the interests of the Moletele traditional leader can only be described as fragile and fraught with accusations and distrust. As discussed in chapter 4, the nature of the relations between these entities can be characterized as a “restrained struggle” (or perhaps “co-operative conflict”), especially between the Moletele CPA and the *Kgoshi*. The MCPA was only able to maintain a semblance of an alliance with the *Kgoshi*, by ensuring a steady flow of benefits to him and his allies. Despite the fragile nature of this alliance, convergence is still evident. In the initial stages, this power alliance causally shaped the configuration and distribution of benefits from the partnerships to the Moletele “community” (as described above). A distinct pattern in terms of unequal access and distribution of benefits is therefore evident in the Moletele case. This pattern of access is also influenced by the nature of relations between different Moletele sub-groupings and the entities in this power alliance.

Power web 2 and power web 3 are configurations that emerged as a response to discernable patterns of access to resources, and represent the new alliances and contestations amongst actors in the Moletele context as they continue in their struggle to acquire and secure access to resources.



8.4.2 Web of Power 2

This web of power arose from the convergence of the interests of the two dissident groupings, the lawyers hired by them, and subsequently, the Moletele traditional leader. Power web 2 thus represents the interests of an alliance standing in opposition to the alliances evident in power web 1. As explained in Chapter 4, I was able to identify two main sub-groupings within the Moletele who contested the legitimacy of the MCPA and who expressed their unhappiness regarding emerging patterns of access to resources. I have labeled these two subgroupings as “Dissident Group 1” and “Dissident Group 2” (see Figure 8.1). The aim of these dissident groupings was to disrupt the MCPA’s control and maintenance of access to the resources. The dissidents felt marginalized by the MCPA executive committee, their sense of vulnerability being particularly acute because they were

represented by leaders who in the past had fallen out of favour with the traditional leader (discussed in chapter 4).

The two dissident groups decided to join forces and asked a firm of attorneys who work on land claims to assist them in planning a takeover. One of these attorneys assisted the dissidents in interpreting the MCPA constitution and helped them plan the launch of a *coup d'état* against the leadership of the MCPA. At the same time, the fragile alliance between the MCPA and the traditional leader finally disintegrated. The *kgoshi* decided that the MCPA executive committee was impeding rather than advancing his access to resources. This prompted the traditional leader to set aside his historically inspired (and deeply seated) resentment of the leaders of the dissident groups in pursuing a new alliance with these groupings. In the process of forming this alliance, the traditional leader effectively 'changed the rules of engagement (Elwert & Bierschenk, 1988:145) and the strategic positioning of the actors in the arena'. The dissidents who were previously considered to be on the fringes of this contested arena, thus shifted into a key strategic position from which they would be able to capture more resources.

The role of the *kgoshi* in terms of this process is best explained by Ribot and Peluso's (2003: 154) assertion that "some people and institutions control resources while others (in this case, the MCPA and dissidents) must maintain their access *through* those who have control" (emphasis in the original). From this perspective, the tangled nature of the web of relations is quite profound. As events unfolded it also became apparent that the MCPA might have been regarded as the legitimate land holding institution, but *control* over the means to benefit (i.e. secure access) was not guaranteed: the executive committee of the MCPA demonstrated an inability to *maintain* access to the resources *through* their relation with the traditional leader.

8.4.3 Web of Power 3

The outcome of the contestations and alliances between these differently positioned actors resulted in the emergence of new web of power, Power Web 3. The strands of this power web portray the extent of converging interests and alliance between the two dissident

groupings, the traditional leader and the new MCPA executive committee. Some of the previous MCPA members are still active, but for the most part, the MCPA under a new chairman, now needs to contend with the authority of the traditional leader and his Council. The Vumelana Advisory Fund (the successor to MABEDI), still tasked with building the business capacity of the MCPA, is also considered part of this power web. The recent shift in state” support in favor of the legitimacy of traditional authorities (DRDLR, 2011 *Green Paper on South African Land Reform*) would imply that the state should also be regarded as part of this emerging web of power, the old core power alliance clearly convulsing into a new set of alliances.

Power Web 3 also represents the convergence of the interests of the new MCPA, the traditional leader and the more affluent members of the Moletete. The favouring of the more affluent amongst the Moletete is very evident in the stated priorities of the cattle grazing scheme that has been introduced on the newly restituted Eden farm. This grazing scheme is now explicitly driven by imperatives to promote the interest of a “thriving commercial cattle farming group who have emerged amongst the beneficiaries” (CRLR Annual Report, 2012-2013). Differentiation in terms of commercial cattle farming is therefore discernable, and this new grazing scheme will probably create opportunities for even further differentiation.

The new MCPA structure is uncompromisingly committed to benefit the more affluent cattle owners amongst the Moletete. The new MCPA chairperson explains: “we are targeting those individuals who have already proven their ability to manage very large herds profitably” (Interview new MCPA chairperson, November 2013). Additionally, the allocation of plots in Scotia for estate-type housing is now explicitly geared towards the more affluent. The most striking aspect of this new power alliance is therefore a very clear shift from more covert or implied “elite capture” patterns, into an overtly stated and uncompromising stance of support for the more affluent amongst the Moletete. Changing patterns of access to resources via Power Web 3 represents a pattern of elite capture becoming more visible and entrenched, allowing opportunities for further differentiation among the Moletete.

The continued neglect of sub-groupings who articulate ‘contradictory’ (i.e. to hegemonic conceptions of restitution) interests desiring access to land for small-scale market-oriented farming or for farming for consumptive purposes, reveal the continuation of a trend already evident in terms of Power Web 1. The new chairperson does point out that plans are also underway for projects that will benefit the less affluent members in the Moletele community. He reports that a portion of the newly transferred land (phase 6 of the restitution settlement, involving 2 400 ha) will be set aside for livestock grazing, to accommodate those with smaller herd numbers, and low cost housing is also part of the long term plan. These plans seem rather vague and relegated to “sometime in the future”. For now, I sense that the needs of the “more affluent” and “connected” (those with kinship ties to the *Kgoshi Abuti Chiloane*) amongst the Moletele, will be treated as the top priority.

The new Moletele CPA is still very committed to the commercial farming model. This time around, the aim has shifted towards pursuing continued commercial production on the Moletele farms by means of partnerships with better resourced agri-business partners, in the form of CPP’s, as opposed to strategic partners. Additionally, the commitment to the commercial rhetoric will now also be pursued in terms of helping commercially-oriented cattle production on some of the land. The vision is that cattle farming practices involve skills and knowledge Moletele people might already have, and that significant profits can be generated from these activities without the need to “partner up” with agribusiness (Interview, MCPA chairperson, November 2013). On the one hand, this new power alliance thus aim to partner the community with larger and better resourced agri-business partners on the production side of activities, on the other hand, there is a clear intent to move away from the need to establish partnerships by means of promoting the commercial cattle farming initiative.

8.5 Outcomes of Strategic Partnerships on Moletele land

I conclude the chapter with some key findings regarding the outcomes to date of Strategic Partnership initiatives on restored Moletele land. These outcomes are framed in terms of: (1) the re-structuring of partnerships deals on Moletele land to form Community-Private

Partnerships, (2) MCPA changes and continuities, and (3) continuing tensions and ongoing struggles.

8.5.1 The restructuring of partnership deals on Moletele land

After the collapse of the Batau partnership, and in the case of the Richmond farm, the MCPA decided to introduce a Community Private Partnership model (CPP). The interest of the state, to provide the restitution community with the type of commercial partner that would be able to shoulder the risks and level of investment required to ensure continued production on the land, thus clearly converged with agri-business interest looking for opportunities to expand, consolidate and integrate their production activities. As an added bonus these large agri-businesses can now gain unprecedented *access* to parts of the most fertile land in the country, with the small inconvenience of a rural restitution community “owning” it. As discussed in chapter 6 of the thesis, for the Moletele, decision-making and most of the value-capturing in terms of the CPP model are happening beyond their reach, despite the promise of higher rental incomes.

