

**Investigating socio-spatial trajectories of class formation:
Accumulation from below and above on 'New Qwa Qwa
farms' from the mid-1980s to 2016**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates socio-spatial trajectories of class formation and processes of accumulation from below and above on redistributed farmland, the ‘New Qwaqwa Farms’ in the Eastern Free State province of South Africa, from the mid-1980s to 2016. Class formation trajectories of the studied land beneficiaries are traced across localised historical geographies and political contexts, from apartheid to the current democratic dispensation, that is, from the land beneficiaries’ recent ancestral history as labour tenants on white-owned farmland, and subsequent systematic expulsions from farmland, to their Bantustan labour reserve resuscitations as mainly non-agricultural petty commodity producers, and later targeting for land reform, as one measure of redistribution. The study adopted a mixed-methods survey, combining in-depth qualitative and quantitative data, informed by critical realism and historical materialism within Marxist agrarian political economy. This methodology was retrospective, circumspective and prospective in unravelling agricultural households’ livelihood trajectories over time and space.

The state’s targeting of classes of labour and fragments of the middle class as beneficiaries of land reform in the area of study has materialised into heterogeneous land reform outcomes centred on differentiated farming systems, farming scales, and farm labour requirements. Research findings suggest class differentiation of a sample of 62 cases of family farms into agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (50%), simple reproduction (26%), and accumulation (24%). The first two categories, constituting 76% of the sample, are essentially small-scale capitalist enterprises engaged in constrained and successful reproduction of capital – some of these households can be theorised as an *impoverished landed property* for their reliance on farm-rental income, combined with marginal farming, and precarious off-farm work for social reproduction. These are small-scale capitalist enterprises on the basis of the capital-wage relation. Their farm production rest upon small livestock herd reproduction and generalised renting out of arable and grazing land. A minority of these small-scale capitalist farms use solely family labour and can thus be defined as petty commodity producers on the basis of their embodiment of the capital-wage relation in

one soul or family. The third category constitutes agricultural households on upward trajectories of capital accumulation from below and above, through expanded reproduction of mixed-farming systems, expressed in intensive farming of small but capitalised farms, as well as extensive farming expressed in livestock expansion/accumulation and renting in of additional grazing land, plus capital intensive crop expansion on non-irrigated land and renting in of additional arable land by some of the top 24% of the sample.

These research findings illuminate heterogeneous land reform outcomes centred on improved access to land for widening the base of social reproduction for classes of labour, and attendant simple reproduction of small-scale capitalist farms. This heterogeneity also includes the function of land reform for accumulation of capital for the black middle class who can muster off-farm capital resources into expanded farm reproduction on their own and without accumulation from above, demonstrated by some accumulators in the area of study. Accumulation from above is taking place on some of the studied land reform farms, often through intersections with economic histories of accumulation from below, exposing the contradictions of capitalism and attendant compulsions of accumulators to accumulate capital by any means necessary. The downside of accumulation from above, however, through capture of public agricultural subsidy in the area of study, is that the collective 76% of the sample at the lower ends of social differentiation and those accumulators excluded from extra-economic accumulation, are barred from accessing state subsidy that benefit a few politically-connected farmers. Whether class alliances across those excluded from accessing state subsidy will materialise into overt political action in demanding a share of public goods from the local ruling elite remains to be seen. These research findings contribute to a heterogeneous understanding of land reform which is sensitive to differentiated livelihood outcomes. Prospectively, this suggests much-needed government policy tailored to different classes of farmers in post land reform localities.

Keywords: Heterogeneous land reform, class differentiation, accumulation, social reproduction, simple reproduction, rent, impoverished landed property, South Africa.

DECLARATION

I declare that *Investigating socio-spatial trajectories of class formation: Accumulation from below and above on 'New Qwa Qwa farms' from the mid-1980s to 2016* 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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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my maternal grandmother, Beauty Thandiwe MaMadlala Sosiba, the woman who was the first to give me narrative lectures about the history and social relations of labour tenancy based on her family history of living and working on a labour-tenant farm in Kwazulu-Natal Midlands, South Africa.



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I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Ben Cousins for introducing me to agrarian political economy, particularly the lens through which various forms of petty commodity production are historicised, interpreted and analysed. I could very much, in thought, integrate this knowledge with my recent family history of agricultural petty commodity production, and even further back in history to much more oppressive social relations of labour tenancy on labour-tenant farms that my ancestors endured. I dedicate this work to my mother, grandparents and paternal forebears who struggled as labour tenants on white-owned farms, domestic workers, worker-peasants, and later teachers in public schools, thanks to our recently obtained democracy.

I am also indebted to the faculty, and admin staff at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, particularly, Prof. Moeniba Isaacs, Prof. Ruth Hall and Carla Henry for the hearth and warm embrace, throughout the intellectual journey of this thesis, especially in trying times. I am also indebted to the STEPS Centre of the Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex for the fieldwork grant, and the National Research Foundation for the PhD scholarship, as well as colleagues at the University of Brasilia, Prof. Sérgio Sauer, Dr Regina Fernandes, Guadalupe Satiro, and Prof. Marcelo Rosa for their hospitality during a three-month writing retreat in Brasilia.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- CPA..... Communal Property Association
PCP Petty Commodity Production
SLAG Settlement Land Acquisition Grant
LRAD..... Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
PLAS..... Pro-active Land Acquisition Strategy
MST Movimento Dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, Movement of Rural
Landless Workers



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Class Dynamics in the South African Land Redistribution Programme

Land reform in South Africa aims to redistribute agricultural land to the dispossessed and effect land tenure reform for farm workers/dwellers, as well as restore urban/rural land through restitution (or provide equivalent financial compensation), in response to the massive land dispossession which took place in the country's colonial and segregationist past (Walker 2008). Progress in land reform has proceeded at a snail's pace, however, and countless problems experienced. The ruling party's lack of political will to reduce high levels of poverty is perhaps best demonstrated in land reform. It has failed to craft long-term visions of land reform, particularly in relation to its class dimensions and attendant livelihood trajectories out of poverty on the basis of agricultural production and employment.

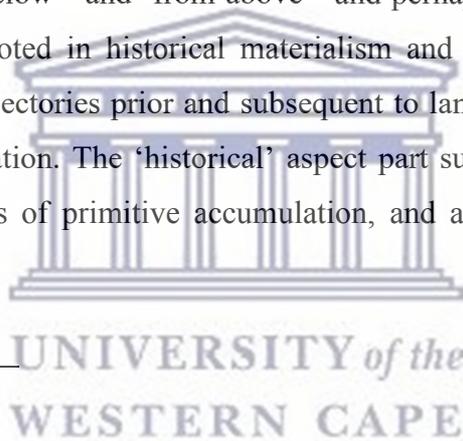
Land reform in South Africa has had a clear rural focus to date, with some urban land restitution claims mainly settled through financial compensation (Walker 2008). More recently the demand for land manifest in land occupations by fragmented grassroots movements, has increasingly taken an urban focus (Hart 2002). This raises new questions about the material conditions of many of those involved, particularly migrant workers circulating between urban and rural areas.

This thesis focuses on one of the key issues in rural land reform: who should benefit? And in particular, which gendered classes from within rural society? And for what purposes? This is linked to issues of the potential contributions of land reform to reducing poverty and inequality; beneficiaries can be not only 'farmers', but also women farm workers and those in similar precarious class positions; and not only the new entrant petty bourgeoisie coming into agriculture with substantive off-farm capital (Mtero et al. 2019) but also fragmented gendered

‘classes of labour’¹ (Bernstein 2004) who can be selected as land beneficiaries and enter agriculture with no existing assets or capital, only their ‘blood and sweat capital’ (Zhang 2015).

The question of who should benefit from land reform has a key class dimension and exploring this aspect requires a class-analytic theoretical framework. The explanatory power of a framework rooted in historical materialism, which exposes the living histories and current material conditions of the historically dispossessed classes, is particularly useful. These classes are the main potential beneficiaries of redistributive land reform in countries which still have unresolved land questions, such as Brazil and South Africa.

This thesis focuses on class formation dynamics amongst land beneficiaries in a specific area, the Eastern Free State province of South Africa. The researcher’s approach to class analysis is drawn from contemporary agrarian political economy and focused strongly on prospects for accumulation, both ‘from below’² and ‘from above’³ and perhaps in combination (Mamdani 1987). This approach is rooted in historical materialism and focuses on unravelling land beneficiaries’ livelihood trajectories prior and subsequent to land reform and exploring their implications for class formation. The ‘historical’ aspect part suggests going further back in history to unravel processes of primitive accumulation, and attendant class differentiation



¹ The term ‘fragmented classes of labour’ denotes the growing numbers of people forced to sell their labour power in precarious, uncertain, and unpredictable forms of employment, and self-employment, sometimes with some but insignificant, access to agricultural land to supplement marginal wages. Fragmented classes of labour can be seasonal farm workers, small-scale farmers, street traders, or job hunters (on the street), differentiated by gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. Their existence embodies precarious forms of survival and poverty across rural-urban divisions (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004). The researcher will use ‘fragmented classes of labour’, and ‘classes of labour’ interchangeably in this thesis, sometimes not in inverted commas, and sometimes not explicitly and duly acknowledging the source as Bernstein.

² ‘Accumulation from below’ denotes the progressive and democratic formation of small- to large-scale capitalist enterprises within generalised commodity production (Mamdani 1987, Bernstein 1988; see Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of accumulation from below, and its democratic ideals).

³ ‘Accumulation from above’ denotes extra-economic means of generating wealth, such as coercion, violence, and political connectedness by existing or aspirant (petty) bourgeois members of society (Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986; see Chapter Two).

tendencies inextricably connected with current land beneficiaries' livelihood trajectories before and after land reform (see Chapter Four).

The researcher chose the Eastern Free State province to explore racialised historical geographies of class formation spanning the apartheid and current democratic dispensation because this is one of those localities where the South African peasantry once prospered, in the form of labour and share tenancy on white owned farms from the 1870s onwards, until their extinction through targeted state policies, including support to white large-scale commercial agriculture from the 1900s onwards. The process also took the form of massive labour-tenant evictions between the 1950s and the 1980s, which can be described as historical trajectories of primitive accumulation (see Chapter Four). This study also focused on this region because many of the current beneficiaries of land reform share, in living memory, this common history: of labour tenancy and sharecropping and subsequent eviction during past undemocratic regimes, to their resuscitation as differentiated, petty non-agricultural-commodity producers and migrant workers in the Bantustans/labour reserves, as well as the current redistributive land reform, owing to their targeted selection as land beneficiaries (see Chapter Four). This is articulated in the title of this thesis: *Investigating socio-spatial trajectories of class formation: accumulation from below and above on 'New Qwaqwa Farms', 1980s to 2016.*

This thesis also aims to contribute to wider global debates on redistributive land reform, namely, (a) farming systems, productivity and employment intensity in the context of land redistribution, linked to different conceptions of 'viability' in agriculture (Cousins and Scoones 2010); (b) appropriate conceptual schema for analysing class dynamics in agriculture, particularly the disaggregation and differentiation of farming, including small-scale capitalist agriculture (Oya 2004).

Accordingly, two key arguments are at the centre of this thesis. Firstly, the researcher argues that what may appear as failed land reform projects in terms of farm production may be, in fact, alternative developmental pathways of differentiated small-scale farming and petty commodity production⁴ on the basis of hired and own labour. This is manifested in the area of

⁴ Petty commodity production (PCP) is a Marxist analytical category denoting small-scale capitalist enterprises where the class places of both capital and labour are embodied in one individual or family although they can also

study's mixed farming systems, centred on small-scale livestock production by capital-constrained and under-resourced land beneficiaries who lack the wherewithal to invest in capital-intensive crop production. This is juxtaposed and contrasted with the much-touted massive grain (or plant crop) production as a panacea for South Africa's failing land beneficiaries, as is implicit in the work of Sender and Johnston (2004). The former systems and their outcomes can be conceptualised as 'land reform for classes of labour and petty agricultural commodity producers'. This argument is backed by evidence of the constant and incessant reproduction of petty commodity production or small-scale capitalist enterprises, within capitalism, without developing in a linear fashion into massive capitalist undertakings (Bernstein 1988). The myth of a linear progression of small- to large-scale capitalist enterprises is unsettled by diverse instances of the former (Lenin 1977, Marx 1976). From this perspective, petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist enterprises are instances of capitalist enterprise, with a variety of concrete determinations. The researcher argues that in land reform for classes of labour and petty agricultural commodity producers (or small-scale capitalist farmers), accumulation from below begins to emerge, alongside localised processes of accumulation 'from above' by a few politically connected petty bourgeois elite in control of the local state's affirmative action redistributive mechanisms (such as state-sponsored tractors for grain/crop production, as well as livestock subsidies; see Chapters Seven to Nine).

Secondly, the researcher argues that a heterogeneous understanding of capitalist agriculture, not as a monolithic system of large-scale production but differentiated by scales of farming and a variety of types of mixed farming systems, can potentially inform progressive agricultural policy in the Global South. The researcher argues that this is a theoretically feasible and progressive class agenda in redistributive land reform and attendant affirmative action policy, and a potential political contribution in terms of both a theory of and as a focus of ongoing class struggles. For example, through historically grounded analyses of class differentiation in latter-day land redistribution, scholars within critical agrarian studies are better able to identify marginalised classes in need of developmental state support, classes whose struggles and

hire non-family labour in addition to family labour. PCP enterprises are essentially part and parcel of the fabric of capitalism, not external to it, and are likely not to disappear over time; instead, they continue to be both reproduced and destroyed by capitalism (Bernstein 1988, Gibbon and Neocosmos 1985).

voices are often obscured and muted by hegemonic agendas in development policy (Byres 2004). Furthermore, historically-informed class analysis equips us with analytical tools to better understand and appreciate trajectories of accumulation from below, rather than always ridiculing the petty bourgeoisie whose life histories often illuminate complex processes of ‘capitalism from below’ (Byres 1986, Lenin 1977). Such an understanding potentially equips us with the political tools with which to engage agricultural development policies developed by the emerging indigenous ruling elite in the Global South (see Chapter Nine). An over-emphasis on large-scale agricultural production as a panacea for food security serves only the needs of agribusiness capital (Akram-Lodhi, Borras and Kay 2009) and legitimises accumulation from above in the name of agricultural developmental policy, and thus belittles and overshadows ‘capitalism from below’ by fragmented classes of labour.

In relation to job creation on redistributed land in South Africa, the central points of this thesis allude to the need for a nuanced understanding of farm labour dynamics within differentiated farming systems, anchored in localised agro-ecological contexts. For example, the core tendency of land reform beneficiaries to engage in systems of simple reproduction anchored in petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist farming in the area of study results in the predominance of livestock-centred, mixed-farming systems, given that the area is located in a grassland biome. On the ground this translates to a central tendency for one herder to be employed per livestock herd (although this can increase with herd size), supplemented by employment of casual workers on crop fields. These are modest job creation opportunities, the importance of which should not be underestimated but also not romanticised, in a sea of poverty and crises of social reproduction.

However, a key finding that the researcher wishes to emphasise is the contribution of many land reform farms to beneficiary families’ *social reproduction*. The latter are often entangled in broader crises of social reproduction in the same way as the herders working on their farms are. This study argues that access to land expands the social reproduction base of land beneficiaries within their diversified livelihoods through modest contributions, such as occasional livestock sales and farm-rental income. These findings suggest that access to land forms a buffer against extreme poverty (see Chapter Seven). The latter is a key determinant of farm-rental dynamics in post land reform contexts.

Dynamics of farm-rental income on redistributed land in the area of study must be understood within global trends of reverse rentals after land reform,⁵ where both large and small forms of agrarian capital rent in farmland from differentiated land beneficiaries in their pursuit of expanded reproduction (Mudimu 2020, Ye 2015, Zhang 2015, Hairong and Yiuyang 2015). Reverse rentals often indicate land concentration is occurring, along with accumulation from above but we must not forget that for fragmented classes of labour with improved access to land through land reform, access to farm-rental income contributes to the ‘social reproduction fund’ (Bernstein 2010). Furthermore, a process of capitalist development ‘from below’ may also see small-scale accumulators needing to rent in land for expanded reproduction. This is not an argument for land concentration but a different kind of lens on the dynamics of farm-rental income on redistributed land. Rental of land should not be seen only through the lens of land concentration (McKay and Colque 2016) but within diverse determinations of phenomena in complex situations, which involves taking the interests of those renting out farmland into account. Perhaps such an understanding could lead to state developmental support targeting the latter, forced, as they are to rent out farmland and resort to marginal farming, owing to their material circumstances as classes of labour. Renting out farmland may thus be a survivalist livelihood strategy.

1.2 Background and Context: Land Reform in Post-apartheid South Africa

Consecutive land redistribution policies in South Africa since democratic transition in 1994 have been under the auspices of the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG, 1994-1999), Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD 2000-2006) and Pro-active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS, 2006-2016). The SLAG was the first land redistribution policy experiment during the Mandela years (1994-1999). It was pro-poor in focus and issued small

⁵ Older versions of state-led land reforms, and in some cases more recent varieties of market-led agrarian reform, share a tendency to *reverse* land reforms, or counter-revolutions of various forms, centred on the resuscitation of capital, which ultimately finds its way back to regain lost land, incarnated as land-grabbing agribusiness capital, engaged in various strategies such as land rentals, purchases, and extra-economic land grabs. This has been found in Latin America (Akram-Lodhi, Borras and Kay 2009, Tuebal 2009), China (Ye 2015, Hairong and Yiuyang 2015, Zhang 2015), Egypt (Bush 2002) and Zimbabwe (Mudimu 2020). The intricacies, and diverse determinations of these trends warrant a global survey beyond the scope of this thesis.

grants (R15 000) per beneficiary household. This led to pooling of grants by often ‘artificial’ communities of land beneficiaries to collaboratively purchase farmland, which led to well-known but arguably overemphasised, group scheme problems and the often-misunderstood low farm production outcomes attributed to lack of post-settlement support by the state (Lahiff 2007). Nonetheless, group schemes need to be seen on their own terms, such as the impacts of improved access to land for settlement, subsistence, and petty production farming for classes of labour, who often do not follow prescribed farm production plans (Borras 2003) such as the prohibition on subdividing agricultural land. The impact of the initial pro-poor land redistribution policy on the survival strategies of working-class land beneficiaries since the mid-1990s is an under-researched area in South African land reform.

LRAD replaced SLAG in the early 2000s. Its beneficiaries were required to make contributions in the form of finance and sweat equity in cases where they were poor. LRAD attracted criticism for its deviation from pro-poor principles of South African land reform because of its bias towards elite beneficiaries who could afford to make their own financial contributions towards land purchases (Lahiff 2007).

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) was set in motion during the Zuma presidency (2007-2016). Its ethos was a contradictory form of land nationalisation through state ownership of agricultural land purchased by a willing state from willing sellers and made available to mainly elite beneficiaries, with the backup of business plans and financial support, and sometimes political support in the form of state patronage. As was the case with the LRAD programme, PLAS too was found to be engulfed by elite capture (Mtero et al. 2019).

The major critique of South African land redistribution policy has been predominantly aimed at its philosophical underpinnings within market-led agrarian reform, which essentially blocks broad-based land redistribution and partners, in contradictory class alliances, with conservative forces opposed to land reform in South Africa (Borras 2003, Lahiff 2007). This guiding orientation of land reform, by design, protects the current status quo in a South African agrarian structure dominated by large-scale capitalist farming geared toward export markets. A narrow, market-oriented land-redistribution policy provides few opportunities for entry into agriculture and is almost exclusively aimed at a politically-connected black minority. It aims at the mere de-racialisation of the agricultural sector, that is, the substitution of white by black (agrarian) elites, to the exclusion of the working-class majority. It thus

blocks wider processes of accumulation from below for classes of labour (Mtero et al. 2019, Lahiff 2007, Neocosmos 1993).

1.3 The South African Land Question

There is consensus amongst academics, civil society organisations, political elites, and South African society, that the amount of agricultural land redistributed falls far short of initial targets, which aimed at redistributing 30% of agricultural land during the Mandela years, 1994-1999 (Cousins 2015). To date, less than 10% of agricultural land has been redistributed (*ibid.*). “By March 2011 ... only 7.2 per cent (6.3 million hectares) had been transferred, and the official target for achieving the 30 per cent target has now been set at 2025” (O’Laughlin et al. 2013, p. 8) and “[b]y the end of 2012, 7.95 million hectares (or 7.5%) of formerly white-owned farmland had been redistributed to black South Africans” (Visser and Ferrer 2015, p. 36).

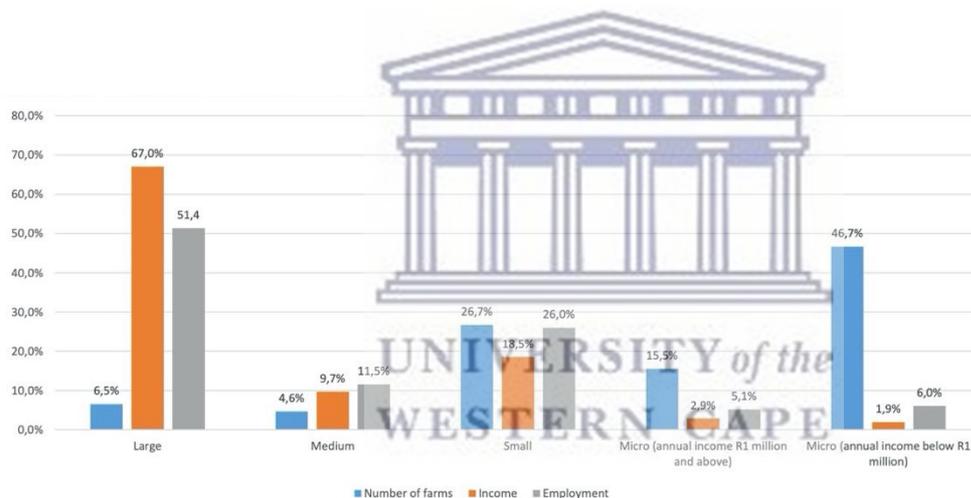


Figure 1.1. Number of farms, income and employment in the commercial agriculture industry by farm size, as a percentage of total in 2017.

There are currently about 33 890 farm units in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2018, p. 6). According to StatsSA (see Figure 1.1), “[i]n 2017, 2 610 large farms (those with annual income of more than R22,5 million) constituted 6,5% of the total number of farms in the commercial agriculture industry and accounted for 67,0% of total income and 51,4% of total employment”. This is the highly productive core of South African agriculture. These are the so-called high-value farms of South Africa the market price of just one farm could seriously undermine the total land redistribution budget. “Taken together, there were 15 180 large, medium and small farms in 2017, with combined shares of 37,8% of the number of farms,

95,2% of income and 88,9% of employment”. In a real sense, this 37,8% is the productive core of agriculture that nourishes domestic and global markets and employs most of the 757 628 differentiated permanent and casual agricultural workers (Statistics South Africa 2018, p. 5). Finally, “[t]his was in contrast to the 18 710 micro farms (annual income below R1 million) which made up almost half of the total number of farms but which accounted for just 1,9% of total income and 6,0% of total employment”. According to Cousins’ (2015) thesis, the owners of these 18 710 farms should be approached by the South African state to give up their land with market value compensation. These are ‘low hanging fruits’ for land redistribution, in South African developmentalist language. Whether these farm owners would agree to the enticement of state compensation under the willing buyer, willing seller, market-based land reform model is another question.

There are 757 628 differentiated permanent and casual agricultural workers in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2018, p. 5) at present. Arguably, the casual and seasonal workers are predominantly women and probably outnumber the current permanent agricultural labour force (Scoones et al. 2018b, Bernstein 2017). On the other hand, growing numbers of immigrant farm workers, particularly women from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, constitute part of the casual labour force on South African white-owned farms (Johnston 2007, 2015), as well as on some farms received through land redistribution, such as in the area of study and on black-owned land in the former labour reserves/Bantustans (Visser and Ferrer 2015).

In dealing with the resurgence of the land question in South Africa and rhetorical calls for expropriation of agricultural land without compensation, some critical agrarian scholars advocate an agrarian reform that is inclusive of processes of ‘accumulation from below’ (Mamdani 1987). Potential land beneficiaries have been identified as petty agricultural-commodity producers and small-scale capitalist farmers on communal land in the former labour reserves (Cousins 2015, 2013a, b, Hall 2009). These potential land beneficiaries have been identified on the basis of their current manifestations as black, household-based producers and small-scale capitalist farmers, whose ‘accumulation from below’ prospects are constrained, partially by land size, owing to South Africa’s history of land dispossession. For example, a small-scale capitalist farmer in the Mooi River or Msinga irrigation scheme in Kwazulu-Natal Province (Sato 2018, Cousins 2011, 2013a,b), with access to only 3 ha of irrigated arable land, would be able to expand crop production if allocated a bigger farm through land redistribution

and in that way accumulation from below could be unleashed, especially with attendant state agricultural subsidy, in terms of access to inputs and (fresh) produce markets.

Some scholars have pointed out that in addition to allocating redistributed land to petty agricultural commodity producers and small-scale capitalist farmers, subdivision of agricultural land should be taken more seriously, rather than be considered a rare or exceptional measure. They argue that the South African state is ambivalent about subdividing agricultural land obtained through land reform (Cousins 2013a, Hall 2009, Lahiff 2007, Van den Brink et al. 2007, Aliber and Mokoena 2002). However, subdivision of agricultural land seems inevitable, given the numbers of potential agricultural land beneficiaries in their hundreds of thousands, or even millions (Cousins 2015, Hall 2009). However, the issue of the subdivision of agricultural land has raised concerns and hence caveats, such as the need for careful targeting of areas with irrigation infrastructure, rather than relying only on grassland biomes, where extensive livestock commonages could be more worthwhile (Hall and Cousins 2013). However, the subdivision of land in the South African context necessarily implies expanding the land size owned by current smallholder farmers in former labour reserves, which constitute land sizes of about 1-10 ha (Sato 2018). For example, a 400 ha farm with good irrigation and soil structure can be acquired through land reform and subdivided into four 100 ha farms and redistributed to four smallholder farmers selected from the former labour reserves. On the other hand, a farm of similar size in a low rainfall grassland biome need not

A materialist study of the land question in South Africa locates the country in its historical context, unravelling processes of land dispossession and the transition to a capitalist economy, within which a transition to capitalist *agriculture* is concretely located (Keegan 1986). The transition to capitalist agriculture is part of this country's peculiar history of primitive accumulation and the formation of differentiated 'worker-peasants' (Lenin 1977, Wolpe 1972) living in labour reserves and supplying labour to mining and manufacturing industry (Cousins et al. 2013). The current pattern of highly skewed and racialised land ownership in South Africa is embedded in this history of colonial dispossession, plus a state-supported transition to capitalist agriculture. It is therefore no coincidence that about 80% of agricultural land in South Africa is concentrated in the hands of 35 000 to 40 000 white landowners (Cousins 2015).

Studying the South African land question from a materialist perspective involves asking questions such as *who owns what* land, *who gets what* from the land or state, and *what do they do with it?* (paraphrase of Bernstein 2010, emphasis by the researcher). Some scholars have

been asking these questions, especially in relation to elite capture of land, since the early days of democratic land reform in South Africa (Murray 1996) and their provocations have helped achieve clarity in dealing with the land question in this country (Cousins 2015, 2013a, b, Cousins et al. 2013, Hall 2009, Hall and Ntsebeza 2007). These scholars highlight unequal and racialised land ownership in South Africa and the need for transformation. Some have suggested that the property clause in the South African constitution is the major constraint (Ntsebeza 2007), a view which informs current proposed amendments to the South African Constitution, while some have argued that the major constraint is in fact the lack of political will to effect democratic land expropriation within the existing legal imperatives, to promote accumulation from below (Cousins 2015).

Most recently, scholars have emphasised that the current land redistribution process is inflicted with relative bias towards economically and politically powerful black individuals as beneficiaries of land and other state resources, such as agricultural subsidies (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017). Such an elite also include key agribusiness actors, described as ‘mentors’ and ‘strategic partners’ in South African land reform jargon, who are essentially fragments of agrarian capital in new class alliances with the state and land beneficiaries (Sommerville 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014, Tom 2006).

One can, therefore, argue that for the small minority of the South African black elite that has recently become beneficiaries of land reform and attendant state agricultural subsidies, the land question has been resolved, in that they have become beneficiaries of land redistribution. They have also successfully mustered attendant state resources to their advantage, to the exclusion of less well-resourced current and potential land beneficiaries (Mtero et al. 2019). To be sure, theirs is a story of ‘accumulation from above’ (Mamdani 1987) evident in their deployment of extra-economic political power in aiding accumulation of wealth (via land and agricultural subsidies) through political connections with the state. But, as this study will show on the basis of empirical evidence (Chapter Nine), this is a small though powerful minority, who are a substantial obstacle to deliberate state-supported ‘accumulation from below’

On the other hand, for the masses of fragmented classes of labour, differentiated into gendered, seasonal and permanent farm workers, farm dwellers, labour tenants, as well as differentiated petty agricultural commodity producers and small-scale capitalist farmers on communal land in the former labour reserves (Bantustans) of South Africa (Cousins 2015), some of whom with outstanding land restitution and labour-tenant claims on white-owned agricultural land, the

land question, and the agrarian question of labour in particular, remains unresolved (Bernstein 2003). Fragmented classes of labour remain landless and jobless and their views are muted by the loud voices of the black (petty) bourgeoisie, so dominant in current South African land reform discourse that one may be misled to assume that they are the most oppressed and marginal class in contemporary South African society. It is within this context the current agrarian structure of South Africa has been unpacked by critical agrarian scholars cited above, with the aim of suggesting pragmatic and democratic solutions towards accumulation from below for fragmented classes of labour (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017, Cousins 2015).

1.4 Class Dynamics in Redistributive Land Reform: Global Debates

There are various schools of thought on the class dynamics of redistributive land reform on a global scale. Most claim to be pro-poor, vis-a-vis small-scale farmers, or the peasantry. A closer look reveals some ideological allegiance within each paradigm, often obscured by subtle political rhetoric (Cousins and Scoones 2010). These schools of thought include neo-classical neo-populism, agrarian political economy, agrarian populism, and livelihoods approaches (welfarist and developmental) (*ibid.*).

Neo-classical neo-populism advocates confiscation of large-scale capitalist farms for redistribution to small-scale family farmers in the Global South. Its proponents argue for the small family farm path on the basis of equitable and efficient pathways out of poverty. This is premised on small farmer marginalisation in development theory and the virtues of economies of scale in smallholder agricultural production, contrary to large-scale capitalist farming (Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz 2004).

The neo-classical neo-populist smallholder path to agrarian reform has been criticised by agrarian political economy scholars on various fronts, firstly, as the face of World Bank neoliberal developmentalism (Oya, 2009, Byres 2004) and its attendant market-led agrarian reform (Borras 2007, 2003). Secondly, its neglect of class analysis within small-scale farming, particularly the omission of the capital-wage relation, particularly tendencies of non-family labour hiring in small-scale capitalist agricultural production, as well as conflictual gendered and generational divisions of labour within the family. This is a critique of its view of an undifferentiated peasantry (Byres 2004, Sender and Johnston 2004).