The consequences of the increasing power disparities between restitution communities and large agri-business partners within such arrangements are clearly illustrated by the recent collapse in negotiations between the (reconstituted) MCPA and BONO-SAFE. After almost three years of negotiations, the process was halted in June 2013. A dispute was declared because the export company asserted that they could not reach an agreement with the “community” regarding the terms of the arrangements and BONO-SAFE, who was appointed at interim care takers of the land since 2010, was able to simply move on. The new chairperson of the Moletele CPA explains²⁴:

“They confused us so badly we did not even know whether we as the Moletele were negotiating with BONO (the subsidiary company) or with SAFE (South African Fruit Export) and meanwhile they were producing and exporting from our land to their heart’s content. No benefits have transpired from that deal for us, the Moletele. They used their know-how to give us the run around.”

The recent collapse of the negotiation process for the CPP arrangement between BONO-SAFE and the Moletele highlight the fact that agri-businesses are clearly aware of their ability to benefit from production activities without the need to “own” the means of

²⁴ Interview conducted with Mr Hezekiel Nkosi new chairperson of the MCPA, November 2013

production. In fact, it is commonly acknowledged that value captured beyond the farm gate potentially outweighs the value of the land, in any case. The extent to which agri-businesses remain able to benefit from production on Moletele land also highlights the role of *mechanisms* (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). The control of technology, markets, knowledge and expertise is key, as argued by Ribot and Peluso, clearly conditioning the social actor's *ability* to benefit from resources, and demonstrating that 'access' entails more than the holding of formal property rights. The CPP deal between the Moletele and Bosveld Citrus on the Richmond farm, however, appears to be "running very smoothly", with benefits in the form of high rental payments already materializing at the time of this write-up (Interview with the new MCPA chairperson, November 2013).

8.5.2 *The MCPA*

Since the "takeover" of the Moletele CPA by 'dissident groups' in 2012, the *kgoshi's* position and interest in the management of Moletele land has gained more prominence. The recent re-assertion of the importance of traditional leadership structures in the South African landscape as articulated by the Zuma-led administration, has lent even more legitimacy to traditional leader institutions. The role of traditional authorities is now considered "clarified and legitimized in terms of the constitutional stipulations" (DRDLR, Communal Land Tenure Policy, 2013:18). In the case of the Moletele, these recent shifts have translated into even more prominence and reverence for the *kgoshi*. The new MCPA now has to align their management decisions with a "committee of elders" appointed by the Moletele traditional council. Additionally, the Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (2013: 67) proudly asserts that newly-transferred phase 6 land of is planned to be managed in terms of the "Communal Tenure Wheel" which suggests a partnership between the municipality and the traditional leader. In terms of this arrangement, the traditional leader is now tasked with administering the land and has the responsibility to ensure compliance in terms of by-laws of this type of partnership arrangement. The vision is also that the municipality will provide support in terms of sector plans, integrated development and spatial plans (Communal Land Tenure Policy, 2013: 18). The state has therefore clearly shifted its focus away from democratic institutions (such as CPAs), their stated intent being

to stop “creating communities within communities”²⁵ leaving very real questions regarding the future of CPAs, such as the MCPA. It is therefore perhaps reasonable to suggest that the state’s withdrawal of support for CPAs as land governing institutions has seemingly now reduced the role of the MCPA into a minor component of an extended structure that promotes the functions and interests of the Moletele traditional leader.

8.5.3 Continuing tensions and ongoing struggles

In the case of the Moletele, struggles over effective access to and control over land and resources are destined to continue. Where direct access to the land is not an option, struggles for access to monetary benefits from the land are becoming increasingly important. By 2012, the Mashile-led MCPA was clearly undecided about making out small cash payments to the broader community (for social reproduction) or re-investing the money for the purposes of enhancing capital accumulation and profitability in the long run. At the time of the takeover by the dissident groups, the Mashile-led MCPA held approximately R 4,6 Million in its bank account (November 2012). In November 2013 the balance in the account was estimated at R 7, 5 Million (interview, Mr Hezekiel Nkosi newly elected MCPA chairperson, 2013). The new chairperson asserts that they are equally indecisive, or rather “cautious” about making “too large or risky” investments. He says that they have made a small investment to procure vehicles for the exclusive purpose of transporting Moletele employees between Hoedspruit and Buffelshoek, but for the most part, the money has been left intact in the account.

One of the strategic partners observes: *“As a business venture, the worst place for your money, is “intact” in your account! The money should be put to use, either to generate an interest or to invest, why can they not demonstrate some business drive or in fact make payments to the rest of the community?”* Questions regarding the extent to which monetary benefits” will be transmitted to the rest of the Moletele community, and regarding which

²⁵ The Minister made this statement at the Land Divided Conference held at UCT, March 2013

sub-groupings among the Moletele will be able to benefit, will therefore continue to fuel struggles and resentments amongst the Moletele.

The continued commitment to the large scale commercial farm model as promoted by the core power alliance will very likely exacerbate the marginalization of those subgroupings amongst the Moletele who articulate an interest to engage in small-scale production activities. This approach also leaves very little scope for those amongst the Moletele who have already proven their ability to farm profitably on a small scale. The continued neglect of these subgroupings, matched by an unreserved support for resource allocation in favor of the “more affluent” or “better connected” amongst the Moletele, could cause further social differentiation, fuelling contestations over access to resources on Moletele land.

The transfer of land back to the Moletele through the strategic partnership approach has resulted in large-scale commercial agricultural production being maintained on restituted land. This is evident in the high value of turnover on Moletele land in 2012, six years after land transfer, estimated at R 200 million (Moletele MCPA Financial Report, 2012). However, the continuation of production activities on Moletele land is not indicative of the “health” of the partnerships to date, or of the degree to which the different actors in the value chains are able to capture value from Moletele produce. Continued production on the land also reveals very little regarding the limited nature of “benefits” being transmitted to “the community” nor does it provide insights into the poor level of control/decision-making that the “community” has in fact been allowed. Achieving continued production on the Moletele land turns out to be a very poor indicator of the long-term sustainability of strategic partnerships. Strategic partnerships in the case of the Moletele are thus seemingly destined to either fail spectacularly, or to continue to exist within fragile alliances and relations, plagued by “restrained struggles”.

The transfer of land back to restitution communities in terms of the Strategic Partnership approach might contribute to a change in the racial profile of land ownership in the Limpopo rural landscape. The formalisation of these rights, in tandem with the retention of large-scale agricultural production activities with the help of commercial partners, could,

however, end up entrenching a de-racialised version of dualism in the South African agrarian structure (Cliffe, 2007), with restitution communities merely being granted 'ownership without access'. This outcome would be in strong contradiction to policy commitments aimed at reforming agrarian dualism, and would arguably be indicative of some of the internal contestations within the post-apartheid state.

8.6 Conclusion

The design of the partnership model, fairly stringent regulations and governance dynamics in the now privately regulated export-driven citrus value chain, and the differentiated nature of the Moletele "community", definitively influenced key processes and outcomes in terms of strategic partnerships on Moletele land. Added to these, the post-apartheid state's preferences for the large scale commercial farming model and conflicting statements about the role of traditional authorities, clearly also influenced outcomes to date. I have argued in this chapter that the *cumulative impacts* of these considerations have culminated in a situation of "ownership without access".

From the Moletele case, I conclude that the "community" was awarded formal property rights (an already contested endeavour), but the ability of members in this highly differentiated "community" to gain effective access, i.e. to benefit from the newly restituted land, is not guaranteed. In fact, the distribution of access to benefits in terms of partnership arrangements should be understood as a contested terrain within differentiated configurations of power-alliances (or webs of power) that strongly shape both processes and outcomes. In the Moletele case, mechanisms and processes of *access control* and *access maintenance* were intrinsically informed by the nature of relations between the relevant entities and a recurring theme seems to be outcomes that favour: (1) those amongst the Moletele with strong connections to the traditional leader or the MCPA, and (2) the more affluent subgroupings amongst the Moletele.

I also conclude that the introduction of CPP arrangements have provided large agribusinesses with an opportune vehicle to expand, integrate and consolidate their productive activities on a scale they would not otherwise have been able to achieve. The interest of "the state", to provide the restitution community with the type of commercial partner that

would be able to shoulder the risks and investment required to ensure continued production on the land, clearly converged with agri-business interest looking for opportunities to expand, consolidate and integrate their production activities. The ability of agri-businesses to jump in and benefit from the most productive parcels of land in the country without the remotest concern to re-invest in the capacities of the rural community which owns the land, thus allows some version of the dualism in the inherited agrarian structure to persist. It also allows a form of accumulation where agri-business companies can close deals with rural restitution communities that will allow them to reap benefits at a rather profound scale and scope without requiring the absorption of surplus labor, or in fact any other form of re-investment into the well-being of these rural inhabitants owning the land - which could be likened to Li's (2005) conceptualization of a form of *detached accumulation*. Informed by these perspectives, I conclude that the "ownership without access approach", linked with these opportune moments for enabling detached accumulation, could end up re-concentrating access to, and control over land and associated resources in the hands of the economically and politically dominant social classes and groups in South Africa.