Neoclassical neo-populism has been further critiqued on the potential dangers of subdividing large-scale capitalist farms if this has negative consequences on farm hands and attendant

labour in various nodes of agricultural value chains (Bernstein 2004, Sender and Johnston 2004). The critique is not counter-revolutionary, or anti-land reform, but reorients debate towards the impacts of land reform on fragmented classes of labour in different nodes of agricultural value chains. However, a potential weakness within this approach is ignoring cases where farm workers have received land through land reform and are involved in various forms of petty commodity production on redistributed land. The case in point is Zimbabwe, though this is not without problems of farm worker marginalisation (Scoones et al. 2018a). In other words, there is a need for agrarian political economy to understand the petty commodity producer in small-scale capitalist agriculture on redistributed land in the same way that petty commodity production (PCP) is recognised as forming part of the fabric of capitalism (Bernstein 1988). This will help recognise alternative farm production systems on land reform farms, not as failed land reform projects, for failure to produce crops on a massive scale, but PCP and small-scale capitalist farming engaged in simple and expanded reproduction within processes of accumulation from below (see Chapters Six to Nine).

Concerning agrarian populism, it will suffice to note that its proponents flag it as a variant of Marxist ideology, which emphasises localisation and delinking from neo-imperialist globalisation tendencies which impoverish smallholder farmers in the Global South, facilitating their exodus to urban slums and townships (Moyo et al. 2019, McMichael 2006, Cousins and Scoones 2010). This approach calls for radical, large-scale farmland redistribution for the benefit of small farmers, outside neoliberal versions of development and within parameters of territorialisation and agro-ecology (McMichael 2006). It is essentially an anti-capitalist version of populism and not an accommodationist framework, such as neo-classical and neo-institutional economics (Bernstein 2004). Sometimes agrarian populism is challenged for its neglect of a class-analytic understanding (Oya 2009, Bernstein 2004, Sender and Johnston 2004). In response, agrarian populists argue that impoverishment and attendant class differentiation is caused by globalisation and neoliberal policies and attendant austerity measures.

However, the concepts of agro-ecology and food sovereignty within agrarian populism, promoted by transnational agrarian movements such as La Via Campesina (Edelman and Borras 2016, McMichael 2006) are not the modus operandi for land beneficiaries in South Africa. This is so for many reasons, including non-internalisation and disorganised agrarian populist movements which have not only failed to occupy agricultural land, as the MST

(Movimento Dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, Movement of Rural Landless Workers) has done in Brazil but also failed to mobilise sufficient resources to enable the practical unfolding of the ideas of agro-ecology and food sovereignty on South African land reform farms. Against this backdrop, the researcher argues that the most progressive conceptual framework applicable to analysis of South African land reform is agrarian political economy (see Chapter Two). The question of the extinguished Landless Peoples Movement of South Africa⁶ (Lahiff, 2007, Marcelo Rosa pers.comm), needs to be situated within the unfolding dynamic of accumulation from above in South African land reform, which cannot be ignored in progressive politics, for it bars alternative mobilisations from below, whether these are glimpses of agro-ecology/food sovereignty, or class alliances between classes of labour against ruling classes within South African land reform.

An agrarian political economy approach studies the logic of capitalist commodity production, particularly the creation of surplus value from within the capital-wage relation. It is also concerned with social relations of production embedded in historically determined relations of power, including the gendered, racial, ethnic and generational hierarchies of social existence (Bernstein 2010, Hall 2003). The logic of capitalism intersects with these historically determined social inequalities and subsumes them into its logic of surplus value creation. and in the process deepens all forms of social inequality. It follows then that the social relations of peasant agricultural production, or small-scale production of any commodity within capitalism, cannot exist outside commodity relations of production, whether directly or indirectly (Bernstein 1988). It is in paying attention to these intersections that agrarian political economy is separated from other approaches such as agrarian populism, neo-classical neo-populism and livelihood approaches, because it is essentially a study of the logic underpinning the reproduction of capitalism and its generalised tendencies towards increased class

⁶ The Landless Peoples Movement of South Africa arose out stalled land redistribution in this country. Its mandate was to occupy farmland from below on a large-scale based on the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement model. However, owing to problems of external and internal disorganisation, and generalised social movement fragmentation, the movement was extinguished, not only by internal fracturing, but also by the hegemonic block of organised agriculture in many subtle ways, such as the latter's influence on the national land and agricultural policy in South Africa.

differentiation and other, intersecting forms of inequality in homes, places of work and society at large (Battarchaya 2017).

1.5 Class Struggle in Latter-day Land Reform: Some Theoretical and Empirical Insights

In agrarian reform contexts in the Global South, rich peasants, or elite farmers of various kinds, tend to be more articulate and influential within the politics of class struggle. Locally embedded elites tend to capture the local state's redistributive mechanisms, such as land and agricultural resource distribution in the name of agricultural development, to the detriment of marginal peasants (Borras 2003, O'Laughlin 1996). The latter are essentially part and parcel of classes of labour (Bernstein 2004). For example, the current class struggle in Southern African ongoing redistributive land reform pertains to political efforts of classes of labour, such as farm workers, to acquire good quality land and attendant agricultural subsidies, still in the hands of white agrarian capital, and more recently the emerging indigenous agrarian capitalist elite. The cases in point are Zimbabwe and South Africa (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017, Cousins 2015, Zamchiya 2013, Scoones et al. 2012). Further afield, China (Ye 2015, Hairong and Yiuyang 2015, Zhang 2015) demonstrates similar dynamics.

1.5.1 Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean case illuminates the politics of class struggle in redistributive land reform most vividly. Empirical observation of processes of class differentiation and class formation, as manifest in livelihood trajectories of differentiated land beneficiaries since farm settlement in early 2000s, have yielded many insights. For example, Scoones and colleagues in their study identified five class-based livelihood trajectories in post land reform localities in Masvingo province, namely: (i) near destitute semi-peasants subsisting through own farm production and selling labour power, locally, to neighbours (i.e. other land beneficiaries) and elsewhere, as well as engaged in informal, petty rural income generating activities, (ii) worker-peasants whose farm production is centred on off-farm income, (iii) petty commodity producers, who are investing farm income into expanded farm production, (iv) rural petit bourgeoisie involved in various trades, including agriculture and transport, (v) a minority of patronage-supported elite farmers funnelling support from central government to their own farms and influential in agricultural policy.

The first four classes rest upon fluid and changing determinations of petty commodity production and patterns of accumulation from below, with the exception of the most destitute

class of the semi-peasantry at the lowest end of social differentiation. A few patronage-supported farmers are accumulating from above and present a looming threat to democratic processes of accumulation from below, not only through their relative power over state agricultural resources but also in the wider macro-economic context, as they increasingly form coalitions with other fragments of capital with interest in landed resources, including mining (Scoones et al. 2012). The political implications for class struggle in Scoones and colleagues' analysis is the potential alliances between classes of labour (i.e. the first four class categories [i-iv], outlined above) against patronage-based elite farmers in demanding state support for comprehensive accumulation from below with due democratised state support.

1.5.2 South Africa

In South Africa, the land reform process has not been as extensive as Zimbabwe. However, tentative evidence with regard to class formation trajectories on redistributed land suggests the overwhelming reality of elite capture (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017, Cousins 2015) and scant evidence of petty commodity production in small-scale agriculture by less resourceful land beneficiaries (Hornby 2015, Aliber and Cousins 2013). For South Africa, this evidence is as yet insufficient for unravelling long-term class formation trajectories on redistributed land which are often obscured by the tendency of black elites themselves to obscure their often-humble beginnings and economic histories which can resemble processes of accumulation from below through petty commodity production. This is a gap in South African land reform literature, which requires objective analysis of land beneficiaries' economic history through the lens of historical materialism and current manifestations of capitalist agrarian social relations of production, reproduction, property, and class struggle (Bernstein 2010, 2004).

This thesis aims to fill this gap with an analysis of class formation trajectories on redistributed agricultural land through the lens of historical materialism and its intersections with living rhythms of accumulation from below and above, as well as the oft-neglected alternative pathways of expanded bases of social reproduction with improved access to land for classes of labour. The political implications of such an analysis are tentatively similar to those reached by Scoones et al. (2012) for Zimbabwe, that is, there is a possibility of forming a coalition between differentiated classes of labour with improved access to land through land reform in demanding, from the core ruling elite, what is available of state agricultural resources in a young democracy such as that of South Africa. Similar political implications can be reached

for those landless classes of labour in their demands for rural and urban land in South Africa, in terms of placing their demands on the doorsteps of the core ruling elite.

1.5.3 China

The relevance of the Chinese case for this thesis is its history of farmland confiscation from landlords and redistribution to worker-peasants and recent processes of consequential class formation on redistributed agricultural land. Differentiated fragments of capital embodied in various forms of agribusiness are penetrating the Chinese countryside. This has a recent historical backdrop enabled by a state-driven agricultural modernisation project with a central trend of accumulation from above and marginal accumulation from below (Hairong and Yiuyang 2015). The immediate impact is that of land transfers in various forms, such as land rentals from peasants at the lower ends of social differentiation, to a well-off middle peasantry but also large-scale agribusiness. The political consequences of these dynamics are yet to be seen but emerging evidence suggests a looming threat to peasants at the lowest ends of social differentiation, who are forced by ‘dull economic forces’ to give up their land to capital (Hairong and Yiuyang 2015, Zhang 2015).

These problems raise questions about the type of state support that Chinese peasants could receive other than within the current paradigm of agribusiness-led agricultural modernisation. The latter is biased towards large-scale capitalist agriculture, providing enhanced subsidies to ‘scaled-up’ agriculture, which inevitably excludes smaller producers who cannot scale up to become so-called ‘middle farmers’, under the wing of dragon-head enterprises in various contract farming schemes. The question is: who are the marginalised peasants that need strategic support in China and how can they be analytically identified? They are the current Chinese fragmented classes of labour, engaged in circular rural-urban migration, often leasing out their agricultural land to fragments of capital (middle farmers and agribusiness), whilst some of them, especially the ‘feminised and greying’, ‘left behind’ population do engage in marginal forms of petty commodity production and subsistence agriculture to make ends meet in their semi-proletarianised existence (Zhang 2015, Ye 2015). Targeted state support could perhaps unleash accumulation from below, on their own terms, on a grand scale, if freed from the constraints imposed from above.

1.5.4 Brazil

Brazil is another country with an ongoing land reform context that can shed light on processes of class formation amongst land reform beneficiaries, at least those in the earlier settlements dating to the late 1980s (Robles 2018, Sauer and Meszaros 2016). However, class analysis of land reform beneficiaries in that country is scant, probably for good reasons. Brazilian agrarian reform scholars spend much time documenting counter-attacks on land reform beneficiaries by that country's conservative forces, including the use of violence (Robles 2018). This does not mean that class differentiation of land beneficiaries is non-existent. For example, the ongoing reverse land rentals, which remain under-researched, hint at class dynamics resting on many determinations and tentatively suggest that those who are renting out their land reform farms may be in dire need of rental income for their social reproduction, against the backdrop of their usage of agricultural land for such purposes (Borras 2003). The latter may as well be too constrained to engage in higher levels of production through simple reproduction of capitalist enterprises or petty commodity production. This is in contrast to Brazilian petty commodity producers on resettlement farms and elsewhere, who produce significant produce for local markets (Escher 2020). What these dynamics mean for class politics and alliances against resurgent forms of populist authoritarianism in Brazil is yet to be seen. However, these tentative findings suggest a need for bringing class back in the analysis of Brazilian land reform.

Current redistributive land reform theoretical debate and public discourse has insufficiently dealt with class analysis in some parts of the Global South such as Brazil and South Africa, with the exception of others such as Zimbabwe. To some extent, this is caused by the relatively pervasive neo-classical neo-populist developmentalism that has engulfed current redistributive land reform, both in theorising and in the real world of politics. The hegemony of neo-classical, neo-populist developmentalism has not only rendered class analysis marginal but also elevated dominant classes in land reform and facilitated accumulation from above for a tiny minority of the indigenous, new-entrant (petty) bourgeoisie in the name of development.

Neo-classical, neo-populist developmentalism has also exaggerated the failure of rhetoric in land reform, especially in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and its narrow lenses obscure alternative pathways of social reproduction and accumulation from below where these patterns emerge on redistributed agricultural land. The latter is a counter narrative which challenges narrow conceptions of accumulation from below as simply another version of accumulation

from above, which do not go beyond mere surface appearances and fail to consider the concrete constituent historical and political elements of class formation.

A class analytic approach on class formation trajectories in post land reform contexts offers an alternative to a historical empirical observation through contextual historical materialism grounded in long-term trajectories of agrarian change and its attendant transformation of social relations of production, property, and power (Chapter Two). By bringing class back into theoretical analysis we set the class agenda for redistributive land reform for classes of labour and thus potentially unleashing potential for accumulation from below, as well as modest benefits of improved access to land such as petty commodity production (or simple reproduction) for social reproduction. It is about grasping concepts of petty commodity production defined above, as well as simple reproduction which denote the mere reproduction of capitalist enterprises without accumulation taking place, as well as unravelling processes of accumulation where they unfold. These are the analytical categorical tools with which one conducts class analysis for our theoretical contributions to a nuanced understanding of redistributive land reform. This potentially mitigates stubborn development plans in the messy world of contemporary politics. For example, contemporary neo-classical neo-populist categories such as small farmers or black commercial farmers in contemporary South Africa are misleading and should be replaced by more robust, analytical concepts, such as petty commodity production, simple reproduction, social reproduction and expanded reproduction, if we are to take class analysis seriously or consider the nuances with a critical eye.

The next section outlines the research objectives and central research question underpinning this thesis.

1.6 Research Objectives and Questions

1.6.1 Central research question

The core question that this study explores is: **What are the trajectories of class formation in processes of accumulation from below and above on redistributed land, on the so-called ‘New Qwaqwa Farms’ from the mid-1980s to 2016?**

This over-arching question can be disaggregated into a series of specific sub-questions:

- **Who are the farmers on ‘New Qwaqwa Farms’ and how did they get to occupy the land in question?**
- **How are the farmers in question differentiated and with what outcomes in relation to farming systems, degree of market integration, and capital accumulation? To what extent have they been ‘stepping up’ (upward trajectory of accumulation), ‘stepping out’ (diversifying livelihoods), ‘hanging in’, ‘dropping out’ or ‘creeping back’ since the 1980s?**
- **To what extent does the social differentiation of the farmers in question reflect processes of accumulation from below and above in terms of historical trajectories of class formation? How can livelihood trajectories be understood in terms of the class dynamics of agrarian change?**

Retrospective studies of post land reform contexts potentially shed light on processes of class formation, in order to better inform political strategies in support of accumulation from below and to formulate stronger critiques of accumulation from above in the Global South. This approach potentially equips us with a better appreciation of processes of social reproduction and simple reproduction in post land reform contexts, as an alternative to merely ridiculing the latter as failed land reform projects on the basis of a failure to meet expectations that they will engage in industrial-style, large-scale agriculture.

How improved access to land improves the livelihoods of marginalised people in society is a key empirical question in order to better understand and appreciate heterogeneity in post land reform contexts. This includes analytical clarity with regard to processes of accumulation from below, as well as social and simple reproduction, in contrast to processes of accumulation from above. This thesis aims to shed light on processes of class formation by illuminating how processes of accumulation from below and above unfold concurrently with processes of social and simple reproduction, through a case study of 62 land reform farms in the Eastern Free State province of South Africa.

1.7 Research Site: The Eastern Free State

The location of the Eastern Free State within the geography of South Africa is shown in Figure 4.1 in Chapter Four, which explores the historical geography of the area of study and, in particular, attendant processes of primitive accumulation. The area of study is located in Maloti a Phofung Municipality, which has three main towns, namely Harrismith, Bethlehem, and

Phuthadijhaba. The latter is located within the former homeland/labour reserve/Bantustan, Qwaqwa, which was the hub of state service economic activity in the 1980s described in Chapter Four. The former homeland and one of the nearby townships, Tshiame saw the entry of foreign manufacturing industries in the 1980s, which had significantly dissipated and closed down by the time of writing this thesis (Slater 2001, 2002, Hart 2002). Very few of these manufacturing industries survive to date.

The former homeland, Qwaqwa, as well as the townships of the above-mentioned small towns, house hundreds of thousands of former labour-tenant families evicted from surrounding farms (Steinberg 2019). The latter are described in Chapter Four. As in other townships and rural areas of South Africa, unemployment is rife against the backdrop of deindustrialisation and jobless growth in the wider South African economy (Mtero 2014). Nonetheless, the main townships serve as a market for livestock in transactions which the study will describe as ‘weekend ceremonial markets’, characterised by overnight slaughter of animals for various cultural events, including funerals, weddings, sport derbies, and cleansing ceremonies. Local abattoirs, informal restaurants, and auction sales are equally important livestock markets for the studied farmers, and as well as other neighbouring farmers.

In terms of crop marketing infrastructure, the Eastern Free State inherited former grain marketing co-operatives, which have been privatised since the end of apartheid (Bernstein 2013) but continue to source grain from farms in the Eastern Free State region, located within the famous ‘maize triangle’ (Keegan 1986). Some, though few, of the studied farmers supply grain to these grain silos.

The Eastern Free State is also known as a landscape of ‘rolling grassland’ (Claassen et al. 2014), with flat and undulating patches of cropping fields in its arable parts, resulting in the mixed farming systems described in Chapter Five. With the exception of the swathe of redistributed land under study and a few other land reform farms and state-owned farms rented out by the local municipality to black and white farmers, as well as the state-owned Golden Gate National Park, the Eastern Free State farmland is overwhelmingly white-owned, as in other parts of South Africa. These farms, in all compass directions to the north, west, east and south of the area of study, have a history of labour tenancy (Chapter Four) and recent farm evictions, with some former labour-tenant families and other farm dwellers still remaining on the land. The Eastern Free State also houses the University of the Free State Qwaqwa campus, located within the former Qwaqwa homeland. Some academics from this university,

particularly in its Department of Geography, have researched and published on the studied land reform farms (see Classens et al. 2014). However, their focus was narrowly on grain production and how black farmers in this region are failing to farm according to agricultural economics textbooks, a narrow view, against which this researcher provides an alternative understanding of agriculture and rural livelihoods.

1.8 Research Design and Methods

In this thesis, the researcher analyses class formation trajectories on redistributed land that was expropriated with compensation from white farmers in the last few years of apartheid and redistributed to differentiated classes of labour such as farm workers, differentiated non-agricultural petty commodity producers, small-scale capitalist farmers, elite beneficiaries such as supermarket and taxi owners, as well as state bureaucrats (Murray 1996, Bank, 1995, Slater 2001, 2002). The method of enquiry used in this study is retrospective in an attempt to trace economic trajectories of land beneficiaries as family-owned farm enterprises but also circumspective and prospective in scope (Murray 2002). The retrospective aspect includes life histories, which document the economic histories of the studied family farms as household units prior to farming, to the point of land allocation. The study also explores subsequent class formation trajectories on redistributed land and explores the policy implications of its findings, and is thus circumspective and prospective in character. This approach seeks to transcend boundaries of space and time (*ibid.*).

On the basis of life histories and a literature review, the study reveals that most land beneficiaries in the area of study share a common history of eviction from white-owned labour-tenant farms in the Eastern Free State district from the 1950s onwards and subsequent gradual relocation to a labour reserve, Qwaqwa. Here, some emerged as differentiated petty commodity producers or entrepreneurs operating various medium-scale enterprises which were to become preferred candidates as beneficiaries of the first experiments with land reform. These took place during the last few years of apartheid in the late 1980s and beneficiaries were targeted by the state on the basis of their status as businesspeople (Slater 2002, 2001). The selection process included radio announcements, distribution of pamphlets with a call for potential land beneficiaries, followed by interviews and screening of applicants (Claasen et al. 2014).

In addition to the retrospective approach, this thesis embraces circumspective and prospective views (Murray 2002). The circumspective aspect of this study looks at what is produced now

and gauges farm production scale and attendant quantitative data, such as farm size, family size, degrees of off-farm income amongst immediate kin within the studied agricultural households. The prospective research aspect is forward looking, concerned primarily with the policy implications of the research findings.

The research methods and design adopted in this thesis reflect insights drawn from a critical realism perspective within the social sciences (Sayer 1998), as well as a political economy approach, centred on Marx's method outlined in the Introduction of the *Grundrisse* (Marx 1973). Critical realism, in the broadest sense, seeks to lay bare the underlying dynamics of phenomenal forms of concrete societal situations in all their diversity. Revealing internal relations within phenomena is necessary for discerning the many determinants of the concrete and complex realities under study, for example, the different class categories of farming households in the Eastern Free State.

Further details of these research paradigms and how they informed the study's research design and choice of methods are set out in Chapter Three.

1.9 Outline of Thesis

Chapter One provides the context for and backdrop to the study and outlines the contents of the thesis. Land reform policies and debates are summarised, as is the core argument of the thesis, that the class dynamics are a central feature of land reform in South Africa. It also argues that the black, petty bourgeoisie's capture of land reform in South Africa constitutes a real obstacle for processes of accumulation from below for classes of labour, who are democratically the most deserving constituency to be allocated land. The reader is introduced to the area of study, the Eastern Free State where, in the 1980s, land beneficiaries were selected on the basis of their engagement in various forms of small-scale enterprise, and petty commodity production, whilst a few were elites proper. The chapter locates agrarian political economy, which is the theoretical framework used in this thesis, within international class debates on redistributive land reform, by way of reviewing recent global debates and their theoretical underpinnings and how they manifest themselves in current land redistributive policy, including in South Africa.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework of the study, agrarian political economy, with a focus on notions of accumulation from below and above (Mamdani 1987), to seek to discern trajectories of class formation in a post-land reform locality in South Africa. Core theoretical

concepts are introduced and how they intersect with concepts such as ‘fragmented classes of labour’ (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2003) and social reproduction (Cousins et al. 2018) are discussed.

Chapter Three outlines the research design and methodology adopted in conducting empirical research for this study. The chapter locates empirical observation within the philosophy of critical realism in social science and further explains how this intersects with retrospective, circumspective, and prospective research methodologies. Historical materialism is embedded in the retrospective approach, while the circumspective approach looks at current realities, such as levels of agricultural production on land reform farms. Chapter Three also explains how fieldwork was conducted, outlines the limitations of the study and reflects on research ethics and issues of positionality.

Chapter Four introduces the reader to the history of the area under study through the lens of historical materialism, focusing on how transitions to capitalist agriculture in the area of study impacted on local African populations. These were to become sharecroppers and labour tenants, later relocated from labour-tenant farms into labour reserves when they were no longer needed by agrarian capital. The chapter uses timelines as thematic signposts, from the 1840s to the 1950s and beyond, in its attempt to illuminate processes of primitive accumulation in the Eastern Free State province of South Africa. Furthermore, Chapter Four examines processes of social differentiation within the main labour reserve (Qwaqwa), into which former labour tenants relocated. Some who had access to resources, such as proceeds from selling livestock brought with from labour-tenant farms (Bank 1992), or local connections with the local chieftaincies (Slater 2002), emerged as differentiated petty commodity producers and small-scale capitalist enterprises. It is the latter, together with some well-connected members of the local elite, which were targeted for selection as land beneficiaries during the first experiments with land redistribution during the mid to late 1980s, which were essentially part and parcel of processes of ‘homeland’ consolidation inseparable from a locally embedded politics of class.

Chapter Five introduces the reader to the agro-ecological character of the area of study and describes five different farming systems operated by land reform beneficiaries. This chapter also provides a critique of a dominant narrative in land reform in South Africa, that land reform should be mainly focused on the production of grain or other plant crops, rather than animal production. In contrast to this overemphasised grain production, an alternative view is posited about the often-neglected extensive livestock enterprises which thrive in natural grassland

biomes such as in the area of study. Livestock production was found to be central in the social and simple reproduction, as well as accumulation, strategies of the majority of family-owned land reform farms in the Eastern Free State (as described in Chapters Seven to Nine).

Chapter Six introduces the reader to differentiated livelihood strategies of the studied farmers, using Dorward et al. (2015) livelihood trajectory categorisations as heuristic devices towards categorising the studied farmers in terms of class. The sample is differentiated into agricultural households 'hanging in' (farming for survival), 'stepping out' (diversifying livelihoods), and 'stepping up' (on upward trajectories of accumulation). The chapter ends by suggesting an alternative class-analytic approach, as a further step in analysis beyond the Dorward et al. formulation, by differentiating the studied sample into agricultural households engaged in social and simple reproduction, as well as those engaged in accumulation. The latter three class categories then form the basis of the next three empirical chapters, with each dedicated to each of the above class categories (Chapters Seven to Nine).

Chapter Seven is dedicated to an analysis of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. These are households that use their improved access to land in order to expand their social reproduction base, mainly through farm-rental income, together with marginal farming of livestock and sometimes crops. Some of these households have fallen behind in farm production, whilst others are constrained by their historical class positions of typically farm work in mustering off-farm capital resources towards increasing the scale of farm production. This chapter introduces the concept of an 'impoverished landed property' to describe agricultural households strongly dependant on farm-rental income for social reproduction. In terms of prospects for accumulation from below, Chapter Seven elucidates that for agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, this is unlikely to unfold in the absence of stable off-farm jobs, unless supported by the state through agricultural subsidy.

Chapter Eight describes agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction. These are essentially households that are not accumulating agricultural capital but farming on the same scale of production from one season to another. The researcher argues that it is their access to a wider base of off-farm income sources that underpins their simple reproduction, in contrast to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction with limited off-farm income sources. Chapter Eight illuminates that, given their access to a wider base of off-farm income sources, simple reproducers are not too constrained by the tensions and pressures exerted by the demands of social reproduction on their small-scale farm enterprises. This chapter further

suggests that some of the immediate kin of the simple reproducers may take early or due retirement from off-farm employments in order to invest retirement packages into expanding farm production, perhaps enabling accumulation from below, or may be able to muster off-farm capital resources for increasing the scale of farm production, following in the footsteps of those farmers described in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine describes agricultural households engaged in accumulation by way of an exposition of key accumulation strategies, manifested as grain-livestock, dairy, and beef-centred accumulation. These have at their core increasing the scale of farm production through increasing land cropped with grain and livestock herd expansion, which sometimes involve the renting-in of arable and grazing land. Chapter Nine also describes the sources of the capital invested in the farms, highlighting the key role of off-farm income sources, particularly from (early) retirement funds and, to a less extent, off-farm business. The chapter highlights the importance of processes of accumulation from below which underpin the formation of many current accumulators in the South African land reform.

Chapter Ten is the conclusion of the thesis. This chapter assesses the socio-spatial trajectories of class formation on redistributed land as differentiated into patterns of social and simple reproduction, as well as accumulation. In Chapter Ten, the researcher argues that on the basis of these differentiated class trajectories, access to land serves heterogeneous purposes for differentiated land beneficiaries. This argument essentially posits that agricultural households engaged in social reproduction and those engaged in simple reproduction should not be narrowly conceived as failed land reform projects but their constraints in accumulating from below should be objectively analysed and understood, such as those wrought by their exclusion in the current redistribution of state agricultural subsidies controlled by the core elite in the area of study. This constitutes a real obstacle to processes of accumulation from below. This chapter reiterates that many of the current accumulators have accumulated from below and their historical trajectories of class formation should be invoked as a class agenda towards systemic change towards accumulation from below beyond the contradictions of capitalism entangling current accumulators in extra-economic political relations with institutional power, dubbed as corruption is mainstream economics.

Furthermore, Chapter Ten located this thesis within agrarian-reform and global debates, and highlighted key issues regarding heterogeneous land reform outcomes that transcends

conventional wisdom regarding the targeting of land beneficiaries, as well as farming systems, farm scales, farm workers and farm capitalisation.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a prologue to the entire thesis and introduces the reader to the central research questions centred on land reform for classes of labour, small-scale capitalist farming for social reproduction and accumulation from below and the latter's intersections with processes of accumulation from above. One thrust has been to highlight the heterogeneity of current agrarian reform scholarship, much of it freed from the constraints of neo-developmentalism and agricultural modernisation from above. Such scholarship appreciates diverse land reform outcomes, for different purposes and classes, as well as differentiated scales of production that is, land reform cannot be only about large-scale commercial farming for the middle class but also small-scale capitalist farming for classes of labour. It cannot be only about capital-intensive crop production but also less capital-intensive livestock production by differentiated classes of land beneficiaries. These arguments are grounded within international agrarian reform trends and attendant class implications, partially driven by the relentless unfolding of capitalism, forever penetrating the countryside in many new ways, such as the rolling back of land reform, reverse rentals or counter revolutions, beyond the scope of this thesis but worthy of further investigation. The conceptualisation of reverse land rentals are problematised as part and parcel of the livelihood strategies of classes of labour with improved access to land, as well as a constituent component of those land beneficiaries on upward trajectories of accumulation who need to rent-in land for expanded reproduction both these aspects move beyond the conceptualisation of reverse land rentals as mere land concentration tendencies but pays attention to the multiple determinations underpinning this phenomenon in post land reform contexts, particularly its function in social reproduction and accumulation strategies of land reform beneficiaries.

CHAPTER 2

THEORISING CLASS FORMATION ON REDISTRIBUTED AGRICULTURAL LAND IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. It suggests that an agrarian political economy approach is a particularly useful framework for analysing land reform and attendant processes of agrarian change, laying bare the social relations of production, reproduction and accumulation in the contemporary context and as they change over time, i.e. in an historically informed manner (Bernstein 2010). Accordingly, this chapter discusses a number of key and interconnected Marxist concepts, and assesses their applicability in analysing the empirical data that has been collected in this study of class formation on redistributed agricultural land in South Africa.

The first of these key concepts is that of ‘accumulation from below and above’ (Cousins 2013a, Neocosmos 1993, Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986, Lenin 1977), which is deployed in this thesis in tracing the economic trajectories of land reform farms in the Eastern Free State as capitalist enterprises engaged in the production of agricultural commodities. This formulation is rooted in Karl Marx’s concepts of simple and expanded reproduction of capitalist enterprises (Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010). The concepts of accumulation from below, and above can aid in assessing the democratic and the non-democratic features of land redistribution aimed at generating economic prosperity for previously marginalised classes (Neocosmos 1993). This is juxtaposed with current land reform realities, characterised by the extra-economic accumulation of wealth (accumulation from above) by the black ‘petty bourgeoisie’ (*ibid.*) adroitly manipulating the redistributive elements of South Africa’s young democracy (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017). This can be seen as yet another case of the extra-economic manipulation of state power for accumulation of wealth by the indigenous elite in the wider African continent in the post-independence period (Neocosmos 1993, Mamdani 1987).

The second Marxist concept used by the researcher in analysing empirical evidence on land reform in the Eastern Free State is the notion of ‘fragmented classes of labour’ (Bernstein (2004, 2010, 2017)). This notion allows one to make sense of the central role in household

economies played by the immediate kin of land reform beneficiaries, in particular throwing light on these households' integration into the wider economy in a variety of ways, which strongly influences the 'reproductive capacity' of these land reform farms.

The third key concept centres on the notion of 'social reproduction' and its usefulness in assessing the survival strategies of rural households in the global South. In particular, it facilitates analysis of the role of 'footloose labour' (Breman 1996), in this case embodied in the role of immediate kin who are engaged in off-farm, non-agricultural employment in countering deepened crises of rural social reproduction (Cousins et al. 2018). This assessment of the social reproduction strategies of fragmented classes of labour who have gained improved access to land through land reform, helps us to understand the impacts of access to land in contemporary rural livelihoods, and the prospects for 'accumulation from below' via land reform.

The fourth, and final key concept is that of 'ground rent', as theorised by Karl Marx and further developed by Neocosmos (1988) and many other scholars (Capps 2010, Banaji 2012). The notion of ground rent facilitates analysis of the widespread phenomenon of deriving income from land rent which is a key feature of land reform farms in the area of study. The Marxist⁷ conception of ground rent is most useful in such analysis. As discussed below, such conceptualisations of ground rent have led this researcher to adopt the concept of 'impoverished landed property'⁸. At its core, this denotes the renting out of farmland for social reproduction on the part of landowners who lack material means to invest in expanded farm production. However, the fully developed Marxist conception of ground rent is not made use of in the analysis of the land rent phenomenon in the Eastern Free State in this thesis, and does not constitute the core of the theoretical framework of the thesis, which is class differentiation on land reform farms in South Africa.