To conclude, production is continuing on the land, the bank balance of the MCPA stands at an impressive R 7,5 Million, new land-use options are being explored, and some innovative and committed maneuvering on the part of one of the strategic partners is evident. Achieving continued production on the Moletele land is, however, a very poor indicator of the long term sustainability of these partnerships. The *cumulative effect* of all these processes at work in the multi-actor landscape of the Moletele claim can thus be characterized as: great expectations and ambiguous outcomes for the Moletele "community".

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

I conclude my study with a brief discussion of the wider implications of its key findings. In the first part of the chapter I revisit what the study set out to achieve and reflect on some of the limitations of the research. In the second part of the chapter, I consider key findings from the study in relation to dominant conceptualizations of ‘inclusive business models’. In the third subsection of the chapter I reflect on the significance of the study’s findings for debates on agrarian change and land reform policy in post-apartheid South Africa. The significance of the findings of the study is also briefly considered in relation to broader debates about inclusive business models. The fourth part of the chapter touches very briefly on the possible implications of recent land reform policy directives for the Moletele land claim.

9.2 What the study set out to achieve and some limitations

This dissertation focused on partnership initiatives or ‘inclusive business model’ arrangements initiated between land restitution beneficiaries and private sector interests. I explored to what extent the introduction of strategic partnerships since 2005 reflected a dominant underlying policy narrative premised on the superiority of large-scale commercial farming, contradicting policy-related statements to the contrary (Cousins & Scoones, 2010, Aliber & Cousins, 2013). The effects of a hegemonic notion of “viability” – framed in terms of the large-scale commercial farm model - on partnership initiatives in the Moletele claim was also a primary concern in the study. I adopted a political economy perspective to examine both processes and a range of outcomes of commercial partnerships established on Moletele land. Informed by this perspective, I explored the strategies pursued by and the alliances formed between differently positioned actors engaged in contestations and negotiations over access to resources from these partnerships, which I conceptualized as “arenas of struggle”.

More specifically, the study examined the nature of the interests, motivations and expectations of different social actors involved in the dynamics of the multi-actor landscape of the Moletele land claim. I considered why these initiatives have been introduced in the case of the Moletele claim, and more broadly in the South African context, and the outcomes in relation to *whose* interests were being met or side-lined. I was intent on moving my inquiry beyond just recording whether or not the intervention failed or whether or not it improved the life conditions of the claimants. I wanted to respond to James Ferguson's (1994), plea to examine what development schemes actually end up doing, whatever their intentions; I felt prompted to scrutinise "the messy, contradictory, multi-layered and conjunctural effects" (Ferguson, 1994; see also Li, 2005: 383) of these types of development interventions.

Right from the onset, my research was informed by my desire to understand the *causal* nature of events and the *social relations* amongst social actors involved in the Moletele claim. For these reasons, a mixed method, case study-based approach informed by the central tenets of the realist perspective on social research was used. During the intensive phase of my research, aspects of both convergence of interests and the conflicting nature of interests of the different social actors involved were analysed using the notion of "webs of power" (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). The extensive phase of my inquiry involved a livelihood survey conducted amongst 50 Moletele respondents, while the intensive part of my investigation involved in-depth discussions with a range of key informant as well as 80 open-ended, semi-structured interviews conducted with claimant respondents.

In reflecting on some of the limitations of my research, (also discussed at length in chapter 2), I felt that my vantage point as an 'outsider'/researcher presented me with a distinct challenge. My attempts to make sense of the complexity of these arenas of struggle were influenced by my understanding of the two dissident groupings the members of which, during interviews, intentionally set out to create the impression that they were both "powerless" and in opposition to one other. After the MCPA AGM at the end of 2011, (when the dissident groups launched a successful coup against the leadership of the MCPA), I realised that a number of things remained hidden to me, especially regarding the nature of the relations between the two dissident groups. 'Half-truths' and feigned

ignorance were used by the dissidents to distract me as they strategized and planned their take-over of the MCPA. This event highlighted my position as outsider and made me more aware of attempts by respondents who wanted to enrol my support for them during the rest of my fieldwork. But, congruent with the realist perspective, I need to concede that my understanding of events remains somewhat incomplete and fallible. To counter this limitation, I have endeavoured to produce accounts comprising ‘thick descriptions’, attempting to capture these “concrete situations in their contexts of considerable historical and geographical specificity....” (Sayer, 2010:262). In my reflections on this experience, Bernstein’s observation that the production of scientific knowledge about the world is itself a form of struggle, indeed of unremittingly hard work where there are simply no short cuts (Bernstein, 2013:70), seems very apt to me.

I also need to acknowledge that my ambitious attempt to demonstrate how the critical realist approach could be used in practice has added to the difficulty of an already challenging research journey. As in the case of other scholars, the critical realist approach seemed appealing to me because of its promise to analytically combine aspects relating to “structure” and “agency” (Sayer, 1992, 2010). In my analysis, however, I fear that my attempt to apply this complex underlying research philosophy in my research might not have been fully successful. For a rigorous application of the approach, my process of abstraction from the case study would have had to have been made more explicit and I would have made a stronger attempt to distinguish between causal mechanisms/necessary relations and those relations that are contingent.. However, I found the approach particularly appealing in highlighting: (1) my own role/vantage point in the research process, (2) the importance of understanding discursive dynamics in a power differentiated reality, (3) the importance of re-iterative abstraction when you realise that you have missed something, and (4) that the nature of the social relations between my objects of study should never be assumed. I set out to identify taxonomic groupings, and actually ended up identifying two groupings with substantial relations impacting on the outcomes of the process.

9.3 Inclusive business, or business as usual?

In reviewing my key findings, my interrogation of the nature of the business model that was introduced for the Moletele claim has wider significance. Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) introduced a framework to examine the inclusivity of business models based on several assessment criteria that focus on the *ownership, risk, voice* and *reward* dimensions. As already discussed in chapters 6 and 8 of the dissertation, the strategic partnership model clearly favoured the commercial partners when it is came to *rewards*, contrary to the stated policy objectives of benefiting the land reform beneficiaries in equal measure. Decision-making and “*voice*” regarding the partnership activities on Moletele land are dominated by the strategic partners. It is also apparent that these partnership arrangements allow *ownership* to vest with the restitution “community”, but the need to ensure commercial productive activities on the land brings into being a particular configuration of property relations that limits benefits to the “community”.

Peluso and Lund (2011: 669) assert that the issue of ‘control’ should be regarded as a key consideration in understanding the impacts of land-related business deals as it “directs attention to practices that fix or consolidate forms of access, claiming and exclusion” Borrás and Franco (2010:24) posit that the most fundamental issue in understanding the dynamics of property relations is to know the direction of the transfer of *effective control* over land, based wealth and power and influenced by land policies. From my analysis of the Moletele case, it transpired that the community might own the means of production, the packhouses and even the produce from the land, but they are left with little control over what is happening on the land. The narrow focus on commercial farming activities favored by these strategic partnership arrangements tends to rule out access to land for small-scale production activities, whilst neglecting options for non-productive uses of the land, thus underscoring the sense that ownership by “the community” is not translating into access or *effective control* of the land’s resources. I therefore frame the strategic partnership approach as one that ends up promoting “*ownership without access*” (from the perspective of the restitution “community”). Congruent with concerns identified by Borrás and Franco (2010) regarding globally driven large scale land acquisitions, I would argue that the strategic partnership approach used for resolving rural restitution cases in South Africa tends to (1)

discount certain land uses, (2) re-concentrate land control and (3) restrict the ability of certain groupings within rural restitution “communities” to access or benefit from these initiatives.

In considering the *risk* and *reward* aspects, the insertion of restitution communities into commercially-driven and export-oriented value chains needed to be critically examined. Inclusive business models are often promoted as avenues for the insertion of the rural poor into profitable global value chains (UNDP, 2008). Du Toit (2004) and Kaplinsky (2004) however warn that the benefits of such insertions should not simply be assumed. Given du Toit’s (2004) warning against “the adverse incorporation” of the rural poor into value chains, part of my inquiry was directed at understanding the terms and conditions of the insertion of the Moletele “community” into the citrus value chain. As discussed in chapter 7, the literature reviewed clearly highlights the challenging scenario for citrus producers, the specific node in the chain into which restitution communities are inserted. Firstly, producers need to contend with the constant commercial pressures exerted by UK and European supermarkets, who have been able to use their dominant position in these chains to extract favourable prices and quality, often at the expense of fresh fruit producers (Ndou, 2012). Secondly, as recently seen European supermarkets have faced increasing pressure in their home markets due to the economic recession that began in 2008, and have imposed a series of far more stringent requirements on South African citrus imports (eNCA news, 2013:4) that leaves even less room for manoeuvre by producers and reduces opportunities for profit.

The increasingly privately-regulated and supermarket-dominated nature of the South African citrus value chain (with high entry barriers), makes it difficult to imagine the nature of the benefits the “community” will be able to capture from their insertion in the production node. In fact, Derman *et al.*, (2007) contend that the production node is potentially the riskiest part of the value chain. Barrientos and Visser (2012) assert that producers and farm labourers are not only the ones most at risk in Fresh Fruit Value Chains (FFVC) in South Africa, but they are also active in the segment of the value chain where the smallest profit margins are available for capture, as very little value addition happens at

this part of the value chain. Engaging in strategic partnerships thus exposes restitution beneficiaries to the highest *risk* potential in the value chain (Spierenburg et al., 2012) with added constraints that end up limiting their ability to capture value (*reward*). Findings from my study, as illustrated by the case of the New Dawn partnership, suggests that the innovative manoeuvring that has resulted in the insertion of community interests beyond the production node (i.e. in ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ activities) could provide claimants far more scope for value capture, (as discussed in chapter 7).

For the initiatives on Moletele land, an assessment of the cumulative outcomes in relation to these factors (*ownership, risk, voice and rewards*) raises questions about the inclusivity of the strategic partnership model. Vermeulen and Cotula (2010:14) assert that “business models are considered to be inclusive if they involve close working partnerships with local land holders and operators and if *they share value among the partners*” (emphasis added). The lack of substantial “value sharing” between Moletele partners, the questionable performance of the Moletele partnerships in terms of the *risk* and *voice* considerations and the transfer of *ownership* to restitution communities without access or effective land control, leads me to support Elize Wach’s (2012) contention that “elasticity in interpretation [of inclusivity]... can be deployed as a smokescreen to continue to do ‘business as usual’” (Wach, 2012:3). I am thus in agreement with Wach’s (2012) call for more research on this issue and more realistic interrogations of “inclusiveness”.

For the South African land restitution programme, where ‘inclusion’ versus ‘exclusion’ remains fiercely contentious and a key determinant of struggles in the post- apartheid land reform arena, the need for a realistic assessment of the inclusiveness of partnership initiatives is vital. I suggest that the approach for assessing the partnerships that should be introduced in the context of South African land restitution should go beyond the criteria presented by Cotula and Vermeulen (2010). Partnerships should be informed by a more context-specific and grounded understanding of what we can realistically achieve through land reform policy, and should be based on insights into the diverse livelihood strategies of rural people in South Africa and thus not focus only on agriculture but on other livelihood options as well (Walker, 2012, Du Toit, 2013).

9.4 Key findings contextualized in the context of debates on post-apartheid agrarian change and land reform.

Since the transition to democracy in 1994, the post-apartheid South African state has committed itself to transforming the inherited, highly racialized and unequal pattern of ownership of productive land and even more so, to the reconfiguration of an agrarian structure dominated by large commercial farms (O’Laughlin et al., 2013: 2). These stated intentions reflect an important set of challenges for land reform and agrarian change in the South African landscape. In this section I relate the key findings of my research to this set of agrarian change and land reform imperatives.

9.4.1 Restitution “communities” reconsidered

James (2007) highlights the contested nature of the concept “community” while Fay (2009) and Kepe (1999, 2008) warn against assumptions of “cohesive, “unitary ‘communities’”. I have discussed these contentions at some length in chapters 4, 5 and 8 of the thesis, and here just briefly note a few key findings from the Moletele case.

Exploring narratives of dispossession and the range of expectations articulated by Moletele members provided valuable insights into the highly differentiated nature of the Moletele “community”. The narratives of dispossession revealed some specific time, space and “group cohesion” related concerns. With regards to the spatial considerations, I found that the respondents who were relocated from a specific area (Blyde River) were more likely to articulate their expectations of restitution in terms of access to farming land. For the most part, however, the expectations of respondents were mostly influenced by age and gender differentials.

I also found a pattern in terms of what I label “class-differentiated” expectations. Those who were clearly “better off” before the dispossession tended to voice their longing for “the good old days” or “days of abundance”. Other, currently more affluent claimants (who have been able to find new, non-agrarian related accumulation paths or opportunities for themselves) seemed ambivalent about returning to the land and framed their expectations

mainly in terms of monetary benefits. However as discussed in Chapter 8, there are also those among the more affluent Moletele who have managed to procure different forms of benefits through their connections with the MCPA and the traditional leader. I would anticipate that the unreserved commitment by the reconstituted MCPA and the traditional leader to support and divert resource towards the “more affluent”, “connected” and those who are regarded as commercially viable cattle farmers amongst the Moletele, could well see further class-based differentiation amongst the Moletele. In a few years time this sub-grouping of the Moletele might well have distinctly different sets of interests and expectations regarding access to land and resources, as the settling of the claim continues.

Analysis of data from the livelihood survey, as discussed in chapter 5, also revealed highly diversified income sources amongst community members, a high incidence of unemployment, high dependence on social grants, and the fact that some people still farm in the Bushbuckridge area. Survey data also revealed that the majority of the Moletele people tend to use farming only to supplement other, often very meagre, income and food sources. However, I also encountered a small group of individuals (n=7) who farmed enough to sell their produce. The livelihood survey thus confirmed that in land reform projects in South Africa “people farm in different contexts and for different reasons” (Aliber & Cousins, 2013:142). More importantly, during the open ended and semi-structured interviews I conducted (n=80), I found respondents who articulated their interest in engaging in small-scale agricultural production activities (n=12). As concluded in chapter 8, the strategic partnership approach, in tandem with the dominance of the large-scale commercial farm model, is leading to the neglect and marginalization of exactly these sub-groupings amongst the Moletele *i.e.* those whose aspirations might align with small-scale farm production activities.

This finding from my study thus validates concerns already raised by Hall (2009); Cousins and Scoones (2010) and Cousins (2011) regarding a continued neglect of options for different types of small-scale producers in land reform policy to date. The striking neglect of options for subgroupings amongst the Moletele whose interests are ‘contradictory’ to notions of maintaining viability as framed in terms of the large-scale commercial farm model, is therefore quite evident. According to Hebinck (2013: 19) this neglect of options

for alternative land uses exposes the limitations of policy makers' assumptions about contemporary rural realities and the received wisdom of the state regarding the superiority of the large-scale commercial farm model. The firm commitment to retain commercial production on restored land by means of strategic partnership initiatives, and limited options for small-scale production activities, could thus entrench dualism in the productive landscape of the Moletete, but also in South African agrarian structure more widely, contrary to stated policy intentions.

9.4.2 Implications of the large-scale commercial farm narrative

Authors such as Hall, (2004b and 2009); Aliber *et al.*(2009), Lahiff, (2011), Van Leynseele (2013) and Helliker (2013: 1) observe that the post-apartheid state, just like its predecessor, remains trapped discursively within a narrow, “productivist” conception of agricultural production and food security. For Greenberg (2010: 12) it seems as if the productivist approach is being promoted by both business and government, who jointly strategise to ensure that the primary yardstick of ‘globally competitive and profitable agriculture’ is not tampered with.

The findings from my research suggest that the hegemony of the concept of “viability” framed in terms of a large-scale commercial farm - and neoliberal rhetoric more generally - is in fact exemplified in how these strategic partnership arrangements are articulated and imposed in the context of land restitution. The hegemony of this concept is also evident in the practices of a range of non-governmental social actors involved in negotiating partnerships on behalf of restitution “communities”, as in the case of MABEDI (now the Vumelana Advisory Fund) in the Moletete case.