⁷ This is similar to Lenin's conception of ground rent, which emanated from his study of poor peasants renting out farmland to middle-class, and rich peasants for their own social reproduction (Lenin 1977).

⁸ This notion was first suggested to the researcher by Ben Cousins (pers. comm.).

The researcher will introduce these four key concepts in sequence and discuss their applicability in analysing class formation on redistributed land in the area of study. This will be followed by a discussion of how these concepts assist in developing appropriate class differentiation categories for the studied family farms on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State. This theoretical framework is grounded in historical materialism, an approach that locates the studied farmers within localised geo-political and historical processes of agrarian change, seen as inseparable from wider macro-economic contexts and processes that operate over different scales of time and space (Murray 2002).

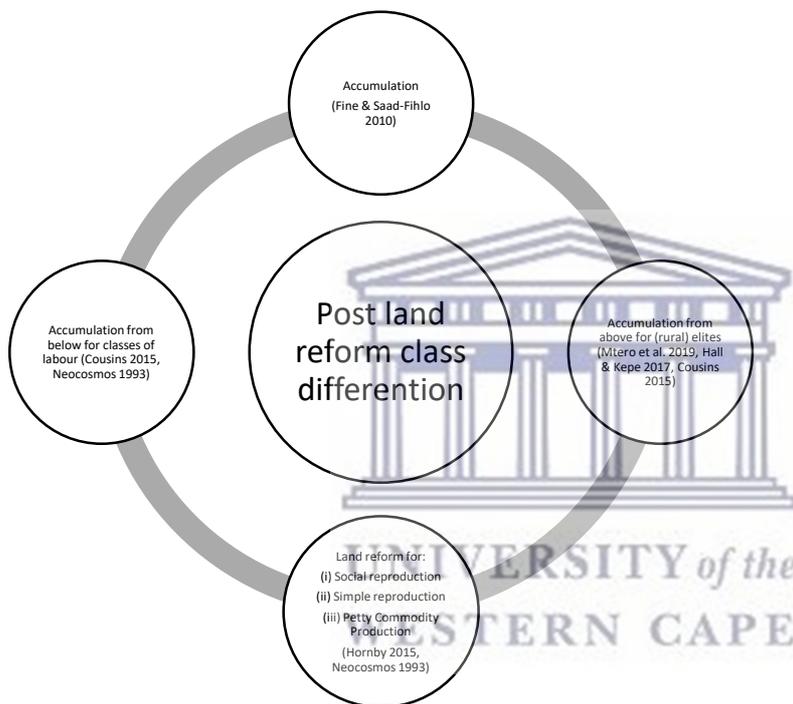


Figure 2.1. Key concepts for theorising class differentiation in post-land reform contexts

Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of the way that some of the key concepts discussed in this chapter are inter-related. The diagram focuses in particular on the class dynamics of accumulation, both from below and from above, and shows how these need not be the main focus of land reform policy, which can also aim to support small-scale farming aimed at social reproduction, simple reproduction or petty commodity production. The cyclical shape of Figure 2.1 reflects cyclical circuits of relations of production within which land beneficiaries are entangled as they realise their land reform outcomes on the basis of their class positions. Accumulation of capital shown at the top of the figure symbolically reflects the top-class stratum often desired by land beneficiaries as potential aspirant bourgeoisie. In order to get to

the top of class structure some may accumulate from below, a trajectory on the left of the diagram, incidentally, reflecting the left democratic politics of capitalism from below, which is considered more democratic (Cousins, 2015, Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986, Neocosmos 1993). In contrast, the right-hand side of the diagram, not only symbolically reflects ‘right wing’ politics, but real capitalism from above, with the aid of often undemocratic political interventions. The bottom of the circle is the starting point, from below, for many of the land beneficiaries, whose economic trajectories can go upwards, from below, and accumulate capital via investments of ‘blood and sweat capital’ (Zhang 2015) into expanded reproduction of agrarian capital, or upwards on ‘the right’, via capitalism from above, through political networks. In short, the main point to grasp in Figure 2.1 is that these interlinked concepts facilitate the analysis of quite heterogeneous class differentiation outcomes of land redistribution.

However, it is also important to note here that these processes and outcomes are not divorced from localised political dynamics. Rather, politics can shape the outcomes of class formation, depending on the positioning of land beneficiaries in processes of class struggle. In a democratic social formation, those who have gained access to capital, by whatever means, are better able to engage the state to ensure they gain preferential access to scarce state subsidies and other forms of state support. On the other hand, those in the lowest ranks of class differentiation find it much more difficult to engage the state since this requires some access to material resources or position of influence at the local community, such as in the chieftaincy, church, or party (Mamdani 1987), in order to obtain information on state agricultural subsidies. However, any land reform beneficiary can fall into the ranks of the disadvantaged by default (in terms of their prior economic trajectory), or by ongoing processes of competition and being ‘winnowed’ out of farm production, but may also progress towards simple, and expanded reproduction in the long run, depending on particular circumstances, such as degrees of access to off-farm income, or state agricultural subsidy. These class differentiation paths unfold within wider contexts, located within the capitalist mode of production and cannot be conceived as operating outside of these. For example, simple capitalist reproduction or petty commodity production on land reform farms in South Africa cannot take place without access to off-farm income sources, or some support from the state such as social grant income or substantial state agricultural subsidies. The role of the state in class formation is explored in later chapters

2.2 The Core Features of Capitalism

Some key features of a Marxist account of class will now be briefly identified. The social relations of production, based on the inherent antagonism between the two main classes of capitalist societies, capital and labour, involve the exploitation of the latter by the former. Through selling their labour power to capitalists and thus enabling the creation of surplus value for the benefit of capitalists, the working classes contribute ‘freely’ to their own exploitation (Patnaik 2012). This sale of their capacity to work is necessary for their own social reproduction, which is enabled by the wage that accrues to the worker. In a capitalist mode of production, the worker is conceived as a ‘free’ labourer in a double sense, free from owning the means of production, and also free from the coercion to work (such as freedom from slavery), with the liberty to move from one employer to another, but also ‘free’ to starve, if unwilling to sell their labour power or being unable to find work (Choonara 2009).

After the workers have set the production process in motion and produced surplus value in the form of products or service, the capitalist can realise profit from the exchange process within ever-fluctuating markets (Akraam-Lodhi and Kay 2009). The capitalist is thus inclined to minimise production costs in order to maximise profit, and the production site is where a capitalist wields much power. Cost-reduction mechanisms can involve labour cost reductions in different ways, such as retrenchments after technological innovation (Ghosh 2012, Wood 2012). Within generalised commodity production, in order to compete with other capitalists, the capitalist is forced by the ‘dull compulsion’ of economic forces to reinvest part of surplus value realised through profit, in the circuit of commodity production, and also innovate in various ways, such as technological innovation, to beget more surplus value or be outcompeted by fellow competitors (Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010, Choonara 2009). In this way and in order to accumulate, capital is forced to expand globally, relentlessly, mainly through processes of concentration and financialisation, to new areas of labour exploitation and other branches of production (Ghosh 2012). Processes of concentration are mainly driven by competition and involve the subsuming of small capitalists into bigger ones, for example, the land dispossession of peasants by larger capitalist agricultural undertakings (*ibid.*).

2.2.1 The Agrarian Question

The classic agrarian question as conceptualised by Engels, Kautsky and Lenin, had three dimensions to it, politics, production, and accumulation. The first was the problem of peasant

persistence in many parts of Europe at the time of their writing in the latter half of the 19th century (Banaji 2008, Byres 2012). Inextricably connected to the first, political dimension was political work by communist parties in mobilising peasants into burgeoning industrialised working-class politics. This stemmed from Engels' envisioning of the agrarian question as "an agrarian question for and about labour" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009, p. 7) given the annihilation of the peasantry by capitalised agriculture from above in the form of agricultural imports from elsewhere (*ibid.*). This was what preoccupied Engels the most after the death of Karl Marx (Byres 1986).

The second dimension which is attributed to Kautsky and Lenin, in the 1890s and early 20th century, was that in addition to the political dimension of the agrarian question as conceptualised by Engels, there was the agrarian question of capital, particularly the obstacles to capital penetration into the countryside (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009), and attendant social and economic implications of capital's penetration into the countryside of Europe, particularly in peasant communities/villages. This provided an impulse to capitalist social relations of production as differentiated peasants and landlord classes responded to, and were also remoulded by, burgeoning capitalist relations which fundamentally transformed productive forces under the influence of the logic of capitalist social relations of production (Byres 1986). Lenin, who was as convinced by the inevitability of a capitalist mode of production as Marx, preferred a path of capitalism from below, as exemplified by the USA path to capitalist agrarian transition, given its more democratic character, in contrast to capitalism from above characterised by extra economic coercion and violence.

The third dimension as explored by Kautsky and Lenin, was the role of surplus value accumulated from capitalist agriculture in aiding generalised industrialisation in a wider social formation (*ibid.*). From the Russian countryside, for example, industrialisation demanded "the physical, financial and wage-goods products necessary" (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009, p. 8) for its own development. This had far-reaching impacts on the destruction of the unity between local agriculture and petty rural industry, as well as the transformation of communal to private property regimes and pre-capitalist to capitalist social relations of labour (*ibid.*). These three dimensions of the agrarian question were to occupy the minds of political activists and intellectuals for the next century and informed political struggles against landed propertied classes in the Global South and subsequent developmental efforts by post-independence states

such as the collectivisation of agriculture for surplus value accumulation, in order to fund the growth of industry in post-colonial/feudal societies.

2.2.2 Accumulation of capital in a capitalist mode of production

If, however, capitalists do not consume their entire surplus value, but spend part of it buying additional means of production, capital accumulation takes place (Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010, p. 54).

Accumulation of capital denotes progressive reinvestment of surplus value by capitalists who are compelled to do so by the 'dull compulsion' of economic forces in order to stay competitive within a capitalist economy (Marx 1976). Accumulation occurs when surplus value is reinvested in the circuit of commodity production, in order to beget yet more surplus value. Accumulators are compelled by the law of value, and pressure by fellow competitors and the capitalist system as a whole, to accumulate or be eliminated out of production (Choonara 2013, Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010).

What then is surplus value, which is reinvested in production to beget more surplus value to enable accumulation? According to Marx, surplus value is derived by the capitalist from deploying their funds into buying the means of production ('constant capital') plus the hiring of workers ('variable capital') to set the means of production in motion in the process of commodity production. In this process, the worker, who is 'free' from the means of production, who needs to sell labour power for the purposes of his or her own social reproduction, provides some labour time to produce *surplus* value for the capitalist, their employer, the owner of the means of production. This is defined as (*relative*) surplus value extraction by Marx. In contrast, absolute surplus value extraction occurs whereby the worker is subject to very long working hours, outside institutionalised working hours, for example, which constitutes super-exploitation in the absolute sense.

For the capitalist, accumulation thus begins with having money at hand with which to purchase constant and variable capital, which are then set in motion through production of commodities for sale in order to gain more surplus value, which is reinvested in production to create more value (Marx 1976). This the logic of capital, and of capital accumulation. In farming, if a farmer does not spend the surplus value earned from previous production in consumption but reinvests it into expanding the scale of production, for example through increasing the size of land under crop production, or the quantity or quality of livestock, accumulation of capital takes place.

2.2.3 Simple reproduction

The ‘simple reproduction’ of capital denotes the basic survival of a capitalist enterprise, at the same scale of production, without accumulation taking place:

If there is no technical change, and if the capitalists spend their surplus value on consumption and merely repeat the previous pattern of production, the economy can repeat itself at the same level of activity, what Marx calls simple reproduction. (Fine and Saad-Filho 2010, p. 53).

Furthermore, in capitalist agricultural production, some capitalist farmers who want to remain in production are forced, by the logic of capital, to reinvest part of surplus value into future production in order to achieve the mere simple reproduction of the enterprise. In this case, simple reproduction denotes the mere repetition of farm production at the same scale of production even when reinvestment of some surplus in farm production occurs.

2.2.4 Social reproduction

The concept of social reproduction denotes the life-producing labour that takes place in families and households, as well as through state-funded services such as education and health care outside of capitalist and commodity relations. Subaltern peoples the world over are engaged in non-capitalist activities and relations that enable them to survive and reproduce themselves, both currently and generationally and within particular contextual hierarchical, structural, and oppressive material conditions (Bhattacharya 2017, Tsikata 2016, Fine and Saad-Filho 2010). It is an essential condition of existence of capital itself as Ghosh (2012) emphasises:

[Social reproduction] is a process that involves and draws in unpaid labour within households, and is typically based on the gender construction within the society, such that women tend to perform most of such work. As this is not paid for by capital, it constitutes part of the surplus labour supporting capitalist production even when it does not directly produce surplus value itself. (Ghosh 2012, p. 31).

Social reproduction in the Global South and elsewhere today, unfolds within wider macro-economic material conditions and attendant economic crises (Bernstein 2010), such as deindustrialisation in South Africa (Slater 2001), with aggravating negative repercussions for life-making/-sustaining activities that fragmented classes of labour are engaged in, such as small-scale farming, and selling labour power under increasingly precarious conditions (Bernstein 2003).

2.2.5 Petty commodity production

The concept of petty commodity production (PCP) denotes small-scale capitalist enterprises within generalised commodity production which hold within them the class places of both capital and labour, by virtue of their ownership of the means of production *and* reliance on their own labour or that of immediate kin, on the basis of self-exploitation (Neocosmos 1993, Gibbon and Neocosmos 1985, Bernstein 1986). PCP enterprises can be found in various branches of generalised commodity production, including agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises, and they can reproduce over time, or accumulate capital or disappear owing to competition from other producers of various sizes in the wider economy (*ibid.*).

Differentiated types of (off-farm) employment, together with their variable conditions (such as remuneration, precarity, and forms of tenure) can co-exist with agricultural PCP enterprises in one way or another. Complementarity can take the form of investment in farming by employed workers, or vice versa, the investment of farm income into off-farm activities which may be restricted to social reproduction for some and education towards skilled and stable off-farm employments for others, and so on (O’Laughlin 1996).

For PCP enterprises there is an inherent tension between the imperatives of simple or expanded reproduction of the enterprise, and the social reproduction needs of the enterprise owner and/or the immediate kin of the latter (Bernstein 2010). Very often, those PCP producers who are forced to spend farm income on meeting the needs of social reproduction are unable to accumulate capital, and thus simply reproduce as capital, or go under. Bernstein’s conceptualisation suggests that the needs of social reproduction or the ‘consumption fund’, can take the form of replacement funds, ceremonial funds, and fund of rent. The *replacement* fund is essentially about reinvesting some surplus value into reproduction of the farm enterprise, such as replacing agricultural tools, purchasing inputs, etc. The *ceremonial* fund refers to the contributions that the PCP enterprise/household makes towards reproduction of its cultural and social embeddedness in the wider rural community, for example within a local farmers’ association this can involve material contributions to cultural events, such as celebrations of various sorts, as well as in supporting bereaved households, for example donating a beast for slaughter for a funeral. The fund of *rent* refers to any contribution of the fruits of labour to the landlord, if any, or other landowning entity if the PCP has no ownership over land (Bernstein 2010). For example, in the current South African land redistribution model, land beneficiaries

are expected to pay rent to the state as part of their lease agreement. They are thus forced to set aside part of their surplus value towards these annual rent payments (Mtero et al. 2019).

In critical agrarian studies, the concept of petty commodity production is useful in order to avoid generalised and homogenous views of the peasantry as an undifferentiated group of agricultural producers. Central to the rhythms of petty commodity production is social differentiation of small-scale enterprises as a result of competition. The concept also leads to a critique of the ‘linear proletarianisation thesis’, often associated with the notion of ‘peasantry’, and particularly so in Southern Africa (Neocosmos 1993). According to Neocosmos (1993, p. 27) “the political economy of rural petty commodity production was systematically ignored” by the linear proletarianisation thesis posited by proponents of radical political economy in Southern Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, through

a kind of fetishism of the working class (what in South Africa is sometimes referred to as “workerism”) whereby an ideal future of a preponderance of proletarians is seen as already in existence or at least “just around the corner”. (*ibid.*, p. 27).

The workerist thesis turned a blind eye to the reality of petty commodity production in labour-providing communities and ignored processes of rural differentiation and accumulation from below (Neocosmos 1993). According to Neocosmos, the peasantry is not homogenous, forming a set of uncritical subjects of capitalism as often portrayed. Various forms of petty commodity production, though constrained by a repressive apartheid state, emerged, and one needs a critical Marxist eye to unravel such differentiation. This includes recognising both agricultural and non-agricultural forms of petty commodity production that unfolded in parallel with proletarianisation, and often benefiting from it in the form of investments of off-farm wages into (farm) production in the former labour reserves. It is this kind of analytical exercise that can unravel processes of accumulation from below.

In theorising petty commodity production, Neocosmos (1993) was concerned about the possibilities of unleashing accumulation from below which had been till then hindered by oppressive states in Southern Africa and anticipated this unleashing as part of a post-apartheid ‘democracy from below’. With the onset of democracy in South Africa, it was anticipated that such accumulation from below would be unleashed, particularly in agriculture, through land reform. Whether this has occurred, to what extent, and with what implications forms part of the core of this thesis encapsulated in the empirical chapters.

2.2.6 Accumulation from below

Accumulation from below occurs within generalised commodity production, which entails fierce competition between small producers of commodities, creating both winners and losers in the process. Winners are able to reinvest surplus value in their enterprises and move towards expanded reproduction, whilst losers are unable to do so and may only engage in simple reproduction of commodities at the same scale of production without expanded reproduction taking place or they may go under and ultimately be ‘winnowed out’ of production altogether (Cousins, 2015, Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986, Neocosmos 1993). The utility of the concept of accumulation from below for this study is its analytic power in identifying fragments of classes of people in society that have managed, through internal processes of competition, to become relatively well-established entrepreneurs in various small-scale trades or petty commodity production.

Accumulation from below is essentially ‘capitalism from below’ (Byres 1986), as characterised by Lenin from observations of the American path, where rural social differentiation and peasant accumulation occurred, unhindered by an oppressive state. This is juxtaposed with accumulation *from above* its opposite path of development characterised by extra-economic coercion and sometimes violence, for the benefit of local elites. This is the notorious Prussian path (*ibid.*), considered in the next section.

2.2.7 Accumulation from above

The most cited case of capitalism from above is the Prussian path where “the feudal landlord class was transformed into a capitalist class” (Byres 1986, p. 25). This was a protracted process which spanned centuries, where the state played a central role in the metamorphosis of the old feudal class into a class of capitalist farmers (*ibid.*). Through conquest of the peasantry, the aristocratic Junker class, the landed elite, secured for themselves large tracts of land and the ‘enservment’ of peasantry in forced labour in large capitalist estates. This was described as accumulation from above by Lenin, for it required significant state intervention in coalition with the Junker class of landed property. “The scope for processes of differentiation was severely limited, although, even in such circumstances, some rich peasants did emerge” (Byres 1986, p. 26). The Prussian path consisted a gradual metamorphosis of the Junker landed property class into a class of capitalist farmers on large estates expropriated from peasants, who were themselves transformed over time, often against their will, to become wage labourers

in new social relations with some reminders of the feudal past. The labour process on large estates can be described as from serfdom to cottage dormitories, and ultimately to wage labour (Byres 1986). “There was also an increasing dependence on foreign seasonal migrants (especially from Poland)” (*ibid.*, p. 28). However, in Prussia a small number of rich peasants who were closely aligned to the Junker elite also became capitalist farmers. Nevertheless, the central tendency was the transformation of the Junker elites themselves into capitalist farmers on the basis of wage labour.

Accumulation from above occurs when some producers of commodities gain an upper hand in processes of wealth creation through deploying extra-economic resources outside production, or the visible hand of the state (state corruption or elite capture) or assistance from a range of other powerful institutions, often through the suppression of other producers of commodities in various ways (Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986). However, Mamdani (1987) cautions that there is no ‘Chinese Wall’ separating these processes of accumulation, for example, within capitalism it can be desirable for those accumulating from below to also engage in accumulation from above. This has implications for localised forms of class politics, which help secure the conditions for accumulation from above; this illuminates the contradictions of capitalism, without romance, which can emerge in the relations between different capitalist farmers.

In African social formations, especially during and after colonialism, some scholars such as Mamdani (1987) have deployed the lenses of Marxist agrarian political economy in analysing the deepening of capitalism in the countryside, and particularly how capitalism can develop from above and below. Accumulation from above is characterised by “extra-economic pressures originating from either the state power itself or from state connected institutions (the party, the church) or individuals (bureaucrats, chiefs)” (Mamdani 1987, p. 200). For example, in Kitende, Uganda, the Land Reform Decree of 1975 facilitated a process of elite capture of land reform whereby local elites gained access to large tracts of land via District Land Reform Committees in which some of them had permanent seats or political connection (Mamdani 1987). As Mamdani states, “(p)olitical power is also used to create the basis for a monopoly, either in land or trade.” (1987, p. 201). He elucidates,

(i)ndependence gave middle class-led nationalist movements access to political (state) power. And it is the exercise of this power that creates the basis of an indigenous bourgeois class. The capital so accumulated may bear a private or a

state character. Its complement is landlordism, when accumulation is the result of a monopoly in land, also acquired through state connections. (*ibid.*, p. 203)

Similar observations have been made in South Africa with regard to the capture and control of District Land Reform Committees by local political elites, the petty bourgeoisie that use their political connection to gain access to land through land reform. These are strategies of accumulation of land from above which may lead to a new form of landlordism manifest in multiple farm 'leaseholderships' vested in politically connected individuals (Mtero et al. 2019).

For South Africa, the accumulation from above thesis is applicable in analysing how particular local elites or capitalists can use the power of the state, or state aligned institutions for their own accumulation. For example, as Cousins states:

[s]ince land reform in post-apartheid South Africa is state-directed, it is also likely to generate opportunities for accumulation from above, with would-be accumulators gaining access to land and other resources through political (extra-economic) connections or even coercion. (Cousins 2013a, p. 120)

It is the latter formulation that seems to be at the centre of recently deployed concepts such as elite capture in South Africa's ongoing land reform which appears to have lost much of its pro-poor connotations (Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017, Borras 2007). For example, the current land redistribution programme of South Africa is biased towards the indigenous elites, particularly those with strong political links within the ruling party, in the allocation of farms, and attendant state agricultural subsidies. The class implications of these developments translate to mere deracialisation of the white-dominated agrarian structure and neglect of those in the lowest ranks of class differentiation. Furthermore, the South African land redistribution programme is gender-biased towards men who are disproportionately the main beneficiaries in contrast to women (Mtero et al. 2019).

In the context of Zimbabwean land reform, Scoones et al. (2012) described accumulation from above by the so-called patronage farmers linked to the ruling party, who were allocated large scale A2 farms on the basis of political connections. They have therefore gained an upper hand in their accumulation strategies, not only through receiving large scale farms but further state support in the form of various agricultural subsidies such as through the so-called command agriculture pushed by the ruling party. These elite patronage farmers constitute a real obstacle in broad-based accumulation from below processes on the part of classes of labour, in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

2.3 Accumulation From Below and From Above in South African Land Reform

South Africa is generally considered to have followed an agrarian path of transition to capitalism that is similar to the Prussian path (Byres 1986), in that South African land-owning white elites transformed themselves into capitalist farmers with the aid of state support (Bernstein 1996, Morris 1976). However, Keegan (1986) contests this view on the basis of indigeneity and what can be viewed as a *linear* Prussian path thesis. Keegan argues that the white landowning elite that transformed into capitalist farmers in South Africa were not an indigenous elite as it was in Prussia. Instead, Keegan posits that the transition to capitalist agriculture rested upon the shoulders of sharecroppers and labour tenants who were the real producers, especially in the Highveld region of South Africa, until state intervention to support white capitalist agriculture, at the expense of suppressing the former. By then capitalist social relations of production had already emerged, though still embryonic and fledgling-like, until the gradual and accelerated state support to white capitalist farmers which impelled the adoption of a fully-developed, capital-wage relation, took full effect.

However, accumulation from above, regardless of its Prussian character or not, was the key tendency in the transition to fully-fledged capitalist white agriculture in South Africa (Genis 2015, Keegan 1986, Morris 1976). Indeed, accumulation from below on the basis of social differentiation of sharecroppers and labour tenants, however nascent in form, particularly on the Highveld labour-tenant farms (where Keegan did his research), and elsewhere (Bundy 1979) was ultimately crushed by massive state support to white farmers. This rendered black peasants, labour tenants, and sharecroppers superfluous to the needs of capitalist agriculture (see further discussion in Chapter Four below).

Beyond debate about this or that path of agrarian transition, what is more pertinent for the purpose in this theoretical chapter is the deployment of a Marxist lens in discerning processes of class formation in the historical and contemporary sense within Southern African processes of agrarian change (Levin and Neocosmos 1989, Neocosmos 1993). This is not a form of Marxist populism but an analysis that moves beyond the linear proletarianisation and de-peasantisation thesis to consider the wider picture. The wider picture entails unravelling historical trajectories of petty commodity production, both agricultural and non-agricultural, especially during the reign of repressive governments, when petty commodity production and accumulation from below was overlooked by the pro-workerist narrative associated with a narrow, linear proletarianisation thesis (Neocosmos 1993).

Neocosmos dismisses the linear proletarianization thesis in Southern Africa for ignoring the differentiated and parallel development of agricultural and non-agricultural PCP, which unfolded concurrently with processes of proletarianisation manifest in migrant labour systems of the region. This is what this study shows with regard to differentiated Qwaqwa PCPs from the 1950s onwards, a process of land dispossession followed by concurrent petty commodity production and proletarianisation (see Chapter Four). According to Neocosmos:

(T)he temporary migration so typical of Southern Africa can be said to take place for different reasons for different strata of peasants or worker-peasants. In other words, *super-exploited labour on the mines and petty commodity production in rural areas have tended to mutually condition each other's existence.* (*ibid.*, p. 45, italics in original)

The point to be grasped is concurrent processes of social differentiation with the penetration of capitalist social relations in Southern African countries, which implies the mutual coexistence of both proletarianisation and petty commodity production (Neocosmos 1993, Levin and Neocosmos, 1989). For Swaziland, Neocosmos (1993) draws on the work of Ruth First to illuminate processes of rural social differentiation with PCP anchored in access to off-farm income through migration (Neocosmos 1989). O’Laughlin (1996) builds upon First’s research findings in highlighting processes of social differentiation and rural livelihood diversification. Neocosmos concludes that this is applicable throughout Southern Africa, including Kenya (Neocosmos, 1993 citing Kitching 1985). These observations are grounded in conceptions of PCP as constituting part and parcel of generalised commodity production in the wider economy of the Southern African region. These are the social differentiation dynamics often missed by radical, populist but bourgeois African nationalists, particularly “the existence and extreme importance of a commonality of petty commodity production in Southern Africa” (*ibid.*, p. 52) and all its manifestations, including in non-agricultural PCPs in both rural, and urban settings (*ibid.*, see Chapter Four).

In a nutshell, Neocosmos (1993) argues that, faced with a repressive state and extra-economic coercion, accumulation from below, in practice, did not cease to exist nor give in to linear proletarianisation, and de-peasantisation during colonialism in Southern Africa. Various manifestation of this type of capitalism from below remain hidden in the historical record and archival material, which can be unravelled by Marxist theory (e.g. Tim Keegan 1988, illuminates class differentiation and what can be conceived as petty commodity producers in the Highveld of South Africa). Neocosmos unravels some glimpses of accumulation from

below in some parts of Southern Africa, for example, in addition to Mozambique, and Kenya mentioned above, Neocosmos adds Zimbabwe (Neocosmos, 1993 citing Cousins et al. 1990), where, after independence, the prosperous class of petty bourgeois and middle-class peasants emerged as a surprise, and challenged the linear proletarianisation thesis. Neocosmos (1993) further cites Phimister (1986) in pointing out that as early as the 1890s, processes of differentiation unfolded and manifested in peasant differentiation into rich, middle and poor strata which ultimately rested upon the foundation of the capital-labour relation. Further examples are drawn from South Africa as well, for example, petty commodity production that took place in the labour tenant, and sharecropping settings, as well as in the so-called black spots (Neocosmos 1993). The latter, particularly in labour-tenant settings, dovetails with the work of Tim Keegan (1986).

Accumulation from below is considered politically progressive by critical agrarian scholars (mainly agrarian Marxists) for its seemingly democratic ideals and thrust. Its surface appearance involves 'legitimate competition', especially when barriers such as an oppressive state or a landlord class are removed in favour of marginalised classes at the bottom end of social differentiation, thus enabling competition between small producers. The accumulation from below thesis, in essence, has a progressive conception of democracy at its core, as emphasised by Lenin (Neocosmos 1993). Such democracy, for example, specifically concerns freedom from various oppressions, a freedom that can unleash the economic potential of previously marginalised classes. These oppressions are often understood as lived experiences of the exploitative social relations between landlords/oppressive states, and unfree labour (or labour tenancy of various sorts), whereby the latter's prospects for accumulation from below is constrained, both in political and economic terms by the former (Neocosmos 1993, Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986). The democratic connotations of accumulation from below thesis stems from the progressive desire to eliminate oppressive social relations for heterogeneous economic participation and distribution of wealth and particularly so if some support from a democratic state is provided to the previously marginalised classes.

Theorising processes of accumulation from below and above in the South African land reform literature today cannot be divorced from its historical context (Chapter Four). This potentially elucidates the progressive need for accumulation from below as a constituent part of unfolding democracy and the equally progressive lamenting of contemporary tendencies on the part of the petty bourgeois and political elite to engage in accumulation from above (Mtero et al. 2019,

Hall and Kepe 2017). In a capitalist mode of production, accumulation from below is deemed more politically progressive and democratic than accumulation from above. As Cousins, notes for the Southern African context:

Accumulation from below on a significant scale in the Southern African context thus requires the redistribution of commercial farms to small-scale producers, but this is not sufficient: access to other resources is also required, including capital to invest in farming, with off-farm income an important potential source of such capital ... Today, massive levels of unemployment, not least in the industrial powerhouse of the region, South Africa, mean that the current structure includes a large 'surplus' population, in both urban and rural locations. Transformation must therefore include job creation on a very large scale. In this perspective, an agrarian reform that promotes accumulation in small-scale agriculture is feasible only in the context of a broader socio-economic transformation, but can also make an important contribution to it. (Cousins 2013a, p. 123)

The broader social transformation that Cousins suggests has to do with dealing with the agrarian question of fragmented classes of labour, as theorized by Henry Bernstein (2017, 2010, 2004). Theoretically, Cousins' suggestion of targeting 200 000 or so commercially oriented small-scale farmers in the former labour reserves of South Africa as potential beneficiaries of land redistribution appears as an appeal for the targeting of petty commodity producers who are inseparable from fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004). The commercially-oriented smallholder farmers in mainly former homelands/labour reserves (communal areas) do appear as petty agricultural commodity producers, in the sense that they possess the attributes of both capital and labour and sometimes hire labour, if not most of the time, and are currently incorporated into differentiated markets for the sale of their produce. Many of the latter can be categorised as small-scale capitalist farmers anchored in the employment of labour from poorer neighbours (Sato 2018, Okunlola et al. 2016).

As historicised in Chapter Four, the targeting of petty commodity producers as (potential) beneficiaries of land redistribution is not new in South Africa. Older experiments are most probably those that targeted nascent and established (petty) traders of various sorts, which included a small minority of small-scale capitalist farmers in the former Qwaqwa labour reserve (Bantustan/homeland) from the late 1980s (Chapter Four). Similar experiments also

occurred in the Eastern Cape Province around the same time (Coka 2018, Phiri 2004)⁹. However, the major difference between these older experiments and Cousins' (2013a, b, c) suggestion is that the former ironically included the business and political elite (Murray 1996) in addition to petty commodity producers of various sorts (Chapter Four).

Cousins' suggestion focuses on a category of producers composed of significant numbers of women, compared to older experiments highlighted above, since horticultural small-scale agriculture in the former labour reserves is often headed by women (Cousins et al. 2018). Cousins' propositions thus appear politically progressive on four relative fronts:

- I. Creating potential for processes of accumulation from below for current petty agricultural commodity producers and small-scale capitalist farmers located in the former labour reserves (Bantustans) of South Africa.
- II. Raising hopes for the inclusion of black women into the male-dominated capitalist agricultural sector, and more importantly the prospects of black women within the ranks of 'classes of labour' (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004) owning land is no small contribution towards an equal society.
- III. The inherent transformative assumptions of land reform in partially dealing with the injustices of racialised capitalism in South Africa today.
- IV. Against the backdrop of the fragmented classes of labour thesis (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004), targeting petty commodity agricultural producers and small-scale capitalist farmers as potential beneficiaries of land redistribution seems more likely to create employment for the currently unemployed; beneficiaries are more likely to remain petty commodity agricultural producers and small-scale capitalist farmers who employ their own labour, as well as the labour of others. Furthermore, also implicit in Cousins' thesis is the land question of current farm workers in their hundreds of thousands, and tens of thousands more of so-called farm dwellers and former labour tenants attached with (documented) land claims to white-owned farms an accumulation from below thesis

⁹ See also Cape Times, 10 November 1993.

that is inclusive of a much wider constituency of fragmented classes of labour, perhaps with the potential even to begin to decongest communal areas (Jara 2019).

It follows that once fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004) become owners of larger pieces of land through land redistribution, processes of class differentiation will unfold accordingly, as long as capitalism lives on. It is the proposition in this thesis that a class analytic approach is necessary in analysing class formation in ongoing land reform in South Africa, and elsewhere.

The concept of accumulation from below enables one to identify those classes in society located in the lower ranks of class differentiation, who are able or can be enabled by a progressive state to muster the resources required to become successful capitalist undertakings, and eventually expand production at a small scale, or even a significantly larger scale. This applies in agriculture, or any other sector of the economy. For instance, the accumulation from below thesis is useful in tracing livelihood trajectories of the studied family farms as enterprises, and farming households, by way of their most recent economic historicising from the time of land allocation from the late 1980s onwards, to about 2016. However, a much deeper economic history analysis of these households is necessary in order to tentatively determine which accumulation path they are following, by reconstructing their economic positioning prior to land allocation and then discerning the economic trajectories of family farm enterprises on the land reform farms after land allocation, not as isolated economic units but in their intersections with economic positions of immediate kin which transcend farm boundaries. As the empirical chapters illuminate, some of the land beneficiaries have embarked on trajectories of accumulation from below over a period of about 30 years, from their allocations of redistributed land from the late 1980s onwards (Chapter Nine). However, some have not been able to accumulate from below and were found using their improved access to land to widen their base of social reproduction strategies, however tenaciously (Chapter Seven). Others are located between these two extremes and engaged in simple reproduction of their capitalist agricultural enterprises (Chapter Eight).

The concept of accumulation from above as it is applied in this thesis potentially reveals that a small minority of the studied family farms may be accumulating from above, through political relations with state institutions and clandestine capture of localised state agricultural subsidies, including farmer associations, and a firm grip of clandestine local municipal affirmative action distributional mechanisms (Chapter Nine).

One of the fundamental contradictions of class politics within the studied farmers may be that a process of socialisation which normalises processes of accumulation from above, and elite capture, perhaps by some of those who have accumulated from below and who may have gradually become successful capital farmers who can be non-sympathetic to those farmers on the lower ranks of social differentiation on land reform farms who are neglected by the state (Hall and Kepe 2017). It will suffice to note these theoretical propositions here for elaboration in the empirical chapters.

2.4 The Agrarian Question of Labour

Henry Bernstein's concepts of an agrarian question of labour and fragmented classes of labour help to illuminate the fact that the initial concern of capital in penetrating pre-capitalist agrarian societies through protracted processes of primitive accumulation, has been completed on a world-historical scale and phenomenally expressed in generalised commodity production on the basis of capitalist social relations (Bernstein 2010, 2004, 1996). What remains unresolved, according to Bernstein, is the agrarian question of fragmented classes of labour, conceived as it is as the expression of historical processes associated with differentiated patterns of primitive accumulation on a world-scale which divorced world populations from the land and other natural resources as means of social reproduction.

By fragmented classes of labour, Bernstein refers to an increasing number of populations that:

directly, and indirectly depend on the sale of their labour power in increasingly insecure and oppressive wage employment combined with a range of likewise insecure 'informal sector' ('survival') activity, typically subject to its own forms of differentiation and oppression along intersecting lines of class, gender, generation, caste and ethnicity. And, of course, many of its number pursue their means of reproduction across different sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural, wage employment and self-employment. (Bernstein 2003, pp. 204-5).

In reaching these tentative conclusions, Bernstein draws from Marx's notion of a 'relative surplus population', rendered surplus to the needs of capital but expands on it based on current global problems, characterised by crises of social reproduction for the majority of classes of labour. At the core of these are generalised crises of social reproduction on a world scale as increasing numbers of people are not only rendered surplus to the needs of capital but many struggle to make ends meet. In their efforts to find work in fragmented and precarious labour

markets, finding a ‘proper’ job is increasingly difficult, and employment is increasingly precarious on a world scale (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2003, Ferguson and Li 2018, Li 2009).

The unresolved agrarian question of labour draws our attention to the masses of people who have been historically divorced from deriving their means of reproduction through traditional means as they were in pre-capitalist societies but not fully incorporated into the labour markets in terms of secure employment (Bernstein 2010). In other words, the world capitalist system fails to provide stable jobs for masses of people on a world-scale which are no longer in the position to derive their means of subsistence through access to land or natural resources as their ancestors did five centuries ago. This also applies to those with access to land, as access to land alone without other off-farm income sources is not enough for social reproduction under current economic conditions, especially in the Global South (*ibid.*, Cousins 2015). What improved access to land through land reform may contribute to the social reproduction of classes of labour is an empirical issue, as illuminated in the findings reported in Chapter Seven.

Central to the agrarian question of labour, and fragmented classes of labour thesis is the nature of off-farm employment and unemployment, even for those fragmented classes of labour (such as former farm workers and labour tenants) with improved access to land through state-led democratic redistributive reforms as is the case for South Africa.

The agrarian question of labour and fragmented classes of labour concepts aid the grounding of empirical research within the wider economic context which tends to always have some influence on localised processes of agrarian change, such as the reinvestment of retirement and resignation packages into farm production by accumulators in the area of study (discussed in Chapter Nine). Other relevant dimensions include the generalised off-farm employment stableness within simple reproducers in the area of study (discussed in Chapter Eight) and the generalised crisis of social reproduction owing to a wider crisis of off-farm unemployment within the impoverished owners of landed property in the area of study (discussed in Chapter Seven).

There have been critiques of Bernstein’s conception of the agrarian question, centred on gendered, ecological and political dimensions (Akram-Lodhi 2009, O’Laughlin 2009, Moyo, Yeros and Jha 2015, Tsikata 2016). These contributions potentially enhance nuance and diversity in contemporary understandings of the agrarian question, especially their political dimensions and implications. For instance, foregrounding the gendered agrarian question of

labour (Naidu and Ossome 2016, Tsikata 2016) in South African land reform is, firstly, to consider classes of labour (Bernstein 2003) or working people (Shivji 2017) as potential deserving beneficiaries of land reform and other redistributive measures, as well as to recognise, most importantly, that even then, redistributive measures may be biased against women's classes of labour, who are currently left out of the currently elite captured land reform process in South Africa. This elite capture of South African land reform is essentially the capture of land reform by privileged, middle-class black men, and a few middle-class, politically connected women (Mtero et al. 2019). The prospective policy implications of the gendered agrarian question of labour in terms of South African land reform is explored further in Chapter Ten of this thesis.

However, in a nutshell, the gendered agrarian question of labour has deepened the theoretical depth of the agrarian question of labour or fragmented classes of labour, and the concept of the working people, so as to consider the unaccounted-for gendered labour that goes into the reproduction of the current surplus labour populations in the Global South as often reiterated by Lyn Ossome. Incorporating its gendered dynamics, the analytical applicability of Bernstein's conception of the agrarian question of labour in this thesis has historical precedent that needs contextualisation – it is rooted in his earlier theorisation of the petty commodity production dynamic (Bernstein 1988) that continues to give impulse to peasant or small-scale agricultural production in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, and the wider global South – particularly, the birth, and persistence of petty commodity production in conditions characterised by generalised commodity production in a capitalist mode of production. Differentiated responses to generalised commodity production exist at its centre, as capitalist relations deepened into the remotest of rural areas on a world historical scale. Bernstein's contribution is necessarily about transitions from pre-capitalist to capitalist society, as peasants responded to burgeoning capitalist relations attendant to locally embedded forms of colonial rule, for example, peasant responses to cash crop production in mission stations, homelands, labour tenant farms or labour reserves, sometimes combining off-farm wages with farm production (O'Laughlin 2009, 1996). Of course, this was intertwined with the social fabric of collective kinship ties that evolved in complementary and contradictory ways to capitalism from above, as Moyo, Yeros, and Jha (2015), citing Mafeje (2003), remind us in their critique of Bernstein's construing of African social formations and attendant transitions to capitalism. This unfolded within a generalised dynamic of racial oppression expressed in local forms of governance which drained out surplus value from the peasantry. This was met with general

disdain, which partially fuelled liberation struggles with an ethos for nationalist liberation from the constraints of accumulation from below in agriculture and other sectors, though this was not explicitly expressed in some liberation movements of Southern Africa (Neocosmos 1993), with the exception of Zimbabwe (Moyo and Yeros 2005). For example, different forms of rents, tributes and other forms of surplus value extraction from the peasantry by local governance structures constituted the ingredients of oppression and suppressed accumulation from below on the part of the peasantry (Mamdani 1987). These forms of surplus value were extracted from the labouring classes whose production form resembled that of petty commodity production.

The conception of petty commodity producers, as small capitals on the basis of self-exploitation and labour hiring, has been further refined as part and parcel of the currently disorganised and fragmented classes of labour - the globalised reserve army of the unemployed, under-employed and a wide range of under classes of working-class populations (Bernstein 2004). As will be shown in this thesis, the persistence of petty commodity production, and other forms of small-scale capitalist agriculture in ongoing land reform of South Africa, and the post land reform context of Zimbabwe can be theorised by concepts of PCP, and fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 1988, 2004). Whether these are patterns of reagrarianisation (Van der Ploeg 2010), survivalist or accumulation strategies (Scoones et al. 2018a, Scoones et al. 2012) is open to empirical investigation, theorisation and debate.

2.5 Social Reproduction and Class Dynamics

Social reproduction consists of all the daily, life-reproducing activities that different genders, classes, ethnicities, races, and generations of people engage in, in order to reproduce themselves as well as society at large. It consists of all the unequal, hierarchical, structural, and oppressive social relations that these differentiated populations enter into, daily, yearly and generationally, in order to reproduce themselves and their immediate kin, in places of work, home, community, and society at large. The bedrock of social reproduction consists of the reproduction, for the better or worse, of material conditions for these differentiated populations within particular, peculiar, contingent and contextual specificities of structural social relations that condition both social existence and political consciousness (Bhattacharya 2017, Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010).

Crises of social reproduction in the Global South today (Bernstein 2010) are generally economic and stem from macroeconomic contexts such as deindustrialisation in South Africa (Slater 2001) but are also inseparable from particular contingencies, such as this country's recent history of racialised oppression (Bernstein 1996). Crises of social reproduction arise where the material basis of daily life has been significantly eroded, for example through loss of income to sustain a family, or small-scale petty commodity production on small pieces of land (Bernstein 2010). Therefore, in studies of petty commodity agricultural production and small-scale farming in the Global South, Tsikata (2016) reminds us of the need to intelligently discern historically-contingent gendered and generational divisions of labour that condition material outcomes, such as accumulation from below from petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist agriculture. In other words, Tsikata reminds us that in every peasant or petty commodity producing household there are gendered and generational divisions of labour which tend to be unequal and oppressive, illuminating a non-romantic view of small-scale agriculture but a form of production rested upon someone's labouring efforts which may be concealed by surface appearances of peasant production units. This is the agrarian questions of gendered labour (Naidu and Osome 2016).

As acknowledged by Cousins et al. (2018) in their review of recent literature on recent developments in social reproduction theory, it is an area of vast definition but with relative apparent consensus about the inseparability of capitalism from social reproduction even in situations where social reproduction appears somewhat outside of commodity production relations.

Social reproduction takes place in particular ways in the Global South where small-scale agriculture is engaged in by significant numbers of people. It includes the use of crop and livestock production for domestic consumption and cash earnings, and the gathering of natural resources such as wild foods, fuelwood, timber, and materials for craft production, for both own use and sale. (Cousins et al. 2018, p. 1064)

For rural villagers of the Global South the above quote is illuminating in terms of how fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004) in these parts of the world survive within the current age of capitalism against the backdrop of unemployment for the majority (Cousins 2015). Nonetheless, as Cousins et al. further observe, access to land, and natural resources seem to contribute in the reproduction of fragmented classes of labour in the Global South and whether this is increasing or decreasing is an empirical question, especially in the agrarian contexts of the Global South with recent or ongoing land reforms such as Southern

Africa and Latin America. However, as observed above from the work of Tsikata (2016) these strategies of social reproduction in agrarian contexts as well as elsewhere are, in reality, deeply influenced by the gendered power relations that largely underpin degrees of access to land and natural resources. They also condition the designation of duties in securing livelihoods which illuminates the tendency for more work and other burdens falling on women in rural areas, such as working the land for food production in conjunction with fetching water and firewood, food preparation, and care for the young and elderly, as well as the sickly (Cousins et al. 2018).

An important observation from the literature on social reproduction is the intersection of various variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, and generation (Bernstein 2010) in the fortunes of and problems experienced by the research respondents in the area of study. The combination of these variables in the social reproduction of the studied family farms on redistributed land is an important factor in determining the class positioning of these households and their relative location in terms of economic trajectories. These intersections reveal differences between those fragmented classes of labour whose improved access to land has widened their base for social reproduction, as well as differentiated the latter from those who are relatively well-off and in a position to invest some of their off-farm earnings into farm production, thus accumulating from below.

2.6 Rent and Landed Property

A class of landed property is considered by some to be Karl Marx's 'third class', in addition to capital and labour (Neocosmos 1986). According to Neocosmos, in a capitalist mode of production this class is essentially a component part of any modern social formation landlords cannot be conceived as feudal leftovers and independent actors existing outside the capital-wage relation. Instead, they are continuously transformed by their social, economic, and political relations with other classes in any social formation (*ibid.*). This is perhaps best manifested in societies where pre-capitalist landlord classes have been transformed into a class of large-scale capitalist farmers (Byres 1986). Feudal leftovers, such as power relations between transformed landlords/large scale capitalist farmers and transformed former serfs/tenants or agricultural workers, can linger on, taken into a capitalist mode of production but are essentially subsumed into the logic of generalised commodity production within wider macro-economic contexts (Neocosmos 1993).

Landed property the world over has been theorised as comprising a powerful class of landlords which, in many instances, has collided with emerging capital in transitions to a fully capitalist mode of production and, in some instances, been overthrown by its own labour force or with the aid of external forces (Banaji 2012, Bernstein 2010, Byres 1986, Lenin 1977). For example, in South Africa, a class of mainly immigrant white landlords emerged within the development of capitalism in agriculture, a transition which has been usefully conceived as a form of accumulation from above resembling the Prussian agrarian transition path (Bernstein 1996, Byres 1986). This class of landlords has historically formed political coalitions with state institutions and received favourable agricultural subsidies, to the detriment of labour tenants who were unable to overthrow the latter through struggle. The land reform process in South Africa's young democracy attempts not to overthrow these landlords/landowners but to redistribute land through market assisted transactions (Borras 2003). Whether or not these land redistributive attempts lead to the formation of an *impoverished* form of landed property is an empirical question dealt with in Chapter Seven.

This study seeks to apply the general concept of landed property in the context of land reform in South Africa. This is done by way of exposition of the essential relations underpinning the surface appearance of an *impoverished landed property*, in contrast to landlords owning land derived from land redistribution, conceived of as a powerful third class.

Lenin also wrote about ground-rent in the context of accumulation from below in the Russian countryside in the 19th century. He was writing in the context of post-reform Russia and his purpose was to scientifically expose the development of capitalism in that country. Lenin came across a different form of ground-rent that was emerging in agriculture, a significantly different form of ground-rent than that theorised by Karl Marx. Marx's approach to ground rent was its theorisation in contexts where landlords proper had different kinds of tenants who paid rent or other tributes to their landlords in pre-capitalist societies, and explored how these relations were transformed with the development of capitalist social relations (Neocosmos 1986).

The concern of this study is with regard to drawing some analytical insight from the manner in which Lenin analysed ground rent in a post-reform context in Russia, where many poor farmers elected to rent out their land to rich farmers, forced as they were by the material circumstances, and perhaps best described as the impoverished landed property alluded to above.

Lenin observed the tendency for land access to become ever more concentrated in the hands of rich farmers following their renting of land from poor farmers (Lenin 1977). The phenomenon of renting, as well as purchasing of land by the rich farmers typically from poor farmers and, to a lesser extent, from middle-class farmers, was an important element of class differentiation that was glaring for Lenin in his analysis of Zemstvo statistics. In his own words: “In addition to selling labour-power, the rural proletariat obtains an income from leasing their allotment land” (Lenin 1977, p. 77). Lenin further points out that worker-peasants “often lease out their allotments because of lack of implements, seed etc” (*ibid.*, p. 145), and emphasised that in order “[t]o view intelligently the differentiation of the peasantry, one must take the picture as a whole: the renting of land, the purchase of land, machines, outside employments [i.e. off-farm work], the growth of commercial agriculture, and wage labour” (*ibid.*, p. 148, emphasis the researcher’s).

Lenin used quantitative data from the Zemstvo statistics to illuminate the phenomenon of land rentals in a capitalist mode of agricultural production and vividly showed that the renting of land then was fundamentally different to that found in pre-capitalist, feudal landlord-serf settings. In Russia it was nascent agrarian capital’s renting of land from poor- and middle-class farmers, which appeared a central tendency, not the other way around. Of course, the new rent arrangements also involved land rentals between the poor farmers, and amongst the middle-class farmers and that too reflected class differentiation. However, what was most significant for Lenin was the tendency towards greater concentration of land amongst rich farmers.

Furthermore, Lenin emphasised that land rent income was very important in the livelihoods of worker-peasants which revealed an “entirely *different* character of renting by the poor, who cling to the land” (Lenin 1977, p. 137 italics in original) whilst they may be employed, or self-employed off-farm, combining wages (off-farm income) with land rent income (*ibid.*). On this note Lenin states: “[i]t must not be forgotten, furthermore, that the income from the leasing of land and from laboring goes entirely to cover the personal needs of the peasant” (Lenin 1977, p. 152) i.e., the farm-rental income goes directly towards the social reproduction of the worker-peasant.

The utility of Lenin’s analysis of the renting out of land by an impoverished landed property is that it helps us understand what this class of landowners did with the rent income so received. Given their location in the lowest ranks of class differentiation, access to this farm-rental income was crucial for the widening of their bases of social reproduction, for it was combined

with off-farm employment or other off-farm income sources, however precarious and minute these might be. For our purposes in the study of class differentiation in post land reform contexts, an important observation to be made in cases where the phenomenon of the renting out of agricultural land is concretely evident, is to probe who is renting out farmland, for what purposes, and who benefits from it, in what particular way, and who does not benefit, and for what reasons.

In South Africa, the current, state-driven land redistribution has created various landholding entities such as Communal Property Associations, individuals with private titles, and the state. Against this backdrop, the researcher posits the concept of an impoverished landed property which has been created and continues to be recreated by ongoing land reform in South Africa. This consists of all those land beneficiaries who rent out their land for rent income or dividends which are, in real terms, insufficient for their social reproduction, let alone accumulation from below. This study argues that these can be marginalised land beneficiaries within Communal Property Associations which nominally own the land rented out to agrarian capital by core local elites within these CPAs and trusts (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014, Ngubane and Brooks 2013, Ngubane 2012), as well as those land beneficiaries in the so-called equity-schemes in South African land reform who are nominal owners of their land but who continue being marginalised farm workers on the same land, whilst the benefits of farm production remain elusive (Tom 2006, Kruger 2008). For marginalised land beneficiaries in these cases, the dividends from renting out arable land are insufficient and inconsistent and beneficiaries are barred from accessing their land for small-scale agricultural purposes (*ibid.*).

This seems to be the case particularly in relation to high-value arable land suitable for the production of horticultural produce, citrus, deciduous fruit, and other high-value plant crops (*ibid.*). It is also observed in so-called community game farms or community nature conservation areas as well, where land beneficiaries become mere shareholders through CPAs, and gain insufficient benefits in the form of dividends, yet are also barred from accessing the land for agricultural purposes by core local elites in community trusts or other collective land holding entities (Ngubane and Brooks 2013). In extremely rare circumstances marginalised beneficiaries even invade their own land for small-scale agricultural purposes and access to natural resources, such as firewood, grassland, and wild fruit where they had been previously barred from accessing land by communal landholding entities (Ngubane 2018).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the conceptual framework adapted for this study by introducing key Marxist concepts such as accumulation from below and above, simple reproduction, petty commodity production, the Agrarian Question of Labour and its attendant fragmented classes of labour concept and social reproduction, as well as the concept of ground rent and its new meanings in post-land reform contexts. Each concept was reviewed briefly, followed by an explanation of its applicability in the analysis of empirical data. Each section was followed by an argument that foregrounded the inter-linkages between these concepts in the analysis of class differentiation on redistributed land in the area of study. Furthermore, the researcher has argued that the interconnections between these concepts, as differentiated as they are, yield enriched analysis when grounded in historicised processes of local agrarian change within wider localised geo-political and macro-economic contexts, which often underpin surface appearance of livelihood trajectories of the studied family farms on redistributed land.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL REALISM IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter does not discuss critical realism in depth, other than drawing upon Sayer's ideas on extensive and intensive research design (Sayer 1998), which have informed the methods of data collection adopted in this thesis. Critical realism is an approach to researching and analysing the social relations that underpin social formations, modes of production, and societal reproduction chains (Sayer 2000, Hall 2003). In the process of undertaking research and analysis through the lens of the critical realist framework, hierarchical, patriarchal, and hegemonic political, economic and social systems in which the reproduction of society is anchored are unravelled and exposed (Sayer 1998). This is why it is described as 'critical'. Critical realist social science and the research methodologies it adopts are grounded in Marx's dialectical method as outlined in the introduction to the Grundrisse (Scoones 2016, Hall 2003, Marx 1973). According to Marx, "(t)he concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse" (Marx 1973, p. 101). Marx's method eschews the surface appearance of objects for the exposition of hidden underlying determinations that constitute the concrete whole. In thought, this is essentially an iterative process from abstract concepts (Hall 2003), to concrete messy realities and lived experiences of human subjects and then finding one's way back to the first step in order to theorise the concrete in terms of these abstract concepts (Sayer 2000).

Sayer (1998) posits that there is no empirical research that is not theory-laden, yet empirical research is still separable from theoretical debate which illuminates the constant need of analytical iterations between the theoretical and the empirical in order to avoid being subsumed by theory in a misleading way. According to Sayer (1998, p. 11) "(w)e simply have to go and find out through theoretically-informed empirical research". This essentially entails equipping oneself with appropriate theoretical abstractions or concepts to aid flexible processes of empirical data collection that are conditioned by the contingent realities of fieldwork (*ibid.*). This suggests going into the field with an open mind, without the mind-set that seeks to prove

a particular hypothesis but in order to aptly recognise the multiple, concrete determinations of the constituent whole. According to Scoones (2016)

greater analytical power, and more effective, generalisable arguments can emerge through an interaction of deep empiricism and intelligent theorisation. Theory cannot exist in a vacuum, though, as it never stands up to scrutiny without being rooted, engaged and supported by empirical foundations. (Scoones 2016, p. 228)

Moving from the abstract to the concrete is theory-laden empirical research, always concerned with unravelling the many determinations of the concrete through immersion in the messy and muddy waters of practical/empirical detail, yet being able to abstract, in thought, from the many determinations of the concrete to synthesise concrete conceptual categories, such as the categorisation of farming populations into differentiated classes of farmers (Sayer 1998).

This chapter discusses how critical realism intersects with historical materialist research methods (Hall 2003) in unravelling longitudinal livelihood trajectories over time and space (Murray 2002). The latter is retrospective, circumspective, and prospective in approach (*ibid.*). The chapter begins with an overview of the general character of these intersections sequentially, followed by an overview of some of the methodological implications, particularly in relation to what are termed 'extensive' and 'intensive' methods (Sayer 1998). This is followed by a discussion of the intersections of the latter with retrospective, circumspective and prospective livelihood research tools, as proposed by Murray (2002), and specifically how this approach has informed the empirical observations reported in this study. The chapter closes with some reflections on the researcher's own positionality involving research ethics as well as his own strengths as an indigenous researcher in South Africa.

3.2 The Retrospective Method in Longitudinal Livelihood Research

The key objective of the retrospective approach is the analysis of household or family trajectories of accumulation or impoverishment over time and of particular matrices of vulnerability (Murray 2002, p. 490).

Colin Murray, an anthropologist of Southern Africa, argues that livelihoods research has to be longitudinal in character (Murray 2002). Accordingly, a retrospective approach looks back in time and considers historical processes of change; it is thus compatible with historical materialism and agrarian political economy. At the core of this approach is the diagnosis of processes such as class formation through scrupulous attention to class social relations within contextualised, contingent and localised historical contexts (*ibid.*). As noted by Hall (2003, p.

134) “(h)istory moves but only as a delayed and displaced trajectory, through a series of social formations or ensembles. It develops by means of a series of breaks, engendered by the internal contradictions specific to each mode”. Accordingly the researcher has deployed the retrospective approach to illuminate structural, economic, and social relations between landed property, labouring classes and the state over time and space, hence the socio-spatial, and historical dimensions of the title of this thesis: *Investigating socio-spatial trajectories of class formation: accumulation from above and below on New Qwaqwa Farms, 1980s-2016*.

Life history interviews, combined with insights from the historical literature reviewed in Chapter Four and informed by agrarian political economy concepts, constitute the key element of the retrospective method of enquiry. The life histories of the studied land beneficiaries were analysed through a critical assessment of the social relations of the material conditions in which they emerged, and in this case, this involves their embeddedness in the wider historical context of racialised colonialism, and attendant oppressive lived experiences. These life histories were integrated into the central theme of tracing class formation trajectories, which span historical epochs.

According to Murray, “individual life-histories assume a significant place in the methodology for achieving a better understanding of livelihood trajectories” (Murray 2002, p. 496). Accordingly, the researcher has traced the life histories of the studied land beneficiaries from reconstruction of their ancestral roots as labour tenants and sharecroppers on white-owned farms, to their relocation to a labour reserve/Bantustan, Qwaqwa, when their labour was no longer needed by agrarian capital. They were thereafter resurrected as differentiated petty (non) agricultural producers and other (migrant) classes of labour within Qwaqwa, followed by their selection as land beneficiaries on the so-called New Qwaqwa Farms from the mid-1980s, onwards.

These livelihood trajectories had spatial dimensions with different sign posts, marked by real farm boundaries and the known and unknown graves of their ancestors on former labour-tenant farms, as well as the township house structures in Qwaqwa, which many still maintain, moving back and forth between land reform farms and the former homeland/labour reserve/Bantustan. The wider significance of these historicised spatial dynamics illuminate the processes through which classes of labour are in motion towards unknown futures of pauperisation or relative prosperity for some, within changing wider, macro-economic contexts. These include the animal hides-centred economy of the latter half of the 19th century, the localised, grain-centred

macro-economic context of industrialising South Africa up to the mid-20th century which rested upon shoulders of labour tenants and sharecroppers of the Highveld (Keegan 1986) and the subsequent deindustrialisation and structural unemployment of the more recent period (Slater 2001, 2002, Murray 1996). Against this backdrop, life history interviews from the vantage point of respondents, combined with the researcher's grounding in historical materialism and agrarian political economy and an understanding of current dynamics within the wider political economy, enriches the contextualisation and tracing of livelihood trajectories (Murray 2002).

In a nutshell, historical materialism and political economy made a threefold contribution to the methods of data collection used in this thesis. Firstly, the history of primitive accumulation that unfolded in the Eastern Free State region provided an essential backdrop in historicising the studied land reform beneficiaries' shared history of labour tenancy, sharecropping, and subsequent relocation from farmland which gained unprecedented momentum from the 1950s onwards. This historical backdrop informed this study's analysis of retrospective accounts of forced removals from labour-tenant farms, as documented in Chapter Four.

Secondly, the retrospective approach informed the researcher's probing of historical events pertaining to how land beneficiaries acquired land, which revealed much about the state's land beneficiary selection process. The latter had class connotations and relative but not absolute biases towards particular classes, as well as a gender bias; the tenets of the promotion of a strong yeomanry farmer has been a lingering desire in Southern African agricultural policy inherited from colonialism of the region (Scoones et al. 2018a). This backdrop was useful in tracing the historical trajectories of class formation in the area of study.

Thirdly, the retrospective approach allowed the researcher to unravel events that took place from the time the first farmers were allocated land in the 1980s and some understanding of the dynamics of farm production from then onwards, even though this did not allow detailed quantitative and longitudinal farm production data to be collected. Nonetheless, this was supplemented by the circumspective approach outlined below.

3.3 The Circumspective Method in Livelihood Trajectories Research

The circumspective approach 'looks around' at social realities in the present and specifically at the current livelihood trajectories of the studied land beneficiaries. Within this circumspective approach, the researcher examined the land beneficiaries' current farm

production data and quantified what is produced now (Bernstein 2010) in order to ascertain their degrees of farm capitalisation, their integration into land markets, as well as input and output markets. In relation to farm production, for example, the researcher collected quantitative data on arable land size, size of the area under crops with grain and other crops, livestock herd sizes, and purchases and sales in attendant input and output markets. This was combined with attention to internal social relations within classes of farmers and their relations with other classes, as well as relations with the state. The concept of an impoverished form of landed property, discussed in Chapter Seven, emerged from these investigations. The circumspensive process was guided by a survey questionnaire, which was both retrospective and current in approach to a degree, and collected data on the different elements that constitute the livelihoods of the studied farmers and their immediate kin. Data were also collected in varying combinations of farm income with off-farm employment of the main farmer and their immediate kin and examination of how this off-farm employment affects both farm production and farm income.

3.4 The Prospective Method in Livelihood Trajectories Research

The prospective approach looks into the future, in terms of the relevance and implications of the research findings for political policy formation. This is discussed in Chapter Ten, the conclusion of this thesis. However, a few remarks can be made here, in light of the propositions outlined in Chapter One. The main prospective dimension of the contribution of this thesis is a proposition around a kind of agrarian reform that takes the side of classes of labour and a land reform that supports classes of labour and promotes accumulation from below. This implies targeting classes of labour as the key beneficiaries of land reform and other forms of affirmative action policies. This targeting of classes of labour can be justified as affirmative action against the historical backdrop of the peculiar conditions of South African forms of racialised capitalism, and is also based on current prospects for accumulation from below with attendant state support. Furthermore, policy recommendations are made with regard to heterogeneous land reform outcomes, as discussed in the introduction and conclusion of this thesis.