In considering the wider implications of the dominance of the large-scale commercial farm narrative in inclusive business model arrangements on Moletete land, the role of the commercial partners (agribusinesses) requires some reflections. From a neo-liberal perspective, the growing role of agribusiness in global agro-food regimes is viewed as an outcome of market-efficient processes based on the logic of comparative advantage, that will lead to socially optimal prices for producers and consumers (Weis, 2007: 119).

Supporters of this perspective amongst the Moletele and advisors from the Vumelana Advisory Fund therefore tend to cast agribusinesses in the role of protagonists who can take on the risks and make the necessary investments that will ensure “success” (particularly in relation to the CPP arrangements on Moletele land). The CPP arrangements by design, necessitate investments from larger and better-resourced commercial partners. However, in this scenario, Tania Li’s (2009:59) reference to the spatial and temporal unevenness of capital investment seems relevant. She refers to the intensification of processes allowing capital to incorporate some places and peoples, and eject or reject others. According to Li (2009:59):

“James Ferguson (2005) captures part of this dynamic with his image of transnational investment capital “hopping” over Africa’s useless people and places to land in the few spots where superior profits can readily be made.”

Li (2009:60) warns, however, as capital “hops” along, there is another dynamic that is potentially more lethal: one in which places (or their resources) are in fact useful, but the people are not, so that dispossession is detached from any prospect of labour absorption. As already discussed in chapter 8, findings from the Moletele study suggest that the introduction of these types of partnership arrangements could induce a similar trend where agribusiness are allowed to “hop in”, concentrate and consolidate their production activities, reap benefits and then be allowed to move on again. This could lead to what Li (2005) terms “*detached accumulation*”, where “the land is needed, but the people are not needed for the global capitalist system” (LI, 2011:281). I suggest therefore that these types of partnership initiatives could promote a form of “*detached accumulation*” where agribusinesses are allowed full access to the means of production, with no intent to absorb “surplus labour” (Li, 2009:60) or re-invest, translating into very limited ‘access’ or benefits for the relevant restitution “community”. With an annual turnover estimated at R 150 000 000,00 (DRDLR Annual Report, 2013:52) commercial farms on the Moletele land can probably deliver the type of “superior profit” that local agribusiness investors are looking for.

The implications of agribusiness expansion have also been noted by other scholars. Hall (2004: 215) warns that while land reform could be providing crucial resources to some, land reform could also be proceeding alongside the deepening of capitalist relations of production in the countryside. In the context of the broader financialization and corporatization that is taking place in the agricultural sector, Anseeuw and Ducastel (2003: 49) warn that current trends could result in the dominance and penetration of large agribusinesses to such an extent that it might signal the “end of the traditional family commercial farmers” (Anseeuw and Ducastel, 2013:48). The authors argue that dual processes of financialization and corporatization are leading to a new regime which is characterized by the domination of a few large food business groups (Huggins, 2011) and could lead to the marginalization of the majority of South African farmers, thus further strengthening dualism in the agricultural sector (Anseeuw and Ducastel, 2013:50). In this regard du Toit (2013:11) warns that a focus on land and agrarian reform that looks only at landownership and at primary production is misdirected, and will ignore the ways in which agribusiness and large corporations are transforming the agro-food sector in their own interests. The continued introduction of partnership arrangements where increasingly better resourced agricultural investors are required (and in fact welcomed) could thus inadvertently enhance the impacts of processes of corporatization and financialization, and contribute to entrenching dualism in the agrarian structure. Du Toit (2013: 11) argues that a progressive agrarian policy will need to focus on the contestation of power relations in the food system as a whole, and calls for a focus on developing approaches aimed at reigning in corporate power, or at the very least ensuring that value chain governance is more pro-poor.

9.4.3 Shifts and struggles regarding land governance authorities

Greenberg (2011: 201) asserts that post-1994 land reform policy has had a contradictory impact on traditional leaders. On the one hand, it has opened space for traditional leaders to reclaim their authority over the land through leading restitution claims on behalf of community members over whom they have jurisdiction in terms of customary law. On the other hand, land reform has created new institutional forms that have enabled other social

forces to challenge the authority of traditional leaders over land, in the form of CPAs and Trusts. Greenberg (2011: 201) concludes that in this respect the post-1994 state has been inconsistent and at odds with itself, and divergent interests within the state have resulted in contradictory impulses to retain pre-existing forms of authority while also introducing new democratic forms of governance.

As indicated in the 2011 Green paper for Land Reform, the previous ambivalence of the DRDLR towards the rule and legitimacy of traditional leaders has recently been replaced by a firm commitment to traditional leaders (DRDLR, 2013). The roles and authority of traditional leaders are now considered “clarified and legitimized in accordance with the constitutional stipulations” (DRDLR, 2013: 4).

Thus it is no surprise that, the Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (2013:8) proudly asserts that newly transferred (phase 6) land in the Moletele claim is now being managed by means of the “Communal Tenure Wagon Wheel” model, which suggests a new form of partnership, this time between the municipality and the traditional leader. Phase 6 land (Eden farm, 2730ha) is now being administered by the traditional leader, who has “the responsibility to ensure compliance with the by-laws of this partnership, while the municipality provides sector plans, integrated development and spatial plans” (DRDLR, 2013: 18). This new partnership arrangement is completely silent on the involvement of the re-constituted MCPA, and could be an important precursor of things to come for other CPAs elsewhere in the country in the long run.

In the Moletele case, I concluded that mechanisms and processes of *access control* and *access maintenance* were intrinsically informed by the nature of the power relations between the traditional leader or the MCPA and “more affluent” subgroupings amongst the Moletele. Access to resources within the strategic partnership arrangements should be understood as a contested terrain with differentiated power alliances (or webs of power) influencing the processes and outcomes in these arrangements (see Figure 8.1). Since 2013, however, the traditional leader’s interests have ascended to the level of an ‘overriding interest’. The traditional leader now increasingly dominates decision-making regarding benefits and their distribution. The stated intention of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform’s Green Paper (2011) thus clearly bolstered the position of

the Moletele traditional leader significantly, and recent statements by government policy makers regarding the Restitution Amendment Act will seemingly bolster the status and power of traditional leaders even further.

Recent statements by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Gugile Nkwinti, regarding the Restitution Amendment Act seems to be opening the door to traditional leaders to claim ownership of restitution land on behalf of 'tribes' defined in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 (Mogale & Thipe, 2014). The Minister has said that Communal Property Associations (CPAs) should no longer be allowed to own land acquired through restitution or redistribution within 'communal areas' because in his view 'a communal area within a communal area' is "wrong"²⁶. The new Communal Land Tenure Policy states that the "registration of new CPAs on traditional communal tenure areas should be *carefully considered and principally discouraged*" (DRDLR, 2013: 14). By implication, therefore, if CPAs can no longer own restitution land in communal areas, the door is open for traditional leaders to claim ownership of restitution land on behalf of 'tribes' (Mogale & Thipe, 2014).

The Communal Land Tenure Policy and stipulations in the Restitution Amendment Act are thus increasingly seen as central elements of "a shift in government policy to do away with elected land holding associations and instead transfer restitution land to traditional leaders" (Centre for Law and Society, parliamentary submission, 2013: 3). The role of traditional leaders in the restitution process remains fiercely controversial but it is apparent that state support has shifted away from CPAs as legitimate land holding institutions for the settlement of restitution claims. This shift in support from the state also raises questions regarding the future prospects for CPAs that are already in place, highlighting the predicament of the MCPA in the Moletele claim. Now that my research is concluded, the following two related questions will continue to linger. Will the MCPA just become an extension of the rule of the Moletele traditional leader or will it completely dissolve? What will be the long term implications of both scenarios for the Moletele people? This brings to mind the need to consider some of the future prospects regarding land restitution for the Moletele land claimants.