3.5 Extensive and Intensive Research Methodologies in Social Science

This study adopted a critical realist methodological framework in its materialist research and its research design, in particular, was strongly influenced by the distinction between extensive

and intensive research methods in social science (Sayer 1992). According to Sayer, extensive research methods often involve a survey questionnaire which can be quantitative and can cover a relatively vast (geographical) area, interviewing many human subjects. In extensive research, the researcher can use a survey instrument to ask similar or uniform questions of a wider population of respondents, so as to yield mainly quantitative data for subsequent statistical analysis and yielding descriptive statistics or generalisations based on an analysis of 'taxonomic groups', which have been identified by the researcher as sharing similar descriptive characteristics (Sayer 1992).

Intensive research methods are mainly qualitative and in-depth in nature and can be ethnographic in approach, focusing on a small number of respondents (individuals, focus groups, or institutional agents), based on particular criteria (sometimes developed after completing extensive research). The criteria can also be developed following a desktop-based review, where secondary material is reviewed, although an empirical base is more desirable, where the actual extensive survey questionnaire is applied to a wider population of human subjects (Sayer 1992). In intensive research, causal dynamics are viewed as 'essential conditions' (Bernstein 1988) or concrete determinations (Marx 1973) of key or emerging social phenomena. The focus is on causal rather than taxonomic groups, based on substantial relations or connections, and thus on causal processes. This offers the potential for an account with greater explanatory power but the small number of respondents limits the representivity of findings. This means that intensive and extensive approaches are best combined, enhancing the strengths of each approach.

In-depth life history interviews are most useful as an intensive research tool, for they trace the living histories of research participants, in this case, trajectories of class formation which do not just emerge but are a reflection of many historical materialist determinations and relations (Hall 2003). This search for causal dynamics and essential conditions of particular class dynamics eschews illusions wrought by mere appearances (Marx 1973) of research subjects, such as a population of land beneficiaries in South Africa, which can be chaotically conceptualised as an undifferentiated, single-class category, perhaps on the basis of racial constructions for example, as black farmers on land reform farms in South Africa. Practically, in the messy world of prospective research that might be targeted at transforming state policy regarding the distribution of state agricultural subsidies, the unpacking of class relations and exposition of elements that constitute, and cause the formation of particular classes are crucial

for reaching the most marginalised classes of labour in the shadow of local elites. This is linked to a prospective approach that seeks to transform society towards deepened democracies that critique the undemocratic nature of indigenous elitism that constrains South African democracy (Ntsebeza 2005), in many different ways, including elite capture of scarce public goods (Hall and Kepe 2017, Mtero et al. 2019).

Combining extensive and intensive research approaches can involve narrowing down to a few taxonomic groupings identified by the researcher through extensive research and then searching for substantial connections between processes and events, focusing on causal groups, their internal characteristics, and social relations (Sayer 1992). For example, the abstract concept of an internally differentiated impoverished landed property described in Chapter Seven emerged from the iterative process of narrowing down to particular taxonomic groups on the basis of concretely shared attributes, ranging from historical experience and current material conditions. This can be ascertained on the basis of life history interviews with a small number of respondents, either through interviewing individual persons or groups, in focus group settings (Murray 2002, Oya 2007). The life history approach was the most important method in conducting interviews in the intensive phase of this study. The latter included repeat interviews and prolonged, ethnographic-style fieldwork. This was combined with quantitative data collection on aspects of current farm production and degrees of capitalisation, which was also crucial in the differentiation of the sample into class-based categories.

3.6 Livelihoods Research that Transcends Space and Time: a Critical Realist Framework

The intersections of livelihood research that transcends space and time, or what Murray (2002) describes in terms of retrospective, circumspective and prospective research, with a critical realist methodological framework, has at its core a materialist foundation. These theory-laden lenses borrow from materialist historical geography which can, for example, examine the spatial dimensions of historical and contemporary livelihoods of ‘footloose’ (Breman 1998) former ‘peasants’, former farm workers, labour tenants, and former sharecroppers. A critical realist framework is interwoven into this type of research. Firstly, because critical realism in social science is consciously theory-laden, for example it is often specifically rooted in theories that examine subaltern classes in society within wider macro-economic and geo-political contexts, as well as particular historical contexts, such as colonial and post-colonial social formations. Secondly, critical realism pays attention to revealing how ‘blood and sweat capital’ (Zhang 2015) is centrally involved in struggles of subaltern classes in relation to other classes

within the contemporary world historical conjuncture characterised by crises of social reproduction for working class populations the world over (Bernstein 2003).

Thirdly, critical realism uses the circumspective method to determine what subaltern classes do to survive in this current conjuncture. Accordingly, within the context of agricultural households on redistributed land in the area of study, the circumspective research approach in this study quantifies differentiated agricultural production benefits and the intersections of agricultural production with off-farm income remittance investments into farm production, and farm income outflows towards mitigating the situation of unemployment and near-destitute immediate kin, living off-farm (e.g. see Chapter Seven).

3.7 Critical Realism in Longitudinal Livelihood Research Methods: the Research Journey

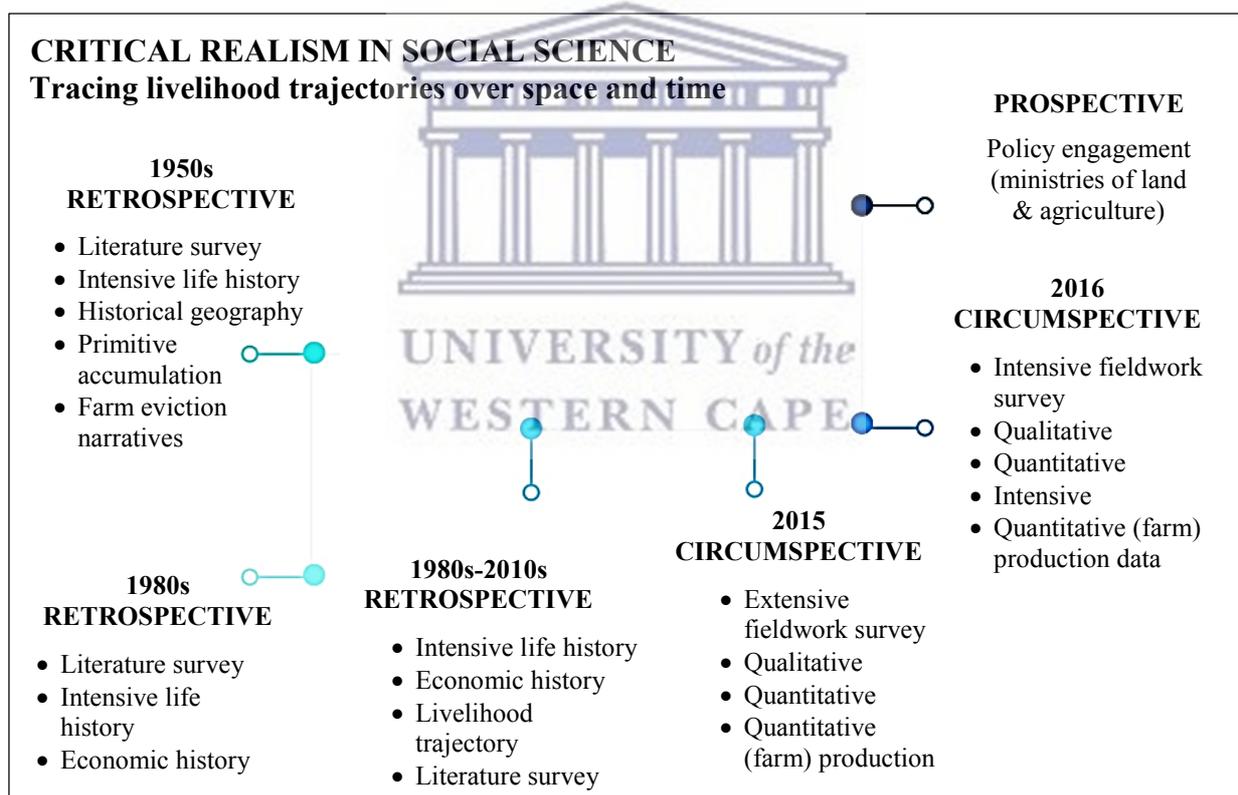


Figure 3.1: Intersections of critical realism with longitudinal livelihood research methods

In this section the researcher traces his own research journey, focusing on how he coalesced intersections of historical materialism and lived experiences of research respondents obtainable through life history interviews, combined with data collection on current aspects of farm production and off-farm employment. The first step entailed immersion in intensive reading of

studies revealing the historical context of the area of study, guided by historical materialist perspectives on South Africa's agrarian transition to a fully-fledged capitalist agriculture and attendant social relations of production, poverty, property, and power (Bernstein 1998, 1996). These social relations evolved within processes of historical agrarian change, particularly the burgeoning capital-labour relation in the countryside, and within the broader social formation of industrialising South Africa (see Chapter Four).

As shown in Figure 3.1, the historical context was reconstructed from a materialist reading of the area of study's historical geography. This was supplemented by life-history interviews of the studied farmers as individuals, and families, with their experiences recalled in living memory from the 1950s onwards. Life-history interviews are critically important for grasping the historical presence of human subjects, especially in studies which seek to discern longitudinal class formation trajectories that transcend space, and time (Oya 2007, Murray 2002). Life history interviews revealed that the history of forced relocations of labour tenants and sharecroppers from white-owned farms in the area of study (Keegan 1986) which significantly intensified from the 1950s-1970s, is inseparable from processes of primitive accumulation which did not lead to linear proletarianisation but, rather, involved differentiated pathways of pauperism and petty commodity production in the Qwaqwa labour reserves. Here, former farm workers, labour tenants and sharecroppers experienced life after farm evictions differently on the basis of the extent to which households were incorporated into the wage economy and (non-agricultural) petty commodity production. In Figure 3.1, the latter is encapsulated from the time period spanning from the 1950s to 1980s. The researcher has documented these aspects in Chapter Four of this study.

The class formation concepts that the researcher equipped himself with prior to fieldwork research are discussed in Chapter Two above. A key theoretical underpinning is worth recalling here: accumulation from below and above (Mamdani 1987). This concept helps throw an illuminating light on hidden pathways of livelihood trajectories with all their complexities and problems, on the part of differentiated classes, genders, ethnicities, and generations, who are nothing but the product of their histories of social relations, or what Marx calls 'socially determined individuals' (Hall 2003). This formulation was guided by the theory-laden empirical research at an abstract level (Sayer 2000), proceeding with an open mind and flexibility to allow for other conception of trajectories of class formation, such as simple reproduction without any accumulation taking place, as documented in the empirical chapters

of this thesis, to emerge from the material itself. In Figure 3.1, the latter is encapsulated in analysis of the period from the 1980s to 2010s and especially the two years of fieldwork, 2015, and 2016, which focused on current farm production dynamics in the circumspective approach. This is the beauty of moving from abstract concepts to the unpacking of many determinations of the concrete and back to the abstract in thought, through abstraction to formulate concrete categories, such as class categories (Marx 1973). Crucial to the latter was the researcher's adoption of a combination of extensive and intensive research methods in conducting fieldwork research (Sayer 1998).

3.8 The Empirical Research Journey on New Qwaqwa Farms

In 2015, on the basis of desktop research, including a review of media outputs (for example, see Appendix 4 and 5), the researcher identified a population of about 114 black farmers located on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State province of South Africa. In contrast to conventional land reform beneficiaries in South Africa, these farmers have a longer history as land reform beneficiaries which can be traced from the mid-1980s (see Figure 3.1). This programme arose in the context of the apartheid government's contingency homeland consolidation plans which were essentially strategic buffer zones to be filled with prosperous black farmers, geographically located between white farmers and black residents of former labour reserves, possibly to block any political militant mobilisations from the latter, including land occupations that may explode with Mandela's release from prison. This policy was strategically applied on the land between white-owned farms and former labour reserves/Bantustans towards the end of apartheid, not only in the Eastern Free State but the Eastern Cape, and other provinces as well (Coka 2018) and was 'sugar coated' by the virtues of creating yeoman black farmers, as well as homeland consolidation (Chapter Four).

An extensive research questionnaire was developed after a literature review on the area of study. This aim of this extensive questionnaire was to gain insights in relation to the geography and agro-ecology of the area of study, as well as some knowledge about the farmers (see Appendix 6). The extensive phase of fieldwork helped unsettle some of the myths of literature in relation to perceptions about land beneficiaries in general, and the studied farmers in particular, for example some of the studied farmers which this study has categorised as an impoverished landed property in Chapter Seven. Other publications, such as the academic publications from colleagues at the Department of Geography, University of Free State, were more concerned about the pervasive failure of the land beneficiaries of the Eastern Free State

to meet the expectations of massive grain production and provided policy recommendations with regard to the latter (Claassen et al. 2014). The researcher's reading of prior research was informed by a materialist perspective at its core and was thus 'theory laden' (Sayer 2000). The main concern in this reading was to situate the area of study within its historical and contemporary context, since the crux of this thesis is to unravel how processes of class differentiation are unfolding on redistributed land within South Africa's ongoing land reform.

Preliminary fieldwork was conducted prior to the formulation of the extensive research component in order to get a sense of the area of study so that the researcher could make informed decisions in designing a farm/household survey questionnaire. The extensive research questionnaire was tested over a period of three months and yielded significant qualitative and quantitative data on 30 farmers in 2017. At that stage it seemed to provide sufficient data for basic quantitative analysis, but further fieldwork was conducted from 2017-2018 as further insights were gained. The researcher was inclined to probe further, and interviewed 32 more farmers and sometimes their family members, as well as farm workers, thanks to an extended fieldwork research grant (see below).

The researcher was particularly intrigued by the renting out of sections of farmland by a significant number of farmers in the area of study to white capitalist farmers, later described as differentiated fragments of agrarian capital, which consists of white and black capitalist farmers and agribusiness. This conception emerged in the course of in-depth, intensive circumspective fieldwork research. The latter focused on a smaller number of farmers (n=20), as well as seven individuals from the so-called 'group schemes' on land reform farms in the area of study. However, group schemes were later excluded from the study in order to focus in depth on family-owned farms operated as individualised family units. Group schemes in South African land reform are relatively well known, perhaps best for their proneness to internal, conflictual social relations which have elite capture and marginalisation of classes of labour at their core (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014). Individualised and family-owned farms on redistributed land in South Africa remain under-researched.

The smaller sample (n = 20) focused on differentiated family-owned farms, where longitudinal class formation trajectories were probed, situated within wider contexts inextricably linked with the macro-economic historical framework which can be traced from the 1950s (see Chapter Four). The most interesting aspect of the latter were narratives of recent forced removals from labour-tenant farms in living memory.

The fieldwork did not only focus on farmers but also farm workers, though this was not without problems. A book entitled: *Rural Wage Employment in Developing Countries* (Oya and Pontara 2015), which illuminates the research gaps in rural labour studies, influenced the researcher's thinking on farm work dynamics and challenged him to do further fieldwork research in June 2019 this time focusing exclusively on farm workers. The researcher was familiar with the area of study by then and could speak with farm workers privately in Sesotho, based on accumulated knowledge of the social dynamics of the area of study. However, the researcher frequently made use of an Isizulu translator, given his limitations in speaking Sesotho fluently.

Furthermore, the researcher's probing of farm work relations was enhanced by a reading of Johnston's (2015) chapter in Oya and Pontara (2015), as well as Johnston's (2007) work on immigrant farm work dynamics in the same region in which fieldwork research was conducted, the Eastern Free State province of South Africa. These are immigrant casual and long-term farm workers found on grain, crop, vegetable, and livestock farms in the same region. Furthermore, the debate on class dynamics of redistributive land reform, particularly its impacts on farm workers (Scoones et al. 2018b, Bernstein 2004, Sender and Johnston 2004) guided the probing of farm work dynamics in fieldwork research, particularly the last stage conducted in June 2019. Later, in October 2019, the researcher assisted the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, his home research institute, in convening a national conference on the future of farm workers in South Africa which was attended by farm workers, farm worker organisations, state officials, non-governmental organisations, and academics. This deepened the researcher's analysis of farm work dynamics illuminated at the introduction of this thesis, as well as in Chapter Six. Indeed, farm work dynamics form part of the class formation trajectories of land reform beneficiaries at the core of this thesis. However, the researcher had time and scope limitations in collecting sufficient data on farm workers and their families, to warrant a chapter in this thesis. Farm work dynamics on land reform farms in the area of study, particularly in livestock herding need further research, especially the immigrant labour dynamic from a neighbouring country, Lesotho.

3.9 Differentiation of Agricultural Households into Class Categories

In a recent study of China's post-land reform context, Zhang (2015) formulated class differentiation criteria for agricultural households, centred on the latter's relational integration into differentiated land, labour, input, and output markets. A similar strategy has been adopted

in the researcher's analysis of the intersections between output markets, livestock herd sizes, family size and degrees of off-farm employment by immediate kin, combined with life/economic histories of the studied families and family farms. Quantitative data was collected and processed on SPSS, yielding mainly descriptive statistics, which were analysed and formed the basis of an analysis of key variables such as land, livestock herd and family size. Output markets in this case refer to quantities of livestock units, and crops sold in differentiated markets. Livestock herd size refers to quantities of livestock owned by the studied agricultural households. The latter were mainly centred on beef cattle, dairy cows, sheep and, to a minor extent, horses and pigs. Variables that emerged at the centre of processes of class differentiation in the area of study were farm capitalisation, farm production scale (livestock herd size, and land size cropped with grain/crops), family size and degrees of off-farm work on the part of immediate kin, as well as life histories.

3.9.1 Degrees of capitalisation and farm production scale

The quantification of degrees of capitalisation and farm production scale involved obtaining quantitative data on the main items of farm production: tools, equipment and machinery such as tractors, ploughs, planters, harvesters, and so on. Farm production scale data collection consisted of documenting livestock herd sizes and types, as well as land size cropped with grain and other crops. This included quantifications of farmland size rented out to differentiated fragments of agrarian capital, as well as cases where farmland is rented-in by particular farmers in the sample, for example those on upward trajectories of accumulation.

3.9.2 Family size and degrees of off-farm work and unemployment

Family size refers to the total number of immediate kin of the main farmer, i.e. the number, gender, and ages of the main farmer's immediate kin, that is, the people closest to the main farmer, and who might benefit from and contribute to farm production. The contribution of immediate kin to farm production is essentially about financialisation of farm production in differentiated ways. In the area of study this was often expressed in livestock purchases from elsewhere for the family farm, hence family-owned livestock herds. The benefits of farm income to immediate kin can be quantified and are evident in what the researcher terms 'outward remittances', expressed in livestock sales income (or farm income) making contributions to the well-being of immediate kin living in the townships and elsewhere, and typically unemployed (see Chapter Seven). For example, the extent of unemployment amongst

immediate kin correlates well with agricultural households at the lower ranks of class differentiation.

3.9.3 Life history

Life history was a key qualitative variable used to discern, illuminate and determine the livelihood pathways of the studied farmers, as former farm workers, former migrant urban (industrial) workers, and former petty commodity producers of various types. This includes other occupations such as government and state servant work, white-collar jobs, and prestigious political work (parliamentarians etc.). Thus, each empirical chapter includes an analysis of the economic history of land reform beneficiaries that assesses the significance of these variables (see Chapters Seven to Nine).

3.10 Problems and Limitations of Empirical Fieldwork Research

One of the constraints faced at the beginning of the fieldwork was the inaccessibility of farm workers and many of the immediate kin of family members were often concealed by the main farmer. The limitations imposed by the inaccessibility of farm workers had more to do with the fact that they were in the shadow of the main farmer and it would probably have jeopardised the process of data collection to ask further questions on labour, beyond some basic enquiries, let alone interview the whole labour force, especially in the presence of the main farmer. This would have presented ethical problems the majority of workers are immigrant herders from Lesotho and tend to be underpaid by the farmers in the area of study. However, in times when the main farmer was absent from the farm, as is often the case in areas characterised by dual residency, some of this labour force was interviewed and provided rich material such as conditions of work, remuneration, and working hours.

After serious consideration of the complexity of a reality characterised by many determinations and, most importantly, after gaining the much-needed trust by farmers, it was only after the intensive phase where the researcher felt comfortable to probe much deeper into farm work dynamics. The latter involved careful explanation and declaration of the researcher's awareness of the sensitiveness of the immigrant labour force and the economic positions of farmers which condition remuneration then only could the researcher put respondents at ease, especially since there are government regulations with regard to immigrant workers and the minimum wage. Of course, some farmers were openly willing to share information about their farm workers and often proactively explained themselves in their tendencies to pay low farm work wages.

Naturally, any capitalist farmer can be in this position but some often boasted about paying their workers too well, especially those on clear upward trajectories of accumulation.

A further limitation on fieldwork research in rural communities is a wider context in which researchers are often perceived as being government officials. This is explained by a history in which the authoritarian apartheid regime engaged in countless and ruthless human movement controls and imposed the so-called agricultural betterment schemes which caused havoc in many rural communities. Any visit from an elite-looking stranger invokes these memories, especially on the part of older generations. This is also due to the research fatigue that many research participants rightfully express during fieldwork, i.e. their precarious lives, characterised by poverty and joblessness remain the same, after countless hours spent in responding to research questions.

This discomfort lingers on in the researcher's memory of fieldwork, and the researcher can only be comforted by the nature of his research outputs, such as communicating them as part of efforts at policy engagement, whether or not these bear any fruit. An inappropriate approach in this regard is a defensive stance when challenged by research participants about research fatigue; the best way to deal with this is to admit one's 'guilt' and to intellectually locate one's self as a researcher in the world of research participants, without making any promises. Sometimes these problems can be mediated by explaining the role of the researcher in documenting social reality, so that the social problems are recorded, with the hope of later use by progressive political forces which may influence the state in the future. However, political engagements with research respondents are potentially risky and these should take place only after consideration of many local political intricacies. For example, in the researcher's case, some research respondents would allude comfortably to local state corruption and political connections between officials and local elite farmers, and the researcher would engage with them for hours but without making any promises in relation to action, and outlining his role as a researcher as clearly as possible.

The relative inaccessibility of the broader family members of the main farmer was not only due to the dual residency of farming households between the farm, and the former Qwaqwa homeland but also due to the tendency of adult members to engage in off-farm employment, away from the family farm and the main homestead in Qwaqwa. However, the intensive part of fieldwork, the researcher's prolonged stay in the area, plus various short research visits between 2015 and 2018, all proved useful in allowing iterative interviews of immediate family

members of the main farmers. This was also complemented by iterative fieldwork visits to enquire specifically about immediate kin, particularly with regard to sensitive issues of remittances and investments of remittances into farm production, as well as outward remittances from family farms to unemployed immediate kin in townships.

While the researcher did not conduct focus group interviews, he would attend Farmer's Day meetings arranged by the local farmers association as an observer, from which he would often obtain cell phone numbers of farmers, who were then contacted directly and interviews were arranged. These sometimes included telephonic interviews. The approach to telephonic interviews was such that the researcher would conduct the initial interview(s) in person, followed by phone calls for specific information. Farmer's Day meetings also provided an opportunity to get to know many farmers through conversations with them and some farmers who had proven difficult to find would be present in these important meetings. They provided farmers with crucial information, especially with regard to state agricultural subsidies and integration into various input and output markets. Farmer's Day meetings also clearly showed the absence of the category of beneficiary termed in this study as an 'impoverished landed property'. These farmers were sometimes referred to as 'parasites', who are 'too pathetic to farm', who just 'sit on their farms and wait for state support', to paraphrase the words of the former chairperson of the provincial farmers association. Those classified as 'impoverished landed property' (see Chapter Seven) would not attend these meetings, because many have boycotted them and revoked their membership of the farmer's association on grounds of corruption, and more importantly, because of their lack of resources to travel.

3.11 Research Positionality: Reflections

Black women researchers suffer greatly when conducting fieldwork research in rural areas. They experience various forms of gendered discrimination and most times sexual harassment. In contrast, as a black male researcher conducting fieldwork in rural South Africa, the researcher was undoubtedly privileged in many ways, including in his ability to make use of ethnographic research methods such as participant observation. For example, a herder out grazing livestock in the mountains could be accompanied, or a room could be shared with a farm worker. However, black women researchers do have some strengths in rural fieldwork research, such as focus groups involving only women and can also conduct participant observation, for example, in casual female farm workers teams which also involves other risks and should not be viewed romantically. Otherwise the risks of fieldwork are many, such as in

the event of livestock theft, which can occur any time, with the most extreme forms of violence to anyone on the farm, including researchers.

The most useful strategy in developing a network of respondents in the course of fieldwork research is working through community leaders, especially in contexts where farmers are organised in farmer associations. This is crucial for developing an understanding of many subtle dynamics, as well as getting a sense of the developmental visions of local farmer associations. The researcher's relative privilege as a researcher from a university helped him to gain insightful information with regard to intersections of the local farmer association with local institutions, such as the local municipality, and the ruling party. However, formal routes can be limiting and it thus became necessary to conduct fieldwork through full residence in the area, for as long as possible, especially if one can speak, or at least understand, the local language.

The researcher's background training as an historical geographer was a valuable strength in conceptualising the spatial dynamics of class formation. For example, his reading of the historical literature in order to better grasp the historical context of this thesis was supplemented by his roots in historical geography. This enabled him to tentatively historicise historical relations (Hall 2003) and generational social relations between colonial, white landed property, differentiated forms of labour, including slavery and unfree labour, as mediated by the state, as well as changes in the wider economy as capitalism deepened and penetrated the countryside over a vast geographical area, from the coasts to the Highveld, over a period of at least 300 years (see Chapter Four).

Furthermore, the reading of the historical literature was complemented and enabled by the researcher's familial embeddedness in labour tenancy on white-owned farms, as part of his family history. For example, the Highveld region, the location of the area of study, is just north-west of the researcher's rural home, Muden, in Kwazulu-Natal Midlands; the interstitial land between these two regions is characterised by the historical geography of labour tenancy, at least in the part known as the 'thornveld region'. These attributes naturally informed the probing, provocations, and sentimental guidance of respondents during the life history interviews. This connected the researcher with the research respondents in a special way, which could perhaps form the basis of longitudinal research at some point.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter described the study's research design and the methodologies used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data in the area of study. This involved combinations of retrospective, circumspective, and prospective research approaches (Murray 2002), which the researcher combined with the basic concepts of critical realism in social science, and applications of the latter through deployments of intellectual iterations between abstract theoretical concepts, and concrete empirical observation through fieldwork. This particularly entailed the adoption of an 'extensive and intensive' research design (Sayer 1998). This involved first the theoretical grounding in agrarian Marxist theory described in Chapter Two, particularly the concepts of accumulation from below and above in agrarian transitions to capitalist agriculture. This then guided empirical observation, open to seeing alternative processes of class formation in post land reform contexts, such as the mere reproduction of small-scale capitalist farm enterprises without accumulation taking place (see Chapter Eight). The contingent ways these class formation trajectories or alternatives are unfolding is the subject of the core empirical chapters of this study, each dedicated to a particular class of agricultural households on redistributed land in the area of study (see Chapters Seven to Nine). The next chapter examines the historical context of the studied land reform beneficiaries, within the wider context of agrarian change in the area of study; this focuses on the historical context that informed the retrospective approach outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

LAND ALIENATION, PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALIST AGRICULTURE IN THE FREE STATE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by tracing the history of colonial land alienation, sharecropping and incipient processes of primitive accumulation towards a fully-fledged, white capitalist agriculture in Free State province from the mid-20th century, with some background reference to the prehistory from the 1840s onwards. From the 1950s, trajectories of the former sharecroppers and labour tenants are traced as they made their way into Qwaqwa Bantustan/labour reserve, after forced relocation from white-owned farms, to their absorption into the wider South African economy as migrant workers, the unemployed, and local traders in Qwaqwa from the 1960s onwards. The chapter also traces how some of those former labour tenants and sharecroppers who became traders, and transformed into petty commodity producers of various kinds and the local business elite in Qwaqwa, were later selected as land beneficiaries of the so-called New Qwaqwa Farms, a chain of farms of about 63 000 hectares in the eastern part of the province expropriated by the state from neighbouring white farmers “for development of small commercial farmers” (Bank 1995, p. 583) from the mid-1980s.

This chapter has threefold components, firstly, the historical context as background material regarding the transition to capitalist agriculture in the arable districts of the Free State province. This is traced through a timeline in two stages (i) the transition to capitalist agriculture, which can be traced from the 1840s to the 1950s, truncated into two consecutive timelines, 1840s-1890s, and 1900s-1950s. These observations, as well as the timelines, are based on the historical work of Tim Keegan (1979, 1983, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c), which is presented in summary form, with emphasis on some key signposts. This is aided by the work of Krikler (1993) on the period of the Anglo-Boer South African war and the agrarian transition of the early 1900s which has revealing implications in relation to a process of primitive accumulation in the area of study and beyond. Secondly, the chapter traces the events that took place

thereafter from 1950-60s, especially the repercussions and impacts of the abolition of labour tenancy on black peasant producers/labour tenants/sharecroppers who had lived on farmland which later became large-scale capitalist farms of the Free State province¹⁰. The latter is based on life history interviews as well as review of literature. Essentially, broad livelihood trajectories of the former sharecroppers and labour tenants are traced as they made their way into Qwaqwa, and formed part of migrant workers, the unemployed, local traders and petty commodity producers and employees of the latter. The third section of the chapter traces how some of the local traders and petty commodity producers of Qwaqwa were later selected to become beneficiaries of redistributed land, the so-called New Qwaqwa Farms, from the mid-1980s onwards. These land beneficiaries were to be assisted by a parastatal company, AgriQwa, in accessing agricultural inputs which was short-lived, owing to neoliberal agricultural development from above.

The next section focuses on the history of *boer* colonial farmland settlement in the Free State. It is based Keegan's work (1979, 1983, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c), presented here in summary form.

4.2 *Boer*¹¹ Colonial Farmland Settlements in the Free State, 1840s-1890s

By the 1840s, the *boer* pastoralists had already settled the Free State almost a century earlier, coming in from the Cape and moving in an easterly direction, often raiding, and negotiating with African communities and chiefdoms. These *boer* pastoralists were linked to international trade in animal products (wool, ostrich feathers, skins/hides), which led to indiscriminate destruction of wildlife (game). Such trade radiated outwards from the ports. Transport riding for taking goods to the ports by ox-wagon was as important as owning a gun for accumulation amongst the early settlers.

The *boer* pastoralists had minimum labour requirements on their extensive landholdings for livestock herding and some domestic work and relied on mainly acculturated labour, a product

¹⁰ Indeed, these large-scale capitalist farms, viewed as they are today, conceal this history and have literally obliterated its remnants in all forms, including the graves of the people that once lived and worked there as labouring classes.

¹¹ *Boer* is an Afrikaans word for farmer. All white farmers were traditionally referred to as *boere* (plural) dating back to the days of colonialism and apartheid.

of enslavements from raiding African communities. These were often abducted African children from raided communities who grew up as slaves, and sometimes slaves from the Khoisan brought from the Cape.

The 1858 war between the Sotho kingdom under Moshoeshoe and the early settlers composed of mainly *boers*, had major repercussions, not only in terms of land alienation in favour of white settlers but also for the factions of the African population who fought with the *boers* against Moshoeshoe. The perceived reward for such collaboration on the part of Tlokwa, and Khoelokwe tribes in particular, was land allocation which did not materialise much beyond the nominal ownership of some pieces of land in the north-eastern parts of Free State.