²⁶ The Minister made this statement at the Land Divided Conference held at UCT, March 2013

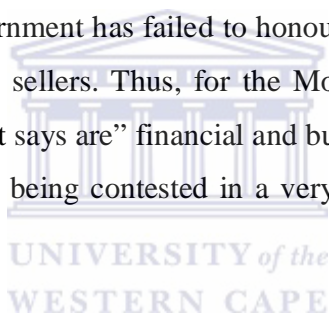
9.5 The implications of recent land reform policies for Moletele land claimants

During May 2014 the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) gave the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Bill its final approval and in July 2014 the Restitution of Land Right Amendment Act was signed into law. People who lost their land as a result of post-Union segregationist policies and apartheid, but missed the December 1998 deadline for the lodgement of their claims, will thus have another five years to lodge claims. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Legacy of the 1913 Land Act anticipates 379,000 new claims could follow from the re-opening of the land claims process. This estimate represents nearly six times the 63 455 claims lodged at the end of 1998 and is estimated to cost between R129 billion and R179 billion over the next 15 years (Mogale & Thipe, 2014). Unsurprisingly, the capacity of the post-apartheid state apparatus to meet this enormous challenge is the first concern that comes to mind. The PLAAS parliamentary submission in response the Land Rights Amendment Bill (PLAAS, November 2013) used the most recent restitution statics to map out the sluggish pace of the restitution programme to date, emphasizing that the restitution process still has a very long way to go, and might require two more decades just to complete the claims currently in the system.

According to Chief Land Claim Commissioner on Restitution there are 9,149 outstanding claims, some of which have not begun to be processed (CRLR, 2014:6). According to the Commission's estimates these are mostly rural claims, which typically involve large communities claiming large areas of land, often high-value farmland. There are also 7,226 claims that are not yet gazetted and a further 1,507 gazetted claims that are not yet settled (CRLR, 2014:6). The *Commission on Restitution of Land Rights' Annual Report* (2014:6) also mentions 20,582 claims that are 'settled' but not finalized. Among the settled but not finalized claims are 8,008 claims that are partially settled and 12,594 settled claims that are not yet implemented. The pervasive capacity concerns regarding the new claims are seemingly accepted by government because they admit that the lack of progress to date with the claims currently in the system is due to "budget backlogs, institutional capacity limitations, and the unwillingness of owners to sell at prices offered by the Commission" (PLAAS, 2013). An added cause for concern, according to Mogala and Thipe (2014), is the fact that R12-billion is needed to settle the estimated 30 000 remaining claims from the first

lodgement period, but only R8.7-billion has been allocated for land restitution over the next three years.

For the Moletele land claim, the promulgation of the Restitution of the Land Rights Amendment Act could deliver mixed results. The Moletele claim is one of the 8,008 claims that should be regarded as partially settled. The claim was lodged for 70 000 ha of land in the Hoedspruit area, but to date only 7000 ha (10%) have been transferred back to the community (MCPA AGM Report 2012:4). Resolving the remainder of the claim has been particularly challenging, as already discussed in chapter 8. Additionally, frustration with the slow progress of the claim has motivated a number of the willing sellers to join the group of white commercial farmers currently engaged in a court battle to resist the claim. Most of these willing sellers are now directing resources towards “fighting the claim” simply because the South African government has failed to honour their offer to purchase land, an offer already accepted by these sellers. Thus, for the Moletele, 90% of the claim is still pending due to what government says are “financial and budgetary constraints”, and 40 000 ha of the land being claimed is being contested in a very expensive and protracted court battle.



The influx of a large number of new claims to be administered by the Limpopo Regional Land Claims Commission could thus shift attention and resources away from resolving the remainder of the rather complex and costly Moletele Claim, towards other claims. Additionally, the Centre for Law and Society (2013:3) expressed their fear that the Restitution Amendment Bill could result in situations where land will not be restored unless the government provides financial support to restitution beneficiaries, but if restoration is deemed to be too costly, it may not happen anyway. Questions regarding the availability of additional funding to the Moletele have already surfaced, an official from the CRLR hinting that, according to their estimations, the Moletele might have already received “just and fair compensation”²⁷. Unless there is a clear policy directive that will ensure sufficient funds for the settlement of existing claims, the Moletele might therefore be facing a very difficult battle to see the completion of their claim, especially once new claims begin to flood in.

²⁷ Information provided in 2012 during an interview with Mr Mashile, the chair-person of the MCPA.

Furthermore, the Centre for Law and Society (2013:3) predicted that once the Bill is passed, restitution claimants will no longer be able to apply for financial support directly through the restitution process. Instead, they will have to apply via the Recapitalisation and Development Fund. Unsurprisingly, the release of these funds is subject to the suitability of a business plan and the availability of a “strategic partner”. Throughout this dissertation, I have raised concerns with a restitution approach based on commitments to business plans and strategic partners. As argued in the PLAAS parliamentary submission on the Restitution Amendment Bill (2013), the list of concerns with this type of approach includes questions regarding transparency and accountability, private sector enrichment through public sector money and unfair profit sharing and/or allocation of shares for restitution claimants. On the other hand, the introduction of the Recapitalisation and Development Fund for the Moletele might present them with an opportunity to apply for the funding (grants) that have failed materialise to date.

To conclude, I have the distinct impression that the introduction of the Recapitalisation and Development Fund as the primary vehicle for post-settlement support in the restitution programme could result in trajectories very similar to the ones I have discussed in this dissertation. If the new initiatives are predicated on the need for funds from government with the sole purpose of introducing restitution communities into commercial value chains as producers, it would once again affirm a narrative of “ownership without access”. I also postulate, that these initiatives could result in a scenario where: we still drive the same car, towards the same destination, but with different drivers -traditional leaders and agribusiness²⁸. Also, Bitzer and Bijman (2014) equate strategic partnerships between emerging farmers and agribusiness to a scenario of “putting old oranges in new boxes”.

Also, the particularly problematic nature of restitution “communities” and the way in which they are being ‘constructed’ and made real through current government practices (logic of the restitution process) in order to resolve claims, demands more careful deliberation. My interrogation of the problematic nature of a constructed “Moletele community” leads me to

²⁸ Van der Brink *et al*, (2006) uses this analogy to predict the outcome of previous land reform policy initiatives.

the following assertion. If we want to implement an effective land reform programme, we would need to deliberate more carefully, not just about our preferred choice of business model and the farming narrative we want to promote, but also about how we will constitute claimant communities (Walker *et al*, 2010). I too am therefore left with the question whether an alternative approach to the constitution of the “Moletele restitution community” could have delivered perhaps more positive outcomes. This would perhaps be an avenue for further research.

9.6 Conclusion

This dissertation argues that inclusive business models within land restitution are designed to ensure the transfer of land ownership back to African communities whilst existing production regimes on the land acquired are retained. Given the magnitude of rural restitution claims, reflected in the large number of beneficiaries and the size of the landholdings involved, I suggest that this policy could end up being fairly successful in ‘blackening’ land ownership in South Africa, without fundamentally altering the lives of the claimants. The combination of ownership without ‘access’ or benefit (Ribot and Peluso, 2003) and structural and regulatory shifts in the value chains into which these communities are being inserted, could culminate in the “reproduction of some version of the existing agrarian structure” (Cliffe, 2007: 2). The dissertation has also argued that the way that partnership initiatives are designed in the context of South African land reform, results in: (1) contradictory articulations of the terms and conditions of access to and ownership of the means of production (influenced by the wide range of interests, motives and expectations involved); (2) uneasy alliances, compromises and contestations amongst different interest groups formed in the context of the partnerships thus representing, “arenas of struggle”; and (3) a ‘detached’ version of capital accumulation, with agricultural corporate interests able to “hop in” and capture most of the benefits of the partnership arrangements with the small inconvenience of having to deal with a land-holding community.

The strategic partnership approach also limits consideration of alternative land uses, such as small-scale agricultural production for consumption or for the market. The transformation of dualism in the post-apartheid agricultural structure in terms of these models is therefore

highly questionable. I conclude in agreement with Cousins (2012; 2013), that also *this* land reform policy has neglected potential avenues for “accumulation from below” that could realistically transform the dualism inherent in South Africa’s agrarian structure. Without consideration of alternative uses of the land, the partnership model approach could therefore exacerbate the current trajectory towards a deracialised version of dualism in South Africa’s agricultural structure (Hall, 2004; Cliffe, 2007, Cousins and Scoones, 2010). The key provisions of the Restitution Amendment Act of 2014 seem set to deliver outcomes aligned with the current trajectory of already existing strategic partnerships, with the difference of also reinforcing the legitimacy of non-democratic land holding institutions. In conclusion, for the Moletete, partnership initiatives have delivered mostly ambiguous outcomes in spite of the great expectations they were supposed to realize.



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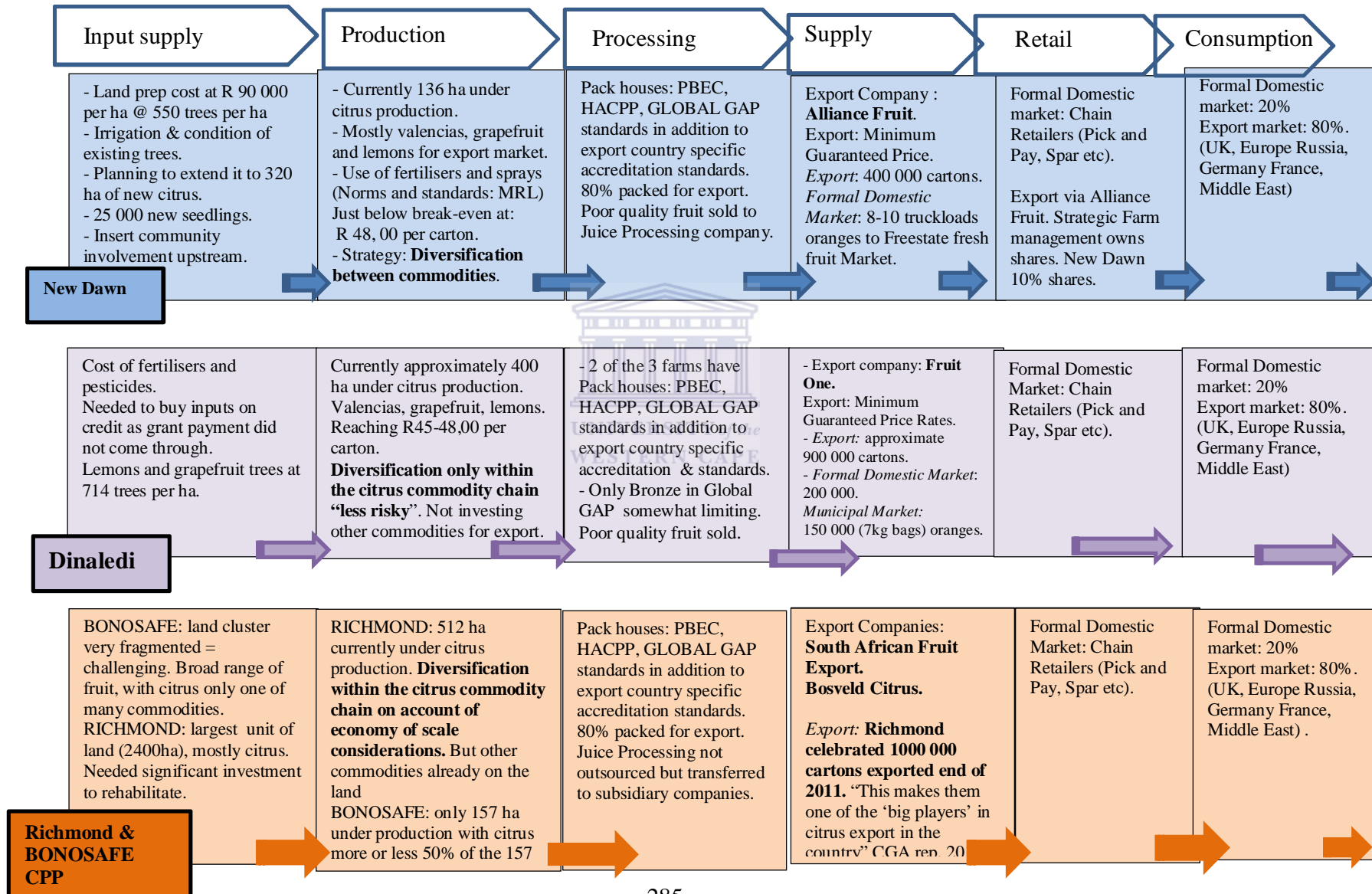
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APPENDIX A: ASPECTS OF PRODUCTION AND EXPORT ON MOLETELE LAND



APPENDIX B: LIVELIHOOD SURVEY

LIVELIHOOD QUESTIONNAIRE MOLETELE

Questionnaire number					Research Assistant		
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Name of respondent	
Area	
Section	
Name and surname by which homestead is known	
Cell phone number of respondent	



Particulars of visit to the homestead

Particulars of visits	Date	Time started	Time ended
First visit			
Second visit			
Third visit			

Hello, my name is Nerhene Davis. I am a student from the University of the Western Cape and I am conducting a study of the Moletele land claim. Your homestead has been selected for participation in this survey. We ask permission to interview the head of this homestead. The selected respondent's participation is voluntary i.e. he or she has the right to refuse. The information obtained from all participating farmers will be compiled in a report and the findings will be presented to people in the surveyed areas. No names will be referred to in the report, if you ask me not to. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you have any questions before we start? **IF NO, CONTINUE WITH THE INTERVIEW.**

Codes Table 1: Homestead members

	How is this person related to you? [Col 4] [DO NOT READ OUT]		What is the marital status of this person? [Col 5] [DO NOT READ OUT]		How often is this person present at this homestead? [Col 6] [DO NOT READ OUT]
1	Self	11	Never been married	1	Present most or all nights
2	Husband or wife or partner	12	With labolla-husband/wife still alive	2	Present during working days but away most weekends
3	My child	13	Without labolla/wife still alive	3	Present during weekends but away during working days
4	Adopted/foster child	14	Other form of marriage/ partnership (describe)-husband/wife/partner still alive	4	Present about once a month
5	Child-in-law	15	Divorced	5	Present for one or two periods in the year
6	Grandchild	16	Separated/deserted/abandoned by husband/wife/partner	6	Present during school holidays
7	Parent	17	(with labola) husband/wife deceased	7	Other (describe)
8	Parent-in-law	18	(without labola husband/wife deceased)		
9	Grandparent	19	Other form of marriage/partnership-husband/wife/partner deceased		
10	Sibling				
11	Co-wife				
12	Co-wife's child				
13	Partner's sibling				
14	Own niece/nephew				
15	Partner's niece/nephew				
16	Other relative (eg uncle, cousin)				
17	Other relative of respondent's partner				
18	Domestic worker				
19	Tenant				
20	Other (describe)				

TABLE 1: HOMESTEAD (UMUZI) MEMBERS

Please tell me about all the people who are members of the homestead, even if they are not here at the moment. Do not include people who have established other homesteads and have not come home in the last few years. [USE CODES TABLE 1: Homestead members]

Household head:

	Col 1	Col 2		Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7
	1.Full name	2.Sex		3.Year of birth and age of this person	4.How is this person related to you? [USE CODES]	5.What is the marital status of this person? [USE CODES]	6.How often is this person present at this homestead? [USE CODES]	Total % present most or all nights
		Male	Female					
1		1	2	/				
2		1	2	/				
3		1	2	/				
4		1	2	/				
5		1	2	/				
6		1	2	/				
7		1	2	/				
8		1	2	/				
9		1	2	/				
10		1	2	/				
11		1	2	/				
12		1	2	/				
13		1	2	/				
14		1	2	/				
15		1	2	/				
16		1	2	/				
17		1	2	/				
18		1	2	/				
19		1	2	/				
20		1	2	/				

Codes Table 2: Income sources of homestead members

N.B. Description of income source: add details on nature of income source such as type of job, economic sector, where it is located, etc

1	Employee in permanent job
2	Employee in temporary, contract job
3	Do casual employee work
4	Farming activities on homestead's land
5	Self-employed in non-agricultural own/family income-earning activity without employees
6	Self-employed in non-agricultural own/family income-earning activity with employees
7	Work on income-generating project
8	Not employed and looking for work
9	Not employed and not looking for work
10	Old age grant from government
11	Pension from private employer
12	Disability grant
13	Child support grant
14	Remittances in cash
15	Remittances in kind (eg food, clothes etc)
16	Other – specify



TABLE 2: SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

[USE CODES TABLE 2: Income sources of homestead members]

	Col 1	Income source 1			Income source 2			Income source 3		
	Full name	Code	Description	Cash per month	Code	Description	Cash per month	Code	Description	Cash per month
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										

TABLE 2: SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS - continued

[USE CODES TABLE 2: Income sources of homestead members]

	Col 1	Income source 4			Income source 5			Income source 6		
	Full name	Code	Description	Cash/ month	Code	Description	Cash/ month	Code	Description	Cash /month
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										

RANKING OF SOURCES OF INCOME OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

Please rank the four most important income sources of the homestead, in order of importance, and explain why each is so important.