After the Sotho wars, significant numbers of African families left Lesotho and settled on white-/settler-owned farms, bringing their cultivation skills as well as farming equipment such as sickles for weeding and wheat harvesting, and scissors for sheep shearing. These large extended families gradually became the sharecroppers of the Highveld, freeing themselves from the Sotho chieftaincies.

The 1860s saw the first diamond mines opened in Griqualand West. This had major impacts on the arable districts of the Free State as well as in Lesotho, as cultivators in both these territories which were smallholders and sharecroppers, respectively, responded progressively in terms of grain output. The sharecroppers were located on white-owned land in the arable districts of the Free State and their landlords often petitioned against competition from Lesotho-based smallholders, who were spectacularly out-producing white farmers in the Free State, especially since the major response to the opening of the mines in Griqualand West on the part of Lesotho nationals was grain production, rather than the supply of labour. This was not surprising because these producers had imported grain production tools.

The 1880s saw the opening of the Rand gold mines which had progressive impacts in terms of grain production on the part of Free State farmers, especially in the northern districts of the province. The predominant form of production was farming on the halves, sharecropping, and thus feeding the maize-eating mineworkers. Market booms led to increased agitation for the state to abolish sharecropping in favour of encouraging wage labour but it was increasingly apparent that grain production would suffer should the state intervene coercively against the sharecroppers at the time in the mid-1890s. However, during these years it was the less well-off farmers and their bourgeois advisors in towns who were the major agitators, not only against

sharecropping but also against tendencies towards land concentration by the upper classes in the broader agrarian economy, manifest in absentee, often speculative, landlords. There were also sometimes landowning companies that welcomed sharecropping for economic reasons, for it generated substantive incomes for them. However, such alliance between the upper stratum of the rural-class structure, and sharecroppers was to come to a bitter end as competition for landed resources and labour accelerated in response to a fairly rapidly industrialising South African economy.

4.3 The Anglo-Boer War and its Impacts on Labour Tenancy, 1900s-1950s

The area of study is spatially located towards the central point of an historical-geographic landscape where primitive accumulation, the pre-history of capitalist development in agriculture and industry in South Africa seen from the vantage point of the Transvaal and its immediate surrounding localities and geographies, is perhaps best encapsulated (Krikler 1993). This is where, by the 1890s, the old *boer*, landed and mining elite had superimposed private property and landlord-tenant farm labour relations on African peasant communities through conquest (*ibid.*, Keegan 1986). However, by then, capitalist relations between the agricultural and industrial sectors were still at the fledgling stage and had not yet been established firmly and this process could not be completed without a war between rival imperialist powers, the British and the *boers* (mainly Dutch originating colonising elites). This culminated in the so-called Anglo-Boer/South African war of 1899-1902 (Krikler 1993).

In the midst of war, British imperialists gained strength from the antagonisms between the *boer* landed gentry controlling landed resources and the rural labouring classes, the labour tenants and farm workers. Such strength was manifest in the thousands of African peasants mobilised to serve in the British army against the *boers*. The labouring classes on *boer*-owned estates were more than willing to turn against their landlords in combat and were certain that such involvement would, finally, bear fruit and free them from the yokes of labour tenancy, labour rents, forced labour, and private property, which had till then stripped them of their old communal ways of reciprocity but not labour exploitation in the capitalist sense (Krikler 1993). Thus they fought with vigour and vengeance, which had a significant impact on the strength of the British army, especially in the western, northern and eastern sides of the Transvaal, which culminated in the humiliation, and surrender of the *boer* army (*ibid.*). The role of the peasantry in overthrowing the *boer* landed elite in the South Africa war of 1899-1902 cannot be under-estimated as the single force which had class struggle connotations at its core – the peasants did not just fight with the

British against their landlords for mere sympathetic reasons; their participation was ‘revolutionary struggle’ in the strongest sense, though this is somewhat downplayed by Krikler (1993), given the lack of modern socialist organisation skills on the part the peasantry. However, Krikler could perhaps have unravelled this in the shared memories and life histories of elders, if he had had the resources to interview the elderly who had lived during the time of his research in the archives during the late 1980s. The struggle for communism or socialism does not have to have a communist manifesto on paper as this struggle of the labour-tenant peasantry against their *boer* landlords shows us (*ibid.*).

In the aftermath of war, the African peasants who had fought on the British side were certain that they would be awarded land as promised by the British commanders (*ibid.*). However, owing to emerging new class coalitions from above between the British imperialists and the *boers*, this did not materialise – the peasants who had participated in war as a form of class struggle against their landlords were not awarded land as promised. Instead the opposite happened, the peasants and former labour tenants were disarmed by the state and skilfully talked out of any hope of post-war landownership and instead indoctrinated into accepting the old hierarchies. These were now recast in new terms of capital-wage relations within the wider macro-economic and legal framework of a fledgling South African social formation controlled by controversial coalescing forces between mining and agrarian capital (Krikler 1993, Trapido 1978). The promise of land was a war recruitment technique that was used by the *boer* elite themselves much earlier against Moshoeshoe rebels further south during the 1860s - here too the promise did not materialise (Keegan 1986).

Against this backdrop, and unsurprisingly, the period from the 1900s-1950s saw increased agitation against sharecropping which culminated in state intervention, not only in the form of legislation such as the 1913 Natives Land Act but also financial support for white farmers. This was often siphoned through the Land Bank and other white-only, localised, private financiers who culturally promoted the ideal of a white supremacist society. However, far more important was a protracted struggle between independent ‘squatters’ and their white landlords over landed resources that can be traced over a 100-year period from the 1840s to the middle of the twentieth century, the ‘arch of dispossession’ (Hart and Hunter 2004) which led to the suppression of sharecropping and its various labour-tenant manifestations by the 1950s. This marked the final triumph of white, state-funded capitalist farming. State finance, mechanisation, and the forging of a wage labour force by capitalising white farmers through

protracted, vigorous efforts accelerated processes of primitive accumulation. This ultimately triumphed over older forms of sharecropping and labour tenancy in a move towards controlled but capitalist farm wage labour. Indeed, with increased state support, through finance from production to marketing, the skills, tools, and livestock of sharecroppers and labour tenants were no longer needed but their labour was; the inevitable result was massive evictions and the relocation of labour tenants and sharecroppers from white-owned farms, a process which had already begun by the 1900s, right through to the 1950s and beyond.

4.4 Farm Labour Tenancy to Off-farm Petty Commodity Production and Diversification to Farming on Redistributed Land, 1960s-1980s

In the post-1945 period the Du Toit Commission discovered that whites were leaving their farms in large numbers and heading for the boom towns of Welkom and Ondendaalrus on the newly opened Orange Free State goldfields. According to the commission, the result was a sudden and disturbing *beswarring van die platteland* (blackening of the countryside). The white exodus in the Harrismith district, the commission reported, had left over 20 per cent of the land falling solely under African control; a further 30 per cent was seen to be farmed for whites by African tenants. To rectify the situation, the commission recommended immediate state action to put white agriculture in the North-eastern Orange Free State on a firm capitalist footing. From the early 1960s, conditions on the farms changed rapidly as white farmers were inundated with state loans and encouraged to evict African tenants, to reoccupy their land and to begin agricultural mechanisation. The introduction of tractors and combined harvesters allowed farmers to put more land under cultivation, which meant that farm workers and tenants lost out. Mechanisation placed tremendous pressure on the semi-autonomous communities of African tenants and workers, who suddenly found their access to rural resources such as land and livestock being cut back. As farmers took a much harder line on how much land they could plough, so tenants and workers began to move around in search of better terms (Bank 1995, p. 575, citing the Du Toit Commission, 1960).

Some of the informants for this thesis, the land beneficiaries of the New Qwaqwa Farms who are in their 60s, and 70s in age in the area of study, vividly recall their families' relocations from white-owned farms in the Harrismith and Bethlehem districts from the 1960s onwards. Some were children or young adults at the time and can remember the various reasons put forth by landowners to justify their relocation (see vignettes A-L below). Very often these were not voluntary relocations without pressure to elect to relocate. Indeed, various determinations which evolved as part of the development of capitalist agriculture (including mechanisation, Bank 1995) combined and by the 1960s rendered the labour-tenant families on white-owned farms relatively superfluous to the needs of state-funded, white-capitalist agriculture (Keegan

1989, 1983, 1986).

By the 1950s, the Qwaqwa homeland town, Phuthaditjhaba, and the homeland's rural villages had been gradually absorbing black families which had been pushed out of white-owned farms where they had lived and worked as labour-tenant households (Bank 1992, 1994a, 1995). This includes families forcibly removed from urban areas/small towns of the Orange Free State (Martiny and Sharp 1984). Tens of thousands of families arrived in peak moments of the 1960s, and 70s (*ibid.*).

On arrival, some of the former labour-tenant families had significant assets, such as livestock, which were invested in small-scale enterprises or “converted livestock into deadstock” (Bank 1992, p. 13). These ‘petty commodity production’ enterprises (Bernstein 1988) were often general dealerships (small amenity shops/kiosks); small-scale brick and construction industries; coal and wood trading operations; taxi services, ‘shebeens’ (informal liquor trading/small informal pubs); and other business, in what appeared to be a growing and vibrant market economy in Qwaqwa, at the time (Slater 2001, 2002, Bank 1992). Many of them were owned and operated by new arrivals who took advantage of the lack of amenities in the sprawling Qwaqwa homeland. Some were contracted by the Qwaqwa homeland state to provide services such as supplying material (bricks, cement, sand, etc.) for the construction of township houses, whilst some had small-scale construction operations constructing those municipal houses. Some purchased coal in as far as Delmas, in what is today known as Mpumalanga province, and supplied coal to small coal-distribution outlets, which in turn supplied it to thousands of households since there was limited electricity at the time, especially in the so-called rural closer settlement villages of Qwaqwa (Niehaus 1984, 1989, Martiny and Sharp 1984, Sharp and Spiegel 1985, 1990, Murray 1980). The main labour regime in these small-scale enterprises comprised family labour commanded by the household head in patriarchal, and generational social relations, traceable to labour-tenant farms prior to settlement in Qwaqwa (Bank 1984).

However, some of the former labour-tenant households that settled in Qwaqwa were less fortunate than the petty commodity producers mentioned above, for many reasons, including restrictions on livestock numbers that could be brought into Qwaqwa, forcing late arrivals to sell their livestock at low prices. They then sought employment within Qwaqwa and beyond as they slid deeper into proletarianisation or pauperisation (Slater 2002, 2001). Some of the poorer households found employment in mushrooming small-scale enterprises (see Table 1),

as petty commodity producers took advantage of the lack of amenities in the sprawling closer settlements of Qwaqwa from the late 1960s onwards (*ibid.*).

From the mid-1980s some of those who had become well-established entrepreneurs through internal competition, differentiation and political connection, diversified into farming. They were the key beneficiaries when an estimated 63 000 hectares of private farmland located between Qwaqwa, and Harrismith was finally¹² acquired by the South African Development Trust for homeland consolidation (Slater 2002, Aliber 2006), through expropriation with compensation. The farms were then sub-divided into smaller units ($\approx 70 - 1000$ ha), and the area was renamed (New) Qwaqwa Farms, probably for their close proximity with the former Qwaqwa homeland (Slater 2002, Murray 1997, see Figure 4.1).

Pronouncing about the same New Qwaqwa Farms, Jordaan and Jooste state that:

commercial farms, approximately 55000 ha were expropriated during the period 1979 to 1986, re-planned and developed with all of the necessary infrastructure needed for sustainable farming. Farm sizes vary from 250 ha to 1000 ha depending on the potential and type of farm. (Jordaan and Jooste 2003, p. 2)

According to Henry Claassen, even though the farms were expropriated at “market related value, about 56% of the farmers were unhappy and appealed, some were successful, and some were not, in their appeals against the state” (Dr H. Claassen pers. comm¹³). Land expropriation

¹² Dr T.K. Mopeli, the Qwaqwa homeland leader, was the main lobbyist of the apartheid government arguing for the return of the land to its rightful owners throughout the 1970s. Such a call was incorporated into the Mopeli’s Dikwankwetla Party’s election campaigns of the 1970s, and 1980s. However, the irony was that when the land finally became available, most of it was redistributed to the PCP, business, and political elite and many cried foul as a result (Bank 1995). Nonetheless, as this historical context chapter illuminates, most of the business elite arguably accumulated from below, as most of them actually started from scratch, e.g through converting their “livestock into deadstock” (Bank 1992, p. 13) on arrival from labour-tenant farms in the then Orange Free State. Processes of social differentiation were at play and conditioned who embarked on differentiated accumulation paths and who was squeezed into unskilled employment in small-scale enterprises and industry within, and beyond the former Qwaqwa homeland from the late 1960s to early 1990s (Slater 2001, 2002).

¹³ Dr Henry Claassen did his PhD research (Claassen 2000) in the same area of study and later worked at the University of Free State where he conducted further fieldwork on the same farms with colleagues (see Claassen et al. 2014).

was followed by the sub-division of farms from “an average farm-size of 900 ha” (Dr H Claassen pers. comm) into mostly smaller units (ranging between 70 ha and 1000 ha) and renamed [New] Qwaqwa Farms (Slater 2002, Murray 1997, Bank 1995, Figure 4.1). For example, the farm Weltevrede was 2900 ha and subdivided into 18 farm units ranging from 98 - 280 ha, and handed over to 18 beneficiaries consisting of former farm workers of the same farm, as well as a few business and political elite (Ngubane 2018, p. 6, also see Appendix 1).

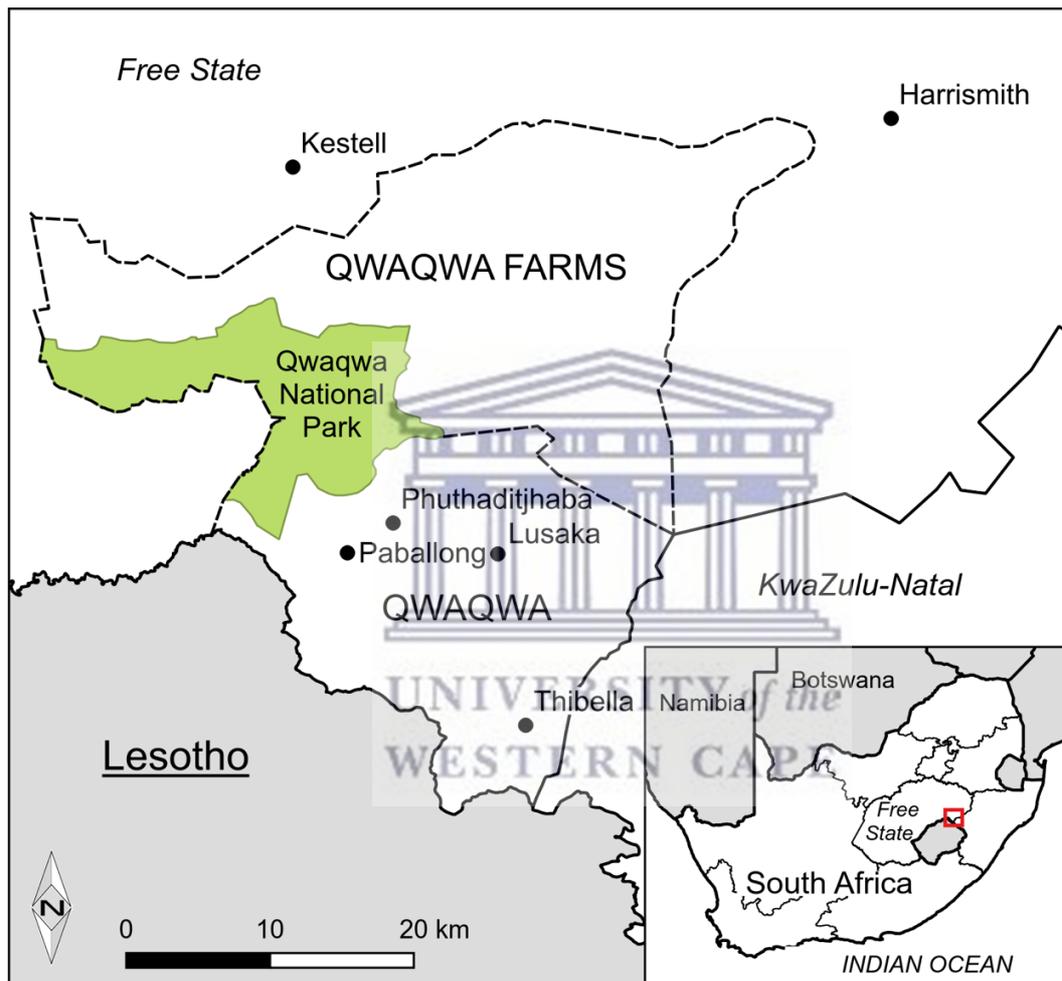


Figure 4.1. Map of the studied redistributed land (adapted from Slater 2002, p. 600).

It must be pointed out that the former labour tenants or farm workers of the white-owned farms which were expropriated were evicted by the state, with very few cases where they remained on the land and automatically became workers for the new owners or land beneficiaries themselves. However, most of the new occupants/farm owners found their farms free of labour tenants as articulated by one of the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms.

The targeting of petty commodity producers or entrepreneurs for land redistribution was no

coincidence but deliberate state policy, as pointed out by Bank:

Mopeli's¹⁴ controversial victory of 1980 brought with it the long awaited land incorporation, 63 000 ha of prime white farmland given to the Qwaqwa government... As various parcels were handed over to the homeland, Mopeli made it clear that the new land would not be allocated to any of the existing tribal authorities, nor would it be made available to satisfy land claims by clan or tribal groupings living outside Qwaqwa. It was intended, he explained, for the 'nation as a whole' and the development of small commercial farmers. (Bank 1995, p. 583)

The majority of the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms were selected from family businesses that operated various small-scale enterprises in Qwaqwa by the 1980s (see Table 1 below). The application process was announced on Radio Sesotho, and pamphlets were distributed on the streets of Qwaqwa's only town, Phuthaditjhaba. Invited applicants were selected and screened on the basis of their business experience (Claassen et al. 2014). Some were selected on the basis of their political connections, especially those who were closely linked to the Qwaqwa homeland state. The beneficiaries began by renting the land from the state, with an option to buy after a period of 10 years but such rental agreements were converted into Land Bank loans after 1994. From the beginning, the land beneficiaries had a sense of entitlement to the land, even though many regret the conversion of their rental agreements with the state into Land Bank loans which resulted in some level of indebtedness, and attendant consequences such as renting out the farmland for farm-rental income (see Chapters Seven to Nine).

Bias in terms of beneficiary selection in favour of the business and political elite was not without criticism:

In the Free State, a swathe of state-owned land north of Qwaqwa, along the northern border of Lesotho, was poised to be sold at the end of 1995 to farmers and businessmen who had previously rented individual farms from the state and who were able to commit some capital resources of their own. There is some question, however, whether these people properly qualify as the putative beneficiaries of land redistribution policy, who are variously described in ANC rhetoric as 'the historically disadvantaged people', 'the landless people', 'the poorest of the poor' and so on. The reason is obvious: that poor people without

¹⁴ Charles Mopeli was Prime Minister of the former Qwaqwa homeland government before it was dismantled in the new South Africa after apartheid.

property cannot obtain access to commercial credit and, even if they could do so, cannot muster the capital resources necessary to embark on farming operations. There is therefore a chasm of credibility in respect of land redistribution policy: between the rhetoric, under which 'poor' people are supposed to be able to take advantage of new farming opportunities, and the reality, by which potential purchasers [or beneficiaries] who emerge are businessmen or taxi-operators or supermarket-owners. (Murray 1996, p. 221)

Furthermore, some informants interviewed in this research mentioned that a few Qwaqwa homeland parliamentarians and state officials also became land beneficiaries (see Table 1 below) but most of the latter sold their farms to mainly white commercial farmers more recently after 1994, as most were absentee landlords.

Life history interviews amongst the studied farmers further revealed that, indeed, even though the studied farmers were small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as members of the civil service or political elite at the time, the first set of farmers who were granted farms on the newly expropriated land in the late 1980s tend to share a history of labour tenancy on white-owned farms that had ended a few decades earlier. This is the history that remains vivid in the minds of the elderly farmers found farming on the same redistributed land, almost 30 years after being granted the land and 60 years after relocation from labour-tenant farms. What they did after relocation from labour-tenant farms since the 1960s through to the 1980s as small-scale entrepreneurs, and migrant workers has been described above.

Below are a few vignettes that show the life histories of farmers in the area of study. These vignettes correlate with the history of relocation from labour-tenant farms and then the entry into non-agricultural petty commodity production in Qwaqwa from the 1960s onwards to the point of land redistribution. Such an arc of social mobility illuminates the varied trajectories of class formation over time and space (Murray 2002) (see Figure 4.1). Of course, these trajectories are implicit in the historical sketch provided above but they are described here to bring this history alive. Some of these farmers are deceased and those who are still alive have either aged or are aging and some of their farms have recently been taken over by a second generation of farmers, some of whom have very little knowledge of their family histories. Their life histories are worth documenting in their own right but also shed light on both their diversity and their core commonalities. Pseudonyms are used for respondents to ensure anonymity.

4.5 Personal Recollections of Relocation from Labour-tenant Farms in the Highveld

4.5.1 Vignette A

Tsepo Selota (pseudonym¹⁵), aged 74, arrived in Qwaqwa in 1965 after his family was forcibly removed from a farm outside Harrismith. The motive for his family's relocation from the labour-tenant farm was "the landowner's actions, forbidding our livestock on the farm", according to Selota. The Selota family relocated to Qwaqwa with some of their cattle (10 in total) after lengthy negotiations with the traditional authority. From Qwaqwa, Selota sought employment in various urban areas, including Empangeni in Kwazulu-Natal and ended up working at Sasol 2 (Secunda, Mpumalanga) as a general worker in the engineering department. He later resigned/retired, and invested his retirement package in a small business in Qwaqwa, buying and selling vegetables as a *bakkie* trader (selling vegetables from the back of a small pickup truck). The latter occupation secured his selection as one of the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms, after a screening process that preferred businessmen as beneficiaries. He thus received a 380 ha farm.

4.5.2 Vignette B

Peter Mokoena, aged 81, was born on a labour-tenant farm in the Bethlehem district. His family relocated to Qwaqwa in 1970, from where he was able to work in Sasol 1 in the Transvaal and then Secunda, for the same company, where he worked as a bus driver, transporting workers from the hostels to the construction site on a daily basis. He resigned in the late 1970s and invested his resignation package/savings in a truck/lorry and started a small coal and wood trading business in Qwaqwa. He sourced coal mainly from Delmas mines in Mpumalanga province, to resell in Qwaqwa as energy used to fuel thousands of households without electricity. Many of these households were new arrivals in Qwaqwa, in their tens of thousands, relocated from the labour-tenant farms of the then Orange Free State. However, Mokoena's small enterprise began to decline with the electrification of Qwaqwa and he took the opportunity of diversifying into agriculture on redistributed land when the opportunity presented itself in the 1980s. He applied for land as per the official invitation, was invited for

¹⁵ Pseudonyms are used for respondents to ensure anonymity.

the interview and qualified on the basis of his business experience.

4.5.3 Vignette C

We worked for a white farmer in Riets. When he saw that our cattle herd size was increasing, he often said we should make means to decrease it. He did not approve of us owning a big herd. In fact, he wanted us to have no cattle at all. So, we took our cattle with us, and left [the farm]. It was hard; we were in fact creeping out and made our way to Qwaqwa. It was a difficult windy relocation during winter.... We arrived in Qwaqwa in 1975. (Joseph, 29 April 2016)

Soon after arrival in Qwaqwa, Joseph, now aged 64 but then a young man, sought employment in the goldfields at Welkom, through the agency of The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA). He worked as a truck driver for the mine until 1987 and decided to resign partly because of a major strike in the same year and partly because he was eager to retire into farming, especially after hearing announcements about the possibility of blacks receiving farms through land redistribution: *Are you a sharecropper?; Are you a farmer or businessman?; Come to the office [Agriqwa], and you shall be allocated a farm of your own.* These announcements on Radio Sotho in the latter half of the 1980s motivated Joseph to resign from his work at a mine in Welkom and to purchase two second-hand tractors from the mine authorities. He made his way towards becoming a sharecropper as a deliberate strategy in order to be eligible to be allocated a farm at a later stage. Indeed, he and the two sharecroppers with which he shared grain fields were allocated their own farms in 1989. In his own words: “We were loaded onto taxis to view the farms. We viewed, and signed the paperwork and then went back to Qwaqwa to take our belongings, and I settled on the farm, ever since”. Their sharecropping strategy paid off. We now turn to briefly describe its arrangement. Joseph, and two other sharecroppers produced maize to supply a grain co-operative in the nearby Africaskop silo outside a small rural town, Kestell. The landowner was a beef-cattle specialist who did not use his arable land and preferred to rent it out to black sharecroppers in a simple arrangement that entailed that the sharecroppers would produce their maize, harvest it, at their own expense, and then leave behind the maize stalk residues as winter grazing for the landowner’s cattle.

4.5.4 Vignette D

Mr Mollo (now deceased) and his spouse, aged 72, were labour tenants in Riets, Bethlehem district and had to vacate the farm because of low wages. On the labour-tenant farm, Mr Mollo was a tractor driver and his spouse worked as a domestic servant in the white farmer’s

farmhouse. They left the farm for Qwaqwa in 1973, where Mr Mollo was ‘freed’¹⁶ for migrant work through TEBA and later resigned to start a small business, an artisanal steel/metal dish/basin making business. He later diversified into a small dealership, as well as a shebeen (small liquor outlet or small pub). However, Mr Mollo and his spouse missed the initial land redistribution process of the late 1980s and only recently (in 2002) purchased their farm privately from a distressed/struggling black farmer who was part of the initial group of land beneficiaries in the late 1980s. Their son, a schoolteacher aged 56, has recently inherited the family farm. The latter has recently sold one of the portions of the family farm to a neighbouring rich black farmer, and rents out arable land to another rich black farmer; he also rents out grazing land to small landless livestock owners. The son focuses on livestock production (thanks to a hired herder) and earns a salary from his off-farm, teaching job. The Mollo family farm is 100 ha in size.

4.5.5 Vignette E

Mrs Z, aged 74, left a labour-tenant farm in the Harrismith district and made her way into Qwaqwa with her first-born child in 1971. The agreement with her husband (now deceased), who had stayed behind on the labour-tenant farm, was that they would sell their livestock and invest the proceeds into a general dealership in Qwaqwa, and they did just that: “We sold all our cattle and started a business in Qwaqwa. My husband later left the labour-tenant farm and joined us, when business went well” (Mrs Z, 28 December 2016).

They worked in their general dealership using primarily household labour and sometimes hired the labour of others. This economic footing secured their selection as one of the beneficiaries of land redistribution. That is how Mrs Z’s family was granted a farm of 350 ha on New Qwaqwa Farms in 1989.

4.5.6 Vignette F

Mr C left a labour-tenant farm in Riets, Bethlehem district and settled in Qwaqwa in 1971,

¹⁶ Freed in the Marxian double sense i.e. landless, owing to forced relocation from agricultural land and free to starve, if unwilling to sell his labour power elsewhere (Choonara 2009).

leaving behind his aging father, whom he later advised to sell all their cattle and leave the labour-tenant farm. Mr C, then a young man, was 'freed' to work off-farm and eventually became a truck driver for a black entrepreneur that traded in coal and wood in Qwaqwa - that was where Mr C learned entrepreneurial skills, enabling him to establish his own coal and wood trading business and also a general dealership which was operated by his wife as he had already expanded into the taxi industry by the mid-1980s. His economic footing secured his selection as one of the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms after a screening process that preferred black businessmen as land beneficiaries. He received his farm of 555 ha in 1989 and sold his taxi business to farm on a full-time basis. Mr C died at the age of 68 in 2017 and the farm was later sold by his family, against his will, i.e. he left a legal will specifying that the farm was not to be sold, which was disregarded by the family.

4.5.7 Vignette G

The K family relocated to Qwaqwa from a labour-tenant farm in 1969. Mr K and his spouse found employment in a small-scale brick construction company owned by one of the wealthiest black businessmen in Qwaqwa. On the side, they managed to accumulate cattle within Qwaqwa and also invested their wages into a shebeen (a small liquor outlet/small pub), which was operated by Mr K's spouse. This economic footing, as well as a political connection aided by their employer (the wealthy businessman) secured their application for a farm on New Qwaqwa Farms and they were thus allocated a 900 ha farm in 1989. (Such relatively large farms tended to be allocated to politically connected beneficiaries).

4.5.8 Vignette H

David, aged 64, arrived in Qwaqwa in the early 1970s after relocation from a labour-tenant farm on which he was born. Soon after arrival in Qwaqwa he sought employment through TEBA and was recruited by Murray and Roberts Company in Johannesburg. He later invested his savings from his wages into a taxi business, transporting migrant workers between Qwaqwa, and Johannesburg and he resigned when the taxi business was well established. Such economic footing secured his selection for a farm on New Qwaqwa Farms; he was allocated a 272 ha farm in 1991. He sold his taxi business as soon as he received the farm.

4.5.9 Vignette I

In the early 1970s, Farmer EE's father made his way from a labour-tenant farm to meet one of

the traditional authorities in Qwaqwa, to negotiate entry into the ‘homeland’, as the conditions were ripe for their relocation from their labour tenancy, as was the case for tens of thousands of other labour-tenant households in the early 1970s. After negotiations, he returned to the labour-tenant farm with a positive message from the chief and they thus planned their silent departure, which forced them to leave behind a herd of 10-15 head of cattle. They left for Qwaqwa and never looked back. By the 1980s, Farmer EE’s two sons had established themselves as taxi businessmen, transporting migrant workers between Qwaqwa, and Johannesburg. It was this economic footing that secured one of the two siblings’ application to get land, a 306 ha farm on New Qwaqwa Farms in 1990. About 30 years later in 2019, Farmer EE’s father had been deceased for almost a decade and the family farm had been taken over by his son, Farmer EE, aged 52, after his resignation from skilled employment.

4.5.10 Vignette J

Mr M, aged 74, grew up on a labour-tenant farm in the Bethlehem district. His father received an eviction order from the farm owner because his children refused to work on the farm as farm workers. They were evicted in 1966 and relocated to Qwaqwa. Mr M, then a young man, had to seek employment in Johannesburg and had started working for a construction company by 1970, from which he invested savings from wages and started a small business as a trader, selling clothing on his bicycle in Johannesburg. He grew from there into a wealthy businessman, owning supermarkets, a general dealer, abattoir, and feedlot in Qwaqwa by the 1980s. His status as a well-known businessman of Qwaqwa, who was also famous for his travels to the United States Department of Agriculture in Texas (through the church) where he was further trained in Brahman breeding, secured his selection onto a 750 ha farm when the opportunity presented itself in 1989. It was almost given that businessmen of his calibre would be allocated farms on the New Qwaqwa Farms. It was also common for the wealthiest businessmen to quarrel over allocation of farms greater than 500 ha.

4.5.11 Vignette K

Mr T was born in 1949 into a labour-tenant household on a farm in Mpumalanga. By the early 1980s, he had inherited cattle from his deceased parents and continued to work on the farm as a labour tenant. It was only in 1984 that he elected to vacate the farm for a better life in Qwaqwa, as an entrepreneur. Of course, that was during the time Qwaqwa was made attractive to aspirant entrepreneurs, especially Sotho-speaking, from anywhere in the country. Such

announcements were particularly made on Radio Sotho and were part and parcel of homeland consolidation propaganda of the South African apartheid state. Such attraction also spread like wildfire, through word of mouth. For Mr T, such prosperity was embodied in real black entrepreneurs from Qwaqwa who sourced coal from coalmines in Delmas, Mpumalanga, using their own trucks. This reassured Mr T that leaving the farm for a better life in Qwaqwa would not be a mistake. In 1984, he sold his cattle, vacated the farm, leaving behind the graves of his ancestors and made his way to Qwaqwa. He immediately invested the proceeds from the cattle sales into a small coal-trading business and thus became a full-time entrepreneur. However, he missed the opportunity to become a land beneficiary of the New Qwaqwa Farms in the late 1980s, partly because he was not yet stable as an entrepreneur he entered during the moment of downsizing in the coal trade due to the electrification of most parts of Qwaqwa and he was not much connected within the wider network of entrepreneurs with political links inside the homeland state. However, he had a strong desire to become a farmer and thus applied successfully for a Land Bank loan in the mid-2000s, which led to his occupation of a 232 ha farm in 2007 after the same farm was auctioned by the Land Bank from a distressed black farmer who was one of the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms in the late 1980s.

4.5.12 Vignette L.

Joseph's parents were farm workers/labour tenants on a labour-tenant farm in the Kestell/Bethlehem district. They relocated to Qwaqwa in the early 1980s and invested the proceeds from cattle sales into a small-scale dairy enterprise, supplying milk to Thaba Dairy, and later Clover. The small-scale dairy enterprise was based mainly on family labour but also hired the labour of others, especially much poorer neighbours who came into Qwaqwa with very few resources or nothing, from labour-tenant farms. Such family business was crucial for selection as beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms they occupied their 400 ha farm in 1992 and relocated their small-scale dairy enterprise onto the farm and continued supplying milk to Clover and later to Nestle after the male household head died. During fieldwork in 2017, this family farm was managed by a second-generation farmer, taking over from his aging mother.

4.6 Income Sources Prior to Settlement of the Farmers Studied

As some of the vignettes above illuminate, the acquiring of land for capitalist farming by a differentiated petty bourgeoisie, both aspirant and established in the former Qwaqwa homeland state from the late 1980s, enabled processes of accumulation from below and above. As shown

by the life histories, processes of accumulation from below and above can be blurred over time and space. Therefore, in an attempt to illuminate economic histories of the farmers under study, Table 1 outlines the economic profiles of the farmers under study prior to their farm settlement. This is juxtaposed with data about the *year of farm settlement*, arranged into random year intervals, conditioned by peak moments of land redistribution, from the mid-1980s to 2014, spanning different macro, and localised geopolitical regimes within South Africa over time.

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Table 4.1: Income source of household head prior to settlement and year of farm settlement (n = 62)

Year of settlement	Income source of household head prior to settlement											Total
	Farm worker/labour tenant	General dealer	Civil servant	Small-scale brick industrialist	<i>Bakkie</i> * trader	Small-scale capitalist farmer	Taxi owner	State Official	Other businesses in Qwagqwa	Unskilled work		
1985 1990	5	6	0	3	1	6	3	1	2	1	28	
1991 1994	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	
1996 1997	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	
2001 2005	6	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	14	
2006 2009	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	
2012 2014	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Total	17	11	2	7	1	6	4	2	4	8	62	

* A *bakkie* is a small pick-up truck in South Africa

Table 4.1 shows that 53% of the sample (i.e. 33 cases from a total of 62) had various small-scale enterprises prior to farm settlement, regardless of the timing of farm settlement. This seems to suggest that capitalist farming became attractive to accumulators from below and/or the (aspirant) petty bourgeoisie elite since the first farmers were settled on New Qwaqwa Farms from the mid-1980s. As illuminated above, it was deliberate state policy to target the business and political elite as beneficiaries of redistributed land in that part of the country from the mid-1980s. However, as shown in Table 4.1, in a sample of 62 cases, there were also 17 farm workers, and eight general workers in industry (especially former mine workers), as well as four state officials and two civil servants who were able to acquire ownership of farms in the area of study from 1985-2014. These occupations are essentially differentiated and fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2003, see also Chapter Two). It is therefore misleading to assume that all black farmers in the Eastern Free State are elite beneficiaries of the apartheid state's land redistribution project, as often wrongly assumed by state officials, who often use such stereotype in barring some farmers, especially those in the lowest ranks of differentiation, from accessing much-needed agricultural state subsidy (see Chapter Seven).

With regard to former farm workers/labour tenants who became land beneficiaries, it is noteworthy that when the land redistribution process began in the mid-1980s in the Eastern Free State, some of the farms expropriated with compensation from white farmers were not immediately redistributed and became state-owned. This land was administered by AgriQwa, a state-owned agricultural company that provided comprehensive agricultural support to land reform beneficiaries. Those farms that were owned by the state/AgriQwa were later redistributed (especially from 2001-2005, see Table 4.1) to farm workers/labour tenants who were found living and working on the same farms prior to land redistribution. Some of "these farms were later redistributed to black farmers under the South African Government's Land Reform Programme after 1994" (Slater 2002, p. 118). The former farm worker/labour-tenant families who were granted land after 1994 were assisted by the state through grants, especially LRAD grants (see Table 4.1) with 'sweat equity contributions' rather than cash. The latter includes some of the farmers who were settled earlier (pre-1994) and could not qualify for Land Bank loans, for example Mr X who was granted land in the 1980s on the basis of his small business as a *bakkie* trader and later could not qualify for a Land Bank loan to purchase the same farm after 1994, thus becoming an LRAD beneficiary many years later.

For those farm workers/labour tenants who were granted land through LRAD grants after 1994, their land redistribution process took a different form, with a shift of focus from pro-business and political elite towards pro-poor land reform policy during the Mandela years (Cousins 2015). However, as the land reform literature in South Africa illuminates, there has been a shift from pro-poor land reform policy, towards subtle ‘elite capture’ of South Africa’s land reform (Ngubane 2018, Hall and Kepe 2017, Cousins 2013b). The latter has manifested on the ground in many contradictory ways as the next section on the withdrawal of state support towards the studied farmers in the mid-1990s partially illuminates.



Table 4.2: Income source of household head prior to settlement and farm acquisition strategy (n = 62)

Income source of household head prior to settlement	Method used to acquire farm					Total
	State application and Land Bank	LRAD Grant	Private purchase	PLAS Lease		
Farm worker/labour tenant	6	8	0	3	17	
General dealer	6	1	4	0	11	
Civil servant	0	1	1	0	2	
Small-scale brick industrialist	3	2	2	0	7	
<i>Bakkie</i> trader	0	1	0	0	1	
Small-scale capitalist farmer	6	0	0	0	6	
Shebeen owner	0	0	0	0	0	
Taxi owner	3	1	0	0	4	
Bureaucrat	1	0	1	0	2	
Other businesses in Qwaqwa	2	1	1	0	4	
Unskilled permanent work	4	4	0	0	8	
Total	31	19	9	3	62	



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Table 4.2 shows the dynamic nature of land transactions which have unfolded in the area of study over time. This also involved private purchases by the black business elite, especially from distressed farmers or other voluntary farm sales in the area of study, more recently.

The 19 LRAD cases shown in Table 4.2 are composed of differentiated beneficiaries, including former farm workers, as well as a few of those that came into farming with significant capital from elsewhere since the 2000s. As mentioned above, the former farm workers who became land beneficiaries have a labour tenant history on the same farms, as well as other farms in the Eastern Free State locality. To recap, the farms that were redistributed to former farmer workers (part of the 19 LRAD cases) were acquired by the state in the late 1980s and held as state enterprises under the then state-owned agricultural company, AgriQwa. The latter operated state farms (grain and livestock) which were purchased by the state with on-farm labour, the former labour tenants that became farm workers for AgriQwa (see Table 2). The same farms were later subdivided and redistributed to the same farm workers from the 2000s (see Appendix 1). As mentioned above, this coincided with the introduction of the LRAD policy which paid out grants for farm purchases on the basis that beneficiaries contributed in sweat equity. The same LRAD grants assisted much poorer farmers who could not afford to purchase farms through Land Bank (Table 4.2).

The cases categorised as private purchases in Table 4.2 are mainly composed of people who recently came into farming with capital from elsewhere, such as retirement/resignation packages from skilled employment and capital from off-farm small to medium-scale business (see Chapter Nine for some examples). The three PLAS beneficiaries shown in Table 4.2 are former farm workers who recently received assistance from previous white owners (former employers) towards owning the land they have worked. The latter seems a preferred land redistribution strategy by some landowners in the current disjuncture of land redistribution in South Africa (Mtero et al. 2019).

The above section has been an attempt to illuminate that the studied farmers are socially differentiated in many ways. Their economic profiles prior to farming are an important indication of such social difference, especially in terms of who came with what into farming, and what they did with it (Bernstein 2010).

The next section unpacks the politics of land size, as it was no coincidence that some farmers received smaller or bigger farm sizes than others (see Vignette A-L).

4.7 The Politics of Land Size on New Qwaqwa Farms

The unequal land size distribution of the farm units under study illuminates unequal distribution of land traceable to the initial land redistribution of the 1980s. This process was influenced by processes of accumulation from above and below (Mamdani 1987). One respondent explained this in simple terms, and said that those farmers who received much larger farms than the average (i.e. greater than 500 ha) were generally the most politically connected to those holding power in the former Qwaqwa homeland state, and some of them were parliamentarians in the homeland government of the time, the late 1980s. However, most of the latter sold the land back to white farmers after 1994. In relation to the latter, one respondent stated that: “Most of them were not farmers as such, they were opportunistic, and dominated our meetings. They were members of parliament, and business” (Respondent 40, July 2016).

Life history interviews have unravelled the tendency of the state towards the distribution of larger farms to the black political and business elite and their close allies. For example, Farmer T received a 900 ha farm through political connection in the late 1980s (see Vignette G above). The latter is one of the farmers in the sample who are currently on an upward trajectory of capital accumulation. Against this backdrop, the ways in which land size has affected the success or failure of the studied farming enterprises in economic terms is an important question. It is also noteworthy that some of the smaller farms, i.e. those less than 300 ha, have become capital intensive as a result of investments from various sources, including off-farm income such as other jobs (mainly involving skilled labour) or resignation/retirement packages from skilled work, as well as income from off-farm small to medium scale business (see Chapter Eight). However, some, though few, of the latter have received various forms of support from the state and private sector more recently, which have evidently contributed to their relative upward trajectory of accumulation. This illuminates the importance of

capitalisation¹⁷ as an important factor in accumulation within farm enterprises beyond land size. However, some of the accumulating farmers on smaller land sizes (less than 300 ha) have made attempts to rent-in more land as well to engage the state to get more land through current land redistribution policy. At the time of writing none of the latter had received more land for expanded reproduction (Bernstein 2010) from the state but some of them were found renting in or have rented arable land in the past for grain production, as well few cases of grazing-land rentals for excess livestock (mainly beef cattle) from mainly neighbouring farmers in the sample (see Chapter Nine).

As illuminated in some of the vignettes presented above, the farmers in the area of study have unequal distribution of land sizes that can be traced to the initial land redistribution process from the 1980s. The size of land each farmer received was no coincidence but was influenced by processes of accumulation from below and above (Mamdani 1987, Cousins 2013a,b) which have a long history in the former Qwaqwa homeland state (Bank 1992, Slater 2002).

The land redistribution of the 1980s in the Eastern Free State was arranged as follows: Unit 1 3 farms were smaller farms less than 500 ha in extent. Unit 4 farms were bigger farms, larger than 500 ha, which were mostly redistributed to the politically connected business elite, the then Mopeli regime, and at least one of the latter land beneficiaries was a parliamentarian in the former homeland state of Qwaqwa. Nonetheless, many of the latter sold their farms to white commercial farmers after 1994. It is noteworthy that the former farm workers who became beneficiaries of subdivided farms received smaller pieces of land compared to their petty bourgeois counterparts (see Chapter Six).

¹⁷ Farm capitalisation is understood here as all the commodities that add value to the farm enterprise, the elements of production such as modern grain production machinery and other implements associated with it (tractors, trucks, ploughs, planters, sprayers etc.), as well as other inputs such as fertiliser, seed, manure, as well as investments in infrastructure (fences, boreholes, farm houses etc.) and so on (Bernstein 2010). The greater the quantities of these farm capitalisation elements, in good working order, i.e. up-to-standard grain production machinery and farming inputs that are within their expiry dates, as well as healthy livestock, with sound veterinary back-up in the scientific sense, the more capitalised any farming enterprise can be, regardless of farming system, i.e. the choice of farm specialisation(s).

In what ways land size has affected the success or failure of the studied farming enterprises is an important question when land sizes are taken into consideration for analytical purposes. For example, some of the smaller farms i.e. those smaller than 300 ha, have become more capital intensive mainly as a result of investments from various sources, including off-farm income sources such as other jobs (mainly skilled labour) and other off-farm business that some of the relatively successful farmers are engaged in. Furthermore, some (though very few) of the latter have received various forms of support from the state and private sector more recently, which have evidently contributed to the relative success of some of these farms. This illuminates the importance of capital intensiveness as an important factor to the success of farming than land size. Furthermore, some of the accumulating farmers on smaller land sizes (i.e. <300 ha) have made attempts to rent-in more land, as well as to engage the state to get more land. The latter illuminates the limitations of expanded reproduction caused by limited farm size.

However, it cannot be ignored that those former farm workers who received relatively smaller farms than the rest of the sample are also constrained by farm size in their strategies for social reproduction which has renting out arable land at its centre smaller land sizes impose limitations on the possible rental income a farmer may earn from renting out arable land in particular, where the land rental rate is typically conditioned by hectares leased out; i.e. the greater the land rented out the greater the probability of corresponding rental income from renting out arable land. These dynamics are further explored in Chapter Seven.

The next section is a historical-geographic analysis of state support mechanisms that the same farmers have received and then lost, since the first farmers were granted land in the 1980s, to the apparent 'elite capture' of state resources in South Africa's land reform most recently (Hall and Kepe 2017).

4.8 The Fall of AgriQwa and Withdrawal of Agricultural State Subsidies from the Mid-1990s

State subsidies in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as described by farmers in the Eastern Free State, refer to support that these farmers received from a state-owned company,

AgriQwa, which later became known as Agri-Eco¹⁸ before it was dismantled in the mid-1990s. AgriQwa provided comprehensive support for the farmers under study which was, according to the farmers, administratively efficient and enabled them to farm productively in economic terms. The farmer support services of AgriQwa provided a comprehensive package in the form of flexible loans to farmers, payable at the end of each farming season. For example, in the early 1990s, farmers could hire a tractor for soil preparation and planting at R500 per season, which was deductible at the end of the farming season. They could also access other inputs such as seed, manure, chemicals, and so on, on credit from AgriQwa. Today farmers invoke the days of AgriQwa quite nostalgically. Below are some of their voices:

In the past we received vouchers [for inputs]. The state had [grain production] machinery that we hired at affordable rates. Our fathers managed to purchase their own tractors through profits they made through the support from AgriQwa. Our cattle grazing camps were well fenced, and each camp had a well-maintained dam. AgriQwa support mechanisms were very helpful. (Respondent 44)

AgriQwa kept our records in a notebook. For example, it was recorded each time a farmer took manure on loan, as well as diesel. The type of interest they charged was not compound interest. We also hired farming implements from AgriQwa we could hire any type of farming implement at affordable cost. Even if one had a smaller tractor one could hire corresponding farming implements based on the [kilowatt] capacity of the tractor owned. AgriQwa officials assisted us with soil testing in order to adapt corresponding chemicals. This included soil preparation, and they sourced the best varieties of seed, and brought it closer to us, and all we did was to collect from their offices at fairly good prices. This was so efficient in such a way that each crop had its own chemicals, for example dry beans and other crops. They further provided us with all the calibration information and explained everything. They also provided advice on how to operate tractors, for example they would say we should use three litres of diesel per hectare. When AgriQwa pulled out, we could

¹⁸ “The main responsibility of the Agricultural Division, previously known as Agriqwa, was the settlement of over 100 black 'novice' farmers on medium scale (c.450-500 ha) commercial farms that had been bought by the state from white farmers in the 1980s on the northern fringe of the old Qwaqwa 'homeland' itself” (Murray 1997, p. 205, see also Figure 4.1). This included the administrative consolidation of economic activities in agriculture and eco-tourism in the former homeland, Qwaqwa, and the neighbouring Golden Gate National Park (former Qwaqwa National Park).

not do calibration on our own that is why I had to take agricultural courses. We were forced to hire independent experts, and that pushed farming costs even higher. AgriQwa sourced the best of inputs fertiliser, seed, and chemicals. They had technicians that did research and advised us and trained us on a monthly basis. However, the most politically active farmers destroyed all of the above. This led to the dissolving of AgriQwa towards 1994. We lost a great deal from the dismantling of AgriQwa we lost access to inputs (manure, seed, fertiliser), and we were left on our own to the “winds of change”. The markets were harsh on us we could not access seeds (Respondent 20, July 2016).

Dr Claassen, one of the former AgriQwa officials and a former academic at UniQwa (University of the Free State) led a research team studying grain production on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State the same farmers under study. After being practically involved with the studied farmers for about a decade, together with colleagues, he admitted that:

Since 1995 government subsidies to emerging farmers were drastically reduced. The premise was that emerging farmers in Qwaqwa should become financially independent and that they should compete in a free market environment. Government also made it clear that resources for training and development would largely be channelled to small-scale and subsistence farmers and that the needs of commercial farmers would have to be addressed by the private sector or through other creative means. The process left a void in the availability of technical and other support systems for the emerging commercial farmer. For the first time, emerging farmers were faced with the harsh realities of a very competitive market place (Claassen et al. 2002 in Claassen et al. 2014, p. 227).

The fall of AgriQwa was not only conditioned by the generalised neoliberal trend associated with the gradual withdrawal of state subsidies in agriculture at a macroeconomic level (Genis 2015) but also indirectly influenced to a great extent by locally embedded politics of the time in the Eastern Free State. There was a local stratum of farmers composed of mainly (former) civil servants, especially teachers, and members of the Qwaqwa homeland bureaucracy who were quite vocal, politically. They successfully mobilised other farmers to push out the white administrative elite of AgriQwa. Today, many farmers look back at such events with dismay, against the backdrop of apparent elite capture (Hall and Kepe 2017) of state resources by the same stratum of farmers who were at the forefront in the dismantling of AgriQwa.

The above quotes from some of the farmers under study imply that even though the white administration of AgriQwa was backward and oppressive in its racialised

political stances during apartheid in many ways, given the nature of the state of the time, its technical and economic efficiency was nevertheless progressive in scientific terms. This proved useful for the farmers under study, as articulated by the farmers themselves, especially those farmers who have struggled since the collapse of AgriQwa. This includes those farmers who are currently struggling due to the current exclusionary dynamics within current state support mechanisms characterised by elite capture (Hall and Kepe 2017, Cousins 2013b). The quotes from some of the interviewed farmers imply that AgriQwa should have been seized upon by progressive political forces and used to promote pro-poor development, rather than being dismantled.

Subsequently and rather unsurprisingly, some of those politically-vocal farmers who were influential in the dismantling of AgriQwa rose to high positions of the National African Farmers Union (NAFU) after 1994. Some sold their farms but still served in the same farmers' organisation and some have recently emerged as renters of arable land from some of the beneficiaries of land reform in the area of study.

4.9 Conclusion

The class formation trajectories of the holders of family farms on recently redistributed land in the area of study have their roots in the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands labour-tenant families from white-owned farms into labour reserves in the Eastern Free State (circa 1950-1970s). Some had sufficient resources such as livestock, to later emerge as petty commodity producers of various kinds within the labour reserve, whilst many were forced into poverty. Those who were lucky became beneficiaries of land redistribution at a critical political moment when the apartheid regime began to experiment with the redistribution of some white-owned agricultural land in the late 1980s.

The land beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms were already differentiated in terms of class by the time they were allocated farmland from the mid-1980s. However, they were not all black elites, parliamentarians, supermarket owners, and taxi bosses. They also included various petty commodity producer households trading in small-scale capitalist enterprises in Qwaqwa. These small-scale capitalist households consisted of general dealerships, brick construction, coal, firewood, sand traders and so on. Some were small-scale capitalist farmers, whilst others were worker-peasants, and a few were

selected amongst migrant proletarians proper of the then Qwaqwa labour reserve. By the 1980s, the Qwaqwa Bantustan/labour reserve had received hundreds of thousands of former labour tenants and farm workers evicted from neighbouring, white-owned farms to make way for large-scale commercial farming. It is from within this surplus labour population that a class of mainly non-agricultural petty commodity producers emerged in response to economic opportunities presented by their own influx, forced as they were by the compelling economic forces for their survival, whilst hundreds of thousands more were forced into pauperisation. For many, such economic petty-trade profiles secured their selection as beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms because they were seen in possession of an entrepreneurial spirit by state authorities, determined to construct yeomanry black commercial farmers. Some of the migrant proletarians strategically transformed themselves into worker-peasants in order to qualify as land beneficiaries. Essentially, given their class positions, the land beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms did not start on an equal footing, which partly explains their subsequent differentiated economic pathways traced in this thesis.

Those who had significant assets and capital from off-farm businesses had a head-start and embarked on sustained stable, and upward trajectories of accumulation from the early 1990s. They invested in tractors, and other means of production, using the proceeds of their small businesses they had kept or sold after becoming land beneficiaries. This enabled the latter to compete rigorously by making sure they sow crops in season, whilst others had to wait in the queue for state-sponsored tractors, and other inputs.

Those who had limited off-farm capital sources had to solely rely on a state-owned agricultural enterprise, AgriQwa, for agricultural subsidies that came in the form of a full package, from input to output market support. Such state agricultural subsidies enabled most land beneficiaries to reproduce as capital on the same scale of production for the first five to eight years, until AgriQwa was dismantled in the mid-1990s. This period of neoliberalisation coincided with the conversion of the option of renting land to purchase into Land Bank loans payable on an annual basis. Subsequently, in the early 2000s and the next decade, many were heading for disaster without state support. A few sold their farms out of distress caused by relentless summons delivered in person by Land Bank agents, whilst others have survived to tell their stories of liquidation of

assets such as cattle, and farm mechanisation under real pressure to settle Land Bank loans.

Their current livelihood trajectories can be critically assessed with the help of close attention to this historical backdrop, from which one can tentatively discern the extent to which the studied family farms on redistributed land have been accumulating from below or above (Mamdani 1987). Also important is the degree to which improved access to land has expanded the social reproduction base of immediate kin located on and off-farm and the extent to which the material fortunes and misfortunes of the latter shape the economic performance of family-owned farms in terms of both reproduction and accumulation. The next five empirical chapters provide detailed empirical evidence of class formation dynamics in the area of study.



CHAPTER 5

FARMING SYSTEMS ON REDISTRIBUTED LAND IN THE EASTERN FREE STATE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the main farming systems adopted by land reform beneficiaries in the area of study. The farming systems described in this chapter are set in motion by the efforts of key personnel, the main farmers, within family owned land reform farms. The chapter begins with an overview of demographic features of agricultural households centred on the main farmers. Subsequently and on the basis of a quantitative analysis of extensive survey data collected from a sample of 62 cases, complemented by in-depth interview material, five different farming systems are identified, in the following proportions:

- a. Livestock and grain production, no arable land rented out (24%).
- b. Livestock and grain production, renting out arable land (16%).
- c. Livestock only, no arable land rented out (15%).
- d. Livestock only, arable land rented out (42%).
- e. Renting out arable land only, no livestock, no grain production (3%).

Further analysis reveals that farmers allocated to these categories are socially differentiated, pursuing different livelihood strategies (see Chapter Six). Class dynamics within each category are also evident, as discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

The chapter is divided into four constituent parts. The first part describes the demographic features of the main farmers and their dual residency on farms and elsewhere and how this is intertwined with the material conditions of their immediate family members. The second part introduces the reader to the agro-ecological and agro-economic character of the area of study. The third part then describes the farming systems practiced by the studied farmers and differentiates these into five farming systems, distinguished by how variables such as livestock production, crop production and land rental for rent income are combined. Analysis of empirical data from the area

of study shows that the majority of land beneficiaries draw modest to substantial benefits from their livestock enterprises, in contrast to crop production which is capital intensive and can only be engaged in by relatively few farmers. The fourth section of the chapter discusses the wider significance of these findings.

5.2 Demographic Features of Agricultural Households on New Qwaqwa Farms

The studied land reform farms are family-owned enterprises operationalised by main farmers within gendered and generational familial relations. This section considers the demographic features of these agricultural households, particularly the gender, age, and educational profiles of the main farmers, as well as their household sizes. The residency of the main farmers and their immediate next of kin are considered.

Table 5.1: Demographic features of agricultural households on New Qwaqwa Farms

Gender of farmer		Age of farmer	Years of schooling	Household size
Female (n=12; 19,4%)	Median	57	12	6
	Mean	57	9,33	6,25
	Minimum	34	3	3
	Maximum	72	15	13
	Range	38	12	10
Male (n=50; 80,9%)	Median	59	10	5
	Mean	56	9,44	5,36
	Minimum	23	0	2
	Maximum	80	17	12
	Range	57	17	10

The preponderance of men as main farmers in contrast to women is no coincidence but a reflection of a patriarchal society in which the studied family-owned farms are socially embedded. In many of these familial enterprises there are real quarrels over inheritance, management, and benefits of farming. Some of these squabbles seem absurd, for example in some cases female next of kin with access to substantive off-farm income are excluded by their brothers from the family farms, even in cases where

they could make substantive investments towards expanding the scale of farm production. However, in some cases, female members of households get to become main farmers, especially in cases where the male household head is deceased or in cases where they are recognised as main farmers, particularly for their financial strength often attendant to access to off-farm income attached to skilled jobs. For example, some former farm-worker households have significantly invested in the education of their off-spring, some of whom have become main farmers and are making significant investments in farming, thanks to their access to off-farm income.

The female main farmers tend to be relatively younger and more educated than their male counterparts. However, the latter also have a few amongst its ranks of highly-educated individuals, some with university undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. These dynamics only reflect the bourgeois aspirations of the studied farmers, inseparable to their economic histories prior to farming. Some of the next of kin of the main farmers have access to skilled off-farm employments for the same reasons and some of the wealthiest of households are investing significantly in the education of their offspring who were at university at the time of writing.

It follows then, with a few exceptions, where household sizes are fairly large, the studied farmers' family sizes reflect their bourgeoisie aspirations. This essentially reflects family planning and aspirations for a better future for the children, particularly in off-farm skilled employment. The fruits of these dynamics are best articulated by the livelihood pathways described in Chapter Nine, whereby some of the offspring are beginning to take (early) retirements and investing significantly in farm production.

Table 5.2: Presence of main farmer on farm

Gender of farmer	Presence of farmer on farm		
	Full-time	Part-time	Absent
Female	8	1	3
Male	27	20	3
Total	35	21	6

Table 5.2 shows that a total of 35, or 56,42% of the main farmers reported in this thesis reside on a full-time basis on the studied farms, whilst 21 (or 33,87%) are part-time farmers and 6 (or 9,67%) are absent. Their farm residency has a wider socio-spatial context. As shown in a map of the area of study in Chapter Four, the New Qwaqwa Farms are spatially located adjacent to the former Qwaqwa labour reserve/Bantustan the historical context sketched in the same chapter traces livelihood trajectories of the studied family farms from labour-tenant farms and relocations into Qwaqwa, and subsequent diversification into New Qwaqwa Farms. These livelihood trajectories have spatial components marked by the graves and remnants of dwellings in former labour-tenant farms of the Free State, as well as current township houses in latter day Qwaqwa, and farmhouses on New Qwaqwa Farms. The presence/absence of the main farmers are intertwined in this backdrop of dual residency between Qwaqwa and the New Qwaqwa Farms. Dual residency between homes and places of work is a common feature in Southern Africa and reflect the peculiar nature of its social formations' incorporation into the wider capitalist economy. This region is characterised by labour migration from rural hinterlands into urban centres and remittance flows to rural homes (O'Laughlin 2002, Murray 1980). Familial relations within the studied land reform farms unfold within these wider dynamics of labour migration and remittance flows, as well as apparent generalised unemployment in the wider South African economy. Those main farmers who are part-time/absent on the farms make weekly and monthly road trips from Qwaqwa to New Qwaqwa Farms to inspect their labour, particularly the long-term herders under their employ. Those who are in full-time residency are much more dynamic and reflect patters of class differentiation partially dealt with in this chapter, and subsequent chapters. As the reader will see in the empirical chapters that follow, degrees of access to off-farm income on the part of the main farmers and their immediate kin is a crucial factor in class formation and livelihood trajectories at the centre of this thesis. Detailed qualitative data with regard to these remittance and income flows from off-farm jobs towards farm production, as well as farm-income flows from the farms to off-farm unemployed kin and the maintenance of off-farm households are discussed in abbreviated case studies in Chapters Seven to Nine.

The next section describes the agro-ecological and agro-economic context of the area of study. The quantitative data shown in the tables below will not be analysed in great detail, given that the study places more emphasis on the three main class categories

discussed in later chapters. Patterns of a quantitative character will be examined in those chapters.

5.3 The Agro-ecological and Agro-economic Context in the Area of Study

Keegan (1986) cautions against stereotypical or textbook approaches to agro-ecological descriptions of localised climatic zones and suggests paying attention to locally embedded agro-economic contexts. This is the approach adopted in locating the current study within its localised agro-ecological context. In their study of land reform farms in the Eastern Free State, Claassen et al. (2014, p. 225) note that “[t]he northern part comprises flat to rolling grassland”, though their main focus was to illuminate that the soil structure, and “average annual summer rainfall [of] between 700 and 800 mm” are conducive to (capital intensive) grain and crop production.

According to Claassen and colleagues

[the] predominant soil types that are found in the area include Avalon, Clovelly and Hutton soils. Avalon soils have good soil moisture content and with discerning applications of fertilisers and agricultural lime this soil type is suitable for crop cultivation. Like Avalon, Clovelly soils are well suited for crop cultivation. Hutton soils drain well and are equally well suited for crop cultivation, particularly in areas characterised by reasonably high rainfall as in the study area. Soils found in the study area are acidic and require regular liming. With a high summer rainfall leaching is a common problem, making frequent fertilisation necessary [for grain/crop production]. (Claassen et al. 2014, p. 225)

Droughts are not as common as is the problem of hailstorms an “average frequency of 6 to 8 hailstorms per year is common” (*ibid.*, p. 225), which can have negative consequences for crop production.

The work of Claassen and colleagues was geared to provide solutions to problems facing grain/crop-producing land beneficiaries in the area of study, given the evident potential for profitable crop production if beneficiaries are provided with adequate state support. However, they are silent on livestock production beyond making a note about the rolling grasslands found in the area (Claassen et al. 2014).

Of course, the arable highveld, as it was once called (Keegan 1986), played a significant role in South Africa’s industrialisation through massive grain supplies, on the shoulders of sharecroppers and labour tenants. Nevertheless, the lenses through which the maize-

triangle is still expected to perform miracles today seems over emphasised, if not misleading. It obscures the reality of livestock production alternatives, conditioned by the local agro-ecological (grassland biome) context of the area of study. Of course, with massive farm capitalisation, on highly capitalised farms within the so-called ‘maize triangle’, crop production is still a reality, but not for all farmers at all times. However, some farmers simply do not have the means to produce crops on such a massive scale and opt to lease out the proportion of their farmland that is arable or convert it back to grazing land to focus on modest to progressive livestock herds. This is the nuance that is lacking amongst proponents of massive increases in levels of crop production on South African land reform farms.