Rank order	Name of homestead member	Income source	Cash earned / month	Reason for importance
1				
2				
3				
4				



TABLE 3: DURABLE GOODS AND PRODUCTIVE ASSETS OF HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

DOMESTIC	Does the homestead have?		Number owned	TOTAL
	Yes (1)	No (2)		DOMESTIC
1 Electric stove	1	2		
2 Microwave	1	2		
3 Sewing or knitting machine	1	2		
4 Washing machine	1	2		
5 Lounge suite	1	2		
6 Gas stove	1	2		
7 Paraffin stove	1	2		
8 Fridge/freezer	1	2		
ELECTRONIC /COMMUNICATION				COMMUNICATION
9 Radio	1	2		
10 CD player	1	2		
11 Television /DVD player	1	2		
12 Computer	1	2		
TRANSPORT				TRANSPORT
13 Motor cycle	1	2		
14 Bicycle	1	2		
15 Motor vehicle in running order	1	2		
AGRICULTURE				AGRICULTURE
16 Tractor	1	2		
17 Plough	1	2		
18 Wheelbarrow	1	2		
19 Knapsack sprayer	1	2		
20 Donkey cart/ox cart	1	2		
21 Garden spade	1	2		
22 Garden fork	1	2		

23 Hoe	1	2		
24 Other (specify)	1	2		



LAND USED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

What types of land does this homestead have? **(Include land that is not adjacent to the homestead)**

	Col 1	Col 2		Col 3		Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7
	1.Type of land	2. Does the homestead have this type of land?		3. Has the land been used by the homestead in the last 12 months?		4. In what year was this land first acquired by the homestead?	5. How was the land first acquired?	6. No. of plots owned?	7. No. of plots borrowed
		Yes	No	Yes	No				
1	Residential								
2	Garden plot/s within homestead	1	2	1	2				
3	Fields	1	2	1	2				
4	Irrigation scheme plot	1	2	1	2				
5	Project garden plot	1	2	1	2				
6	Additional land reform land	1	2	1	2				
7	Other (specify)	1	2	1	2				

If land is owned but not used, please explain why:

.....

CROPS GROWN BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

What types of crops were grown on the land used by this homestead last year? (Include land that is not adjacent to the homestead)

	Type of land	Crop type1	Amount harvested	Crop type2	Amount harvested	Crop type3	Amount harvested	Crop type4	Amount harvested
1	Residential								
2	Garden plot/s within homestead								
3	Fields								
4	Irrigation scheme plots								
5	Project garden plots								
6	Additional land reform land								
7	Other (specify)								

CROPS GROWN BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR - continued

	Type of land	Crop type5	Amount harvested	Crop type6	Amount harvested	Crop type7	Amount harvested	Crop type8	Amount harvested
1	Residential								
2	Garden plot/s within homestead								
3	Fields								
4	Irrigation scheme plots								
5	Project garden plots								
6	Additional land reform land								
7	Other (specify)								



CROPS SOLD BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

	Crop type	Amount sold	Measure	Cash received	Purchaser
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					



LIVESTOCK OWNED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD

What livestock are owned by members of this homestead? **(Include animals kept elsewhere and looked after by others)**

	Col 1 Type of livestock	Col 2 Number owned now	Col 3 Purchases in last year	Col 4 Sales in last year	Col 5 Births in last year	Col 6 Deaths in last year	Col 7 Slaughter in last year
1	Cattle						
2	Goats						
3	Sheep						
4	Donkeys						
5	Pigs						
6	Chickens						
7	Other (specify)						



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LIVESTOCK SOLD BY MEMBERS OF THE HOMESTEAD LAST YEAR

	Livestock type	Number sold	Cash received	Purchaser
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				



APPENDIX C: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUPS AND MEETINGS

Individual Interviews					
Name	Description	Date	Location	Translator	Recorded
Mr Mike Scott	Strategic Partner Dew Dawn	October 2009 January 2010 June 2010 August 2010 November 2012	Morea Farm Hoedspruit	N	Y
Mr Martin Mentis	Dinaledi Strategic partner Farm Manager	August 2011 November 2012	Glencoe	N	Y
Mr Kobus De Bruin	Richmond Farm Manager	August 2011 November 2012	Richmond farm	N	N
Mr Lawrence Nkosi	New Dawn HR representative	October 2009	Morea Farm	N	Y
Ms Julia Mashile	New Dawn Pack house worker	October 2009	Morea Farm	N	N
Mr L. Chiloane	New Dawn Nursery Manager	August 2010	Morea Farm	N	N
MCPA					
Mr Thandios Mashile	Chairperson of the MCPA	January 2010 June 2010 August 2010 November 2011 November 2012	Hoedspruit Clinic and at his home in Buffelshoek.	N	Y
Mr Norman Chiloane	MCPA member and representative of the Moletele Community Capacity Building Facility	July 2010	Buffelshoek	N	N
Mr George Fraser	MCPA Property Portfolio Manager MCPA	October 2009 January 2010 June 2010 August 2010 November 2012	Scotia Farm	N	Y
Mrs Julia Fraser	MCPA Property Portfolio Manager	October 2009	Scotia Farm	N	N

	MCPA	January 2010 June 2010 August 2010 November 2012			
Prince Jan Chiloane	MCPA member and Ex-official member representing the interest of the Traditional authority in the MCPA	October 2009 January 2010 June 2010 August 2010 November 2012	Scotia Farm	N	N
Mr Hezekiel Nkosi	New Chairperson MCPA	November 2013	Telephonic Interview	N	N
Other Supporting/Resisting Actors					
Mr Emile De Kock	Representative of MABEDI	October 2011	Graskop	N	N
Mr Braam Van der Merwe	Chairperson White Commercial farm Group	October 2011	Hoedspruit	N	N
Mr Fanie Meyer	Hoedspruit Citrus Grower representative	October 2011 November 2012	Hoedspruit	N	N
Mr David Ndiafhi Kwinda	Nkuzi Development Association	October 2009	Elim	N	N
Moletele Traditional Authority					
Mr Johannes Ntelele	Moletele Traditional Council member	July 2010	Buffelshoek Moletele Trad Council Office	N	N
Prince Jan Chiloane	Moletele Traditional Council representative	August 2010	Buffelshoek Moletele Trad Council Office	N	Y
Suzan Chiloane	Sister of Kgoshi Chiloane	July 2010	Buffelshoek	N	Y
Dissident groups					
Mr Enos Chiloane	Dissident Group 1 Leader	June 2010 August 2010	Buffelshoek	Y	Y

		November 2012			
Mr Marius Chiloane	Dissident Group 2 Leader	June 2010 August 2010 November 2012	Acornhoek	Y	Y
Government Officials					
Mr Erasmus	Representative from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture	September 2009	Polokwane	N	Y
Mr L. Liphako	Representative from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture	September 2009	Polokwane	N	Y
Ms Mamotshabi Ntiwane	Project Coordinator: Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner Limpopo	July 2010	Polokwane	N	N
Mr Sempe	Representative from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.	July 2010	Polokwane	N	Y
Focus Group Discussions					
Sehlar Tribal Council Members	Included as part of the tribal council meeting.	July 2010	Acornhoek	Y	N
Kabelo Chiloane Ivy Mashile Lekina Chiloane Anna Chiloane	Women's Farm Group interview	August 2010	Buffelshoek	N	Y
Moletele Tribal Council focus group Interview	Included as part of the tribal council meeting.	July 2011	Buffelshoek	Y	N
Focus group Interviews with Dissident Group 1		June 2010 August 2010 November 2011	Buffelshoek	Y	N
Focus group interviews with Dissident Group 2		June 2010 August 2010 November 2011	Acornhoek	Y	N

AGM 2011 & 2012	Meeting attended	November 2011 November 2012	Scotia Farm	Y	Y	