The crop-production narrative in relation to South African land reform rests on a subtle underlying narrative that land reform is about crops only and the failure to produce crops, particularly grain, is considered as failure to farm on the part of beneficiaries of land reform. At least this is the narrative underpinning the work of Claassen and colleagues cited above. In contrast, Keegan (1986a, b, c) suggests that the Harrismith district, where fieldwork for this study was conducted, was once roamed by thousands of cattle within the mobile pastoral production systems practiced by local African communities as well as white settlers in the early 20th century. These kinds of pastoral systems were gradually undermined as white settler farmers were encouraged to purchase individual farms on the basis of private property and thus subdivide their extensive livestock holdings in the first half of the 20th century. This perspective provides an essential backdrop to the argument advanced in the final section of this chapter, that the area of study in the Eastern Free State is prime livestock production territory and thus that the predominance of livestock on land reform farms is far from surprising.

5.4 Farming Systems on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

Analysis of data from a sample of 62 cases of farmers on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State revealed five different farming systems. The central importance of livestock production in four of the five farming systems in the area of study derives from the fact that most of the studied land beneficiaries put more effort into livestock production than into crop production. The researcher argues that this is essentially a phenomenal expression of two combined phenomena, (a) the agro-economic context,

which forces many farmers to drop out of grain and crop production because of its unaffordability, given its highly capitalised nature, and (b) a conducive agro-ecological context: a grassland biome where ruminants naturally thrive, as well as the relatively low-input nature of livestock production, that is, for example small livestock herd production has relatively lower barriers of entry in an area that relies on summer rainfall for non-irrigated grain and crop production. That this natural aspect is advantageous to land beneficiaries in the area of study is highlighted in this study especially those with deep-rooted local histories of labour tenancy in the Eastern Free State district. They combine these attributes with the relative abundance of livestock-rearing skills obtained from a history of farm work, as livestock herders and handlers, amongst many of the land beneficiary families.

Farm households engaged in each farming system tend to include members with off-farm jobs, which the main farmers on these family farms combine with farm-derived income. Some do not have access to off-farm income, for various reasons, and tend to live on farm income such as a few livestock sales income combined with farm-rental income. The role of immediate kin in these social reproduction patterns are explored in detail in the core empirical chapters (see Chapters Seven to Nine). Emerging patterns suggest that in some farming systems the main farmers therein have access to substantive amounts of off-farm income but in others they do not. For example, the *livestock and grain production farming system, no arable land rented out* farming system illuminates this pattern; farmers in this category are better-off combining livestock and grain production and do not rent out arable land, as in other farming systems. In essence these farming systems reflect internal class differentiation patterns within the studied sample, which will be explored in the core empirical chapters. On their own, these taxonomic, descriptive categories have limited analytical power but they do shed light on aspects of class differentiation, as explored in more depth in further analysis (Chapters Seven to Nine).

Table 5.3: Land-size dynamics for farmers in Farming System One

		Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Proportion of arable land to farm size (%)	Grazing land (ha)	Proportion of grazing land to farm size (%)
N	Valid	15	15	15	15	15
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		367,1	128,1	42%	241,6	58%
Median		257	120	50%	144	50%
Range		956	230	82%	811	82%
Minimum		107	10	6%	32	12%
Maximum		1063	240	88%	843	94%
Sum		5506	1922		3624	
Percentiles	25	221	73	21%	80	43%
	50	257	120	50%	144	50%
	75	412	210	57%	292	79%

Farmers in Farming System One have a median farm size of 257 ha, and a range of 956 ha. They specialise in mixed farming with crops and livestock and dedicate differentiated proportions of their farmland to arable and grazing land. This is conditioned by localised climatic conditions, soil quality and attached scale of farm enterprise capital intensiveness. The essence of Table 5.3 is to show that farmers in Farming System One dedicate relatively half of their farmland to either crop or livestock production. This is expressed by a median percentage of 50% of both arable and grazing land. However, there are internal variations to proportional distribution of these land uses when each farm is taken into consideration. The latter is predicated upon the extent of arable, or grazing land available and the extent to which either can be converted to either for intensive specialised farming in crop, or livestock production. These dynamics hint to class differentiation which will be explored in later chapters.

Table 5.4: Crop production for farmers in Farming System One

	Proportion of arable land cropped in 2014/2015 (ha)	Grain in 2015/2016 (ha)	Proportion of arable land cropped in 2015/2016 (%)	Yellow maize in 2015/2016 (ha)	Yellow maize in 2014/2015 (ha)	Sugar/ dry beans in 2015/2016 (ha)	Sugar/ dry beans in 2014/2015 (ha)	Wheat in 2015/2016 (ha)	Wheat in 2014/2015 (ha)	Sunflower in 2014/2015 (ha)	Soya beans in 2015/2016 (ha)	Soya beans in 2014/2015 (ha)	
N	Valid Missing	12 3	15 0	15 0	10 5	7 8	13 2	11 4	2 13	1 14	1 14	4 11	4 11
Mean	63%	90,8	66%	61,5	52	40,76	34,45	27	20	30	28	63,25	
Median	59%	78	69%	41	50	30	30	27	20	30	26	61,5	
Range	75%	205	84%	128	80	155	76	14	0	0	20	30	
Min	25%	5	16%	12	5	5	4	20	20	30	20	50	
Max	100%	210	100%	140	85	160	80	34	20	30	40	80	
Sum		1362		615	364	530	379	54	20	30	112	253	
%	25	35%	50%	24,5	30	16	21	20	20	30	21,25	52,5	
	50	59%	69%	41	50	30	30	27	20	30	26	61,5	
	75	94%	78%	105	80	55	49	,	20	30	36,75	75,75	

Table 5.5: Livestock production for farmers in Farming System One

	Beef cattle	Sheep (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Beef cattle sales (#)
N	Valid 14 Missing 1	5 10	4 4	4 4	11 4
Mean	55	49	73,25	11,5	12,73
Median	43	40	56,5	10	8
Range	146	39	140	14	39
Minimum	4	35	20	6	1
Maximum	150	74	160	20	40
Sum	770	245	293	46	140
Percentiles					
25	21	37,5	20,5	6,5	5
50	43	40	56,5	10	8
75	92,25	65	142,75	18	20

Table 5.6: Farm-income dynamics for farmers in Farming System One

		Proportion of LSU* income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of crop income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of milk income in gross farm income (%)	Gross farm income (R's)
N	Valid Missing	14 1	12 3	4 11	15 0
Mean		17%	84%	59%	994700
Median		9%	89%	68%	666860
Range		100%	55%	88%	3357900
Minimum		0%	45%	5%	38700
Maximum		100%	100%	94%	3396600
Sum					14920500
Percentiles	25	6%	82%	16%	202400
	50	9%	89%	68%	666860
	75	18%	95%	93%	1347400

*Livestock Unit



5.4.1 Farming System One: Livestock and grain/crop production, no arable land rented out

A total of 15 farmers or 24% of the sample (n=62) were found combining livestock and crop enterprises without renting out their arable land. Table 5.4 shows the distribution of crops produced by farmers in Farming System One. The proportion of land used for crop production is an important indicator of capital investment in crop production. The most crucial aspect of this data is that farmers in Farming System One are intensifying crop production, with the exception of a few, whilst others produce crops to full capacity of their arable land. This data hints to the class character of farmers in Farming System One, which will be analysed more systematically in later chapters. Their cropping enterprises, from which they draw great proportions of their gross farm income, include yellow maize, dry/sugar beans, wheat, soya and sunflower (Table 5.4), for which they typically hire crop production machinery for soil preparation, planting, and harvesting. Some have tractors and planters and conduct the ploughing and planting of fields themselves but the majority, with a few exceptions, hire a combine harvester for the harvesting of their crops. They also typically hire service companies for transportation of grain to grain silos and other small-scale processing companies, with the exception of a few who own high capacity vehicles. It is also common to see a team of up to 20 women harvesting beans or hand-picking maize that has fallen onto the ground out of reach for the combine harvester. These casual workers are paid from R60-R150 per day, depending on the farmer's discretion. Some of the workers originate from Lesotho and sometimes relocate closer to the farms for farm to farm job seeking (Johnston 2015).

As shown in Table 5.5, livestock enterprises of farmers in Farming System One consist of beef cattle, sheep, dairy cows and, to a more limited extent, goats and pigs. Beef cattle production is the principal livestock enterprise for the majority of farmers in this farming system, followed by sheep, and dairy. As their neighbours, farming system one farmers hire herders who are often immigrant workers from Lesotho to look after their animals (Appendix 3). Livestock auction sales in nearby towns provide important buyers for their livestock but informal sales in weekend ceremonial markets are equally important. The distribution of these livestock enterprises in terms of scale and intensity reflect internal class differentiation explored later.

Table 5.6 considers the proportional distribution of gross farm income derived from mixed farming with livestock and crops for farmers in Farming System One. It is a fact that most farmers in this farming system derive the greatest proportion of their gross farm income from crop production, with only a few exceptions. This occurs within the mixed farming context, involving milk production for only four farmers in Farming System One. After crop production, livestock sales income is the second-most important if we were to put aside dairy, because these livestock sales are typically beef cattle, practiced by fifteen out of sixteen farmers in Farming System One. When gross farm income in its proportional totality is considered, it does become clear that farmers in this farming system are an enterprising class whose concrete situation will be analysed later.



5.4.1.1 Historical and contemporary off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System One.

Table 5.7: Historical and contemporary off-farm income for farmers in Farming System One (n= 15)

Income source of farmer prior to settlement	Current off-farm income source # 1						Current off-farm income source # 2	
	NA*	Old-age grant	Skilled full-time job	Self-employed off-farm (small business)	Self-employed off farm (medium-scale business)	NA	Self-employed off-farm (small business)	
Farm worker/labour tenant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
General dealer	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	
Small-scale brick industrialist	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	
Small-scale capitalist farmer	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	
Taxi owner	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	
Other businesses in Qwagwa	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	
Unskilled permanent work	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	
Skilled permanent work off-farm	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	
Total	4	5	1	4	1	13	2	
*Not applicable								

Table 5.7 illuminates that some of the farmers in Farming System One have family business histories, including general dealerships, small-scale capitalist farming, taxi business, and other business in Qwaqwa. These are former petty commodity producers that were allocated land from the mid to late 1980s in the area of study (see Chapter Four). However, some of the farmers in Farming System One have history of unskilled and skilled permanent work prior to farming.

Off-farm small- to medium-scale business is an important source of off-farm income for some farmers in Farming System One, which seems to put them in an economically advantageous footing over other farmers in the sample, hence their production of more crops than the other descriptive categories analysed in this chapter. Their capital intensiveness in terms of grain/crop production is partly underpinned by their access to off-farm income, or even driven by it.

Table 5.7 also shows that a total of eight out of 14 farmers in Farming System One have histories of petty commodity production, particularly general dealerships, small-scale brick industries, and small-scale capitalist farming, as well as taxi businesses, and other business in Qwaqwa prior to farming. The rest, i.e. six out of 14 farmers in Farming System One had (un)skilled off-farm employment prior to farming. Accordingly, proceeds or savings, or at least some form of capital resource from the above differentiated income sources prior to farming may have been invested in farming at the time of settlement. As will be made explicit in Chapters Seven to Nine, some of the accumulating farmers (predominantly practising Farming System One) seem to conform to research findings about the growing significance of medium-scale farmers in the wider African context, who come into agriculture with off-farm capital derived from diversified off-farm livelihoods (Scoones et al. 2012, Jayne et al. 2016). In this case, they also include a variety of farmers with significant state and private sector support and a small minority with political access to state resources and those who have progressively accumulated from below through their own efforts (see Chapter Nine).

Table 5.8: Farm size dynamics for farmers in Farming System Two

		Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Proportion of arable land to farm size (%)	Grazing land (ha)	Proportion of grazing land to farm size (ha)
N	Valid	10	10	10	10	10
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		404	202	51%	201	49%
Median		355	200	54%	204	46%
Range		750	424	64%	400	64%
Minimum		150	26	13%	50	23%
Maximum		900	450	77%	450	87%
Sum		4040	2028		2012	
Percentiles	25	238	96	26%	78	30%
	50	355	200	54%	204	46%
	75	517	285	70%	283	74%



Table 5.9: Arable land cropped and rented out by farmers in Farming System Two

		Crops in 2015/16 (ha)	Proportion of arable land cropped to arable land size in 2015/16 (%)	Crops in 2014/15 (ha)	Proportion of arable land cropped in 2014/15 (%)	Arable land rented out (ha)	Proportion of arable land rented out (%)	Rent per hectare (R's)
N	Valid	10	10	8	8	10	10	9
	Missing	0	0	2	2	0	0	1
Mean		75	24%	95	32%	105	62%	536
Median		33	16%	33,5	18%	76	66%	525
Range		429	94%	427	94%	245	84%	800
Minimum		1	2%	5	2%	26	16%	255
Maximum		430	96%	432	96%	271	100%	800
Sum		750		763		1054		
Percentiles	25	5	4%	7	5%	66	38%	320
	50	33	16%	33	18%	76	66%	450
	75	87,5	39%	156	62%	144	84%	700

Table 5.10: Crop production for farmers in Farming System Two

	Valid	Yellow maize in 2015/2016 (ha)	Yellow maize in 2014/2015 (ha)	Sugar/dry beans in 2015/2016 (ha)	Sugar/dry beans in 2014/2015 (ha)	Wheat in 2014/2015 (ha)	Sunflower (ha)
N	4	4	4	5	6	1	2
	Missing	6	6	5	4	9	8
Mean		36	107	35	39	100	65
Median		35	95	34	33,5	100	65
Range		63	225	70	95	0	86
Minimum		7	7	2	5	100	22
Maximum		70	232	72	100	100	108
Sum		147	429	176	234	100	130
Percentiles							
	25	10	10	5	7	100	22
	50	35	95	34	33	100	65
	75	65	216	66	65	100	,

Table 5.11: Livestock production for farmers in Farming System Two

		Beef cattle (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Sheep (#)	Beef cattle sales (#)
N	Valid	8	4	3	6
	Missing	2	6	7	4
Mean		68	27	25	13
Median		22	27	20	7
Range		267	16	25	37
Minimum		10	20	15	3
Maximum		277	36	40	40
Sum		544	111	75	80
Percentiles	25	13	21	15	3
	50	22	27	20	7
	75	123,25	34	34	25



Table 5.12: Farm and rental income proportions in gross farm income for farmers in Farming System Two

	Gross LSU* income (R's)	Gross income from milk sales in 2016 (R's)	Arable land-rental income (R's)	Grazing-land-rental income (R's)	Total rental income (R's)	Proportion of farm-rental income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of LSU* income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of milk income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of crop income in gross farm income (%)	Estimated gross farm income (R's)
N	Valid 8 Missing 2	4	9	1	8	8	8	4	4	10
Mean	71587	212700	56181	2880	56541	42%	21%	55%	68%	573943
Median	30000	186000	53200	2880	53200	39%	16%	56%	64%	303400
Range	313000	212400	152000	0	149120	99%	58%	69%	53%	2992470
Minimum	12000	133200	10000	2880	12880	1%	1%	19%	45%	31380
Maximum	325000	345600	162000	2880	162000	100%	59%	88%	98%	3023850
Sum	572700	850800	449450	2880	452330					5739430
Percentiles										
	25	16775	141900	13925	2880	21387	16%	26%	46%	71250
	50	30000	186000	48000	2880	53200	39%	56%	64%	303400
	75	84750	310200	60600	2880	60900	69%	81%	94%	637300

*Livestock Unit

5.4.2 Farming System Two: Livestock and grain/crop production, renting out arable land

A total of 10 farmers or 16% of the sample were found combining livestock and grain/crop enterprises, whilst concurrently renting out some proportion of their arable land. Farm size dynamics for farmers in Farming System Two show similar dynamics to those in Farming System One. This has to do more with the agro-ecological context of the area of study, naturally constituting differentiated soil and vegetation types. However, there are slight differences, for example the degree of farm production intensity between farmers in System One and Two showed in Table 5.10. The latter alludes to class differentiation explored more systematically later.

Farming System Two farmers produce grain on relatively smaller proportions of their arable land, for example in 2014/15 season, their median proportion of land cropped with grain/crops was 33,5 ha (18%), and 33 ha (16%) in the subsequent 2015/16 season, whilst renting out the remaining, often larger proportions (Table 5.10). They rent out some proportion of their arable land, whilst they produce crops on the remaining, often smaller proportions. As Table 5.9 shows, the proportion of land size cropped with crops is generally lower than that rented out for rental income. As will be seen later, farm rent income is functional for differentiated needs of farmers, including to keep some proportion of arable land under crop production for strategic and expedient reasons. All of these reasons have class connotations. However, these rent agreements appear as a strategy in order to gain access to crop production machinery. In these types of rental agreements, where some proportion of the landowner's land is put under grain/crop production, with the aid of the renter's crop production machinery, appear as sharecropping agreements. To be sure, this often involves the usage of the renter's crop production machinery for soil preparation, planting, and sometimes harvesting of the landowner's smaller proportion of arable land, whilst the larger proportion is rented out. The use of the renter's crop production machinery can be seen as a form of rent, or a form of service performed by the renter for the landowner in return for the land rented. On the other hand, these rental arrangements also appear as a strategy to overcome the lack of capital to invest in hiring or purchasing of crop production machinery to have some proportion of arable land under crop production.

The sharecropping strategy used by farmers in Farming System Two is fundamentally different to that of mere renting out of arable land. This is a most lucrative and remunerative arrangement, in contrast to renting out land in the open land rent market. In Chapter Nine, the researcher shows that this has class connotations as it seems that it is only those farmers on upward trajectories who are economically well-off are able to negotiate sharecropping arrangements with fragments of agrarian capital owning the machinery used in the production of crops. Otherwise the latter, as capitalist endeavours, would very much prefer the mere renting of land under normal market rates, to sharecropping.

On the proportion of their arable land not rented out, farmers in Farming System Two were found to be producing at least one of the following crops: yellow maize, dry/sugar beans, wheat, and soya on differentiated proportions of their arable land (Table 5.10 and 5.12). Sugar/dry beans, and maize constitute the most important, principal crops, followed by wheat and sunflower. The land size cropped with grain, regardless of that rented out, is fundamentally higher than smallholder farmers in the former labour reserves of South Africa, farming on no more than 10ha of arable land (Sato 2018, Cousins 2013).

In addition to renting out some proportion of arable land and producing crops on the remaining arable land, farmers in Farming System Two also farm with livestock. As in Farming System One, beef cattle production is their main specialisation unevenly distributed in terms of livestock herd size within this farming system. A few have dairy cows, and producing milk, whilst others also combine this with sheep production. Sheep sales are excluded in Table 5.11, for their insignificance, but will be considered later. However, the beef cattle sales are far too important to be obscured, and their trends suggest relative specialisation in beef cattle production concurrently with minute crop production, and the renting out of some proportion of arable land. These dynamics will be explored with greater analytical clarity in the next three empirical chapters. However, the combination of crop and livestock production particularly benefits their livestock enterprises in terms of supplementary feeding, for example, after any maize harvest, cattle, and sheep feed on the residue material. Furthermore, for dairy farmers within Farming System Two, the production of yellow maize, especially on smaller

proportions of arable land which is not rented out, is important for processing into silage for supplementary dairy cow feeding.

Table 5.12 presents farm differentiated proportions of gross farm income for farmers in Farming System Two. Livestock and farm rental income proportionally constitute the greatest proportion of gross farm income when considered in combination, especially because 80% of farmers in this farming system put more efforts in gaining farm rental income as well as livestock sales income concurrently. This is followed by proportional crop sales income, which, on the surface appears as constituting the greatest magnitude of farm income. As will be evident in subsequent empirical chapters, crop production is only of relative importance for many farmers in the area of study, though crucial in the context of mixed farming, where livestock and crop production are compatible, especially if combined with farm rent income.

5.4.2.1 Off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Two

Table 5.13: Off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Two

Income source of farmer prior to settlement	Current off-farm income source	
	Old-age grant	Self-employed off-farm (small business)
Farm worker/labour tenant	1	0
General dealer	1	1
Small-scale capitalist farmer	2	0
Total	4	1

A total of five out of ten farmers in Farming System Two were found with access to off-farm income and four out of five of the latter are old-age social grants and one small business (Table 5.13). This suggests that farmers in this category are characterised by a generalised lack of access to off-farm income sources. In a few cases, immediate kin's off-farm income is important, where the latter are not too constrained by the pressures of their own social reproduction (see Chapter Eight). However, in a wider historical context, consideration of income sources of farmers prior to settlement reveals that some of the farmers aged 60 and above have differentiated histories of farm work, small-scale

capitalist farming and other petty commodity producing enterprises, such as small-scale brick industries (see Chapter Four). They were part of the initial set of beneficiaries of redistributed land of the mid- to late-1980s, who currently do not have a wider resource base in the form of off-farm capital to invest in farming, as do farmers in Farming System One, but they have been ‘hanging-in’ in relation to farming (Dorward 2009), and are thus currently not on upward trajectories of accumulation. They appear to be able to reproduce their farming enterprises as capitalist operations from year to year and this has involved renting out some proportion of their arable land, to focus mainly on livestock, i.e. dairy for some, and beef cattle, or sheep for others (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

Against this backdrop, cropping¹⁹, especially maize, is complementary to livestock production, especially for feeding on crop residue materials soon after harvest. After a maize harvest, the fields are left fallow for the period before the next planting season, and this opens an opportunity for grazing/feeding (of beef cattle/sheep or dairy cows) on the maize residue material (i.e. maize stalks left over after harvest) during that window of opportunity. Therefore, those farmers who are renting-out their arable fields obtain access to this supplementary feed for their livestock, which partly explains why renting out some or most of their arable land and focusing more on livestock production (including milk production) seems to work for the farmers who rent out their arable land, as differentiated as they are (see Chapters Seven to Ten).

5.4.3 Farming System Three: Livestock only, no arable land rented out

A total of nine farmers or 15% of the sample (n=62) specialise in livestock farming, and do not produce any crops, nor rent out their arable land. This group of farmers tend to use 100% of their farms as grazing land for livestock (especially beef cattle), sometimes after diversifying away from crop production, for all its problems associated with high input, capital-intensiveness. This is essentially the conversion of arable land to grazing land for livestock specialisation. It is argued in this study that

¹⁹ Grain/crop production, particularly maize, and to a less extent dry beans, and sunflower, consists of main occupations of renters of land in the area of study, that is, the differentiated fragments of agrarian capital renting-in arable land from farmers in the area of study.

these conversions of arable land into grazing land may become more pronounced in the near future for the same reasons, or more arable land may be given up for renting out to efficient crop producers.

Table 5.14: Farm enterprise overview for farmers in Farming System Three livestock only, no arable land rented out

		Farm size (ha)	Beef cattle (#)	Sheep (#)	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Gross beef-cattle sales income (R's)	Cattle sales in gross farm income (%)	Grazing-land rental income (R's)	Grazing-land ret in gross farm income (%)	Gross farm income (R's)
N	Valid	9	9	3	6	6	6	2	2	9
	Missing	0	0	6	3	3	3	7	7	0
Mean		281,89	85,111	6	9,5	45916,667	82%	14500	54%	33833,33
Median		198	23	3	3	12500	100%	14500	54%	12000
Range		678	545	9	31	169500	65%	19000	21%	176000
Min		72	5	3	1	6500	35%	5000	43%	0
Max		750	550	12	32	176000	100%	24000	65%	176000
Sum		2537	766	18	57	275500		29000		304500
Percentiles	25	140	14,5	3	1,75	10625	51%	5000	43%	0
	50	198	23	3	3	12500	100%	14500	54%	12000
	75	421	49		20	86000	100%			46500

At least two farmers within this group of farmers earn grazing-land rent income from allowing ‘grazers on rent’ onto their farms. These grazers on rent are essentially small- to medium-size livestock owners grazing their animals on the land, as they do not have access to municipal common land, or own land reform farms in the area of study and throughout the Free State province and beyond (Atkinson and Ingle 2020).

As expected, farmers in Farming System Three derive significant farm income from livestock sales (Table 5.14). They are specialising in livestock production, and as will be seen in later chapters, some are engaged in livestock accumulation. To recap, the essence of this chapter is to provide an overarching description of the area of study, and to allude to some class concrete realities for further unpacking and analysis in the next three empirical chapters.

5.4.3.1 Historical and contemporary off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Three

Table 5.15: Off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Three

Income source of farmer prior to settlement	Current off-farm income
	Old-age grant
Farm worker/labour tenant	2
Small-scale brick industrialist	1
Other businesses in Qwaqwa	1
Skilled permanent work off-farm	1
Total	5

A total of five out of nine farmers in Farming System Three have the old-age social grants as their only source of off-farm income. The remaining four live on farm income from the occasional sale of a few livestock. In other words, Table 5.15 illuminates that in the 30 years following their allocation of land, a total of five farmers in Farming System Three were found with no other sources of income other than full-time farming and the old-age social grant. This suggests that the farmers in Farming System Three have aged, and are currently without other sources of income other than farm-derived income, as well as the old-age social grant. Those who do not yet qualify for an old-age social grant (minimum ages are 60 years for women and 65 years for men) are unemployed and live off farm income, as well as contributions from their next of kin who may have interests in family-owned livestock herds (see Chapters Seven to Nine).

5.4.4 Farming System Four: Livestock only, arable land rented out, no grain/crop production

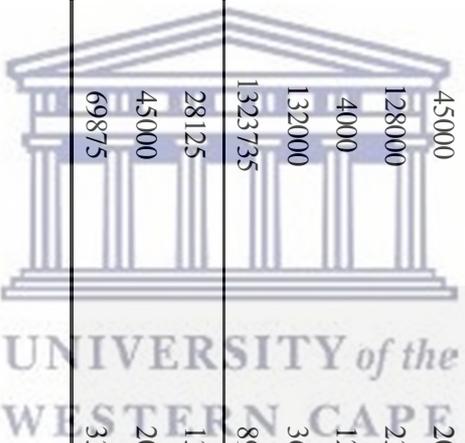
Farming System Four constitutes a total of 26 farmers, or 42% of the sample, who were found specialising in livestock and renting out greater proportions of their arable land to differentiated fragments of agrarian capital (i.e. white farmers, agribusiness operations, and a few local well-off black farmers). The mean arable land size rented out by farmers in Farming System Four is 111 ha, with a range of 230 ha; a minimum of 10 ha and maximum of 240 ha. These variable farm sizes suggest internal differentiation in terms of farm size, within Farming System Four. Farm size is an important variable in terms of benefits that can be derived from the farm, in this case farm-rental income determined at variable rates per hectare. This is partially reflected in the annual gross farm income of this group of farmers shown in Table 16, with a mean of R95 244, and median of R58 750.

Table 5.16: Farm size dynamics for farmers in Farming System Four

	Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Proportion of arable land to farm size (%)	Grazing land (ha)	Proportion of grazing land to farm size (%)	Arable land rented out (ha)	Proportion of arable land rented out to arable land size (%)
N	Valid Missing	25 1	26 0	25 1	25 1	24 2	25 1
Mean		351,32	129,885	216,64	60%	113,083	80%
Median		333	126	190	69%	112,5	95%
Range		774	283	610	79%	216	100%
Minimum		98	10	22	12%	4	0%
Maximum		872	293	632	91%	220	100%
Sum		8783	3377	5416		2714	
Percentiles							
	25	216,5	66	100	41%	78,5	68%
	50	333	126	190	69%	112,5	95%
	75	466	192,5	293,5	75%	150	100%

Table 5.17: Farmland rent income dynamics for Farmers in Farming System Four

		Rent per ha (R's)	Arable land-rental income (R's)	Grazing land-rental income (R's)	Total rental income (R's)
N	Valid	23	25	4	23
	Missing	3	1	22	3
Mean		481,96	52949,4	22260	53679,35
Median		490	45000	20400	44740
Range		600	128000	23760	128000
Minimum		200	4000	12240	4000
Maximum		800	132000	36000	132000
Sum			1323735	89040	1234625
Percentiles	25	350	28125	13380	34350
	50	490	45000	20400	44740
	75	650	69875	33000	65000



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Table 5.18: Livestock production for farmers in Farming System Four

	Beef cattle (#)	Sheep (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	
N	Valid Missing	26 0	10 16	2 24	16 10	7 19
Mean	44,85	26,2	17,5	7,313	4,857	
Median	31,5	21	17,5	5	3	
Range	187	54	5	24	14	
Minimum	3	6	15	1	1	
Maximum	190	60	20	25	15	
Sum	1166	262	35	117	34	
Percentiles						
25	22,25	11,75	15	2	1	
50	31,5	21	17,5	5	3	
75	56,25	42	2	12,75	10	



Table 5.19: Farm and rental income proportions for farmers in Farming System Two

		Gross beef-cattle sales income (R's)	Gross sheep sales income (R's)	Gross milk sales income (R's)	Proportion of LSU* & income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of farm-rental income in gross farm income (%)	Proportion of milk-sales income in gross farm income (%)	Gross farm income (R's)
N	Valid Missing	16 10	7 19	2 24	20 6	23 3	2 24	26 0
Mean		32868,75	5742,857	228240	35%	70%	62%	95244,423
Median		24250	2700	228240	27%	75%	62%	58750
Range		81000	13800	4320	97%	71%	12%	405500
Minimum		8000	1200	226080	3%	29%	56%	4000
Maximum		89000	15000	230400	100%	100%	68%	409500
Sum		525900	40200	456480			124%	2476355
Percentiles								
	25	11050	1200	226080	19%	45%	56%	44362,5
	50	24250	2700	228240	27%	75%	62%	58750
	75	50250	15000	,	55%	97%	,	129062,5

*Livestock Unit

In essence, Table 5.16 illuminates that farmers in Farming System Four rent out the greatest proportion of their arable land. The remaining of their farm size is thus dedicated to livestock grazing. Table 5.17 then takes the reader through farm rent income dynamics of these farmers. The essence of Table 5.17 is to show that farmers in Farming System Four derive significant farm rent income from renting out their arable land. What they do with farm rent income is the subject of the next three empirical chapters, and Chapter Six in particular. Table 5.18 is an exposition of livestock types owned by farmers in this farming system. Beef cattle production is the principal specialisation, followed by sheep, and dairy (Table 5.19). Beef cattle sales are modest on an annual basis, which hints to class dynamics explained later.

5.4.4.1 Off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Four

Table 5.20: Off-farm income sources for farmers in Farming System Four

Income source of farmer prior to settlement	Old-age grant	Skilled full-time job	Unskilled full-time job	Unskilled casual/part-time work	Self-employed off-farm (small business)
Farm worker/labour tenant	1	0	0	1	0
General dealer	1	1	0	0	0
Civil servant	0	1	0	0	0
Small-scale brick industrialist	2	0	0	0	1
Taxi owner	1	0	0	0	0
Bureaucrat	2	0	0	0	0
Unskilled permanent work	0	0	1	1	0
Total	8	2	1	2	1

The ‘income source of farmer prior to settlement’ column in Table 5.20 traces the economic histories of farmers in Farming System Four prior to land allocation. Petty commodity production of various sorts was the principal occupation for farmers in Farming System Four. More than 30 years later since the first farmers were settled from the mid-1980s, many of the above occupations had been phased out at the time of writing. Only a few have off-farm self-employment endeavours today and a total of six listed their current off-farm occupations as skilled permanent work, unskilled permanent work, and unskilled casual/part time work, reflecting a wider pattern, the

evolution of fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2003). The individuals in this category who are categorised as main farmers because of their managerial roles on the family farms in the area of study, rent out most of their arable land, and focus on livestock, and also often resort to seeking employment off-farm, leaving the livestock to be tended by a herder in their employ²⁰. On the other hand, those main farmers who listed the old-age grant as their third source of income, in addition to farm-rental income and livestock sales income, are mostly elderly men and a few elderly women, who tend to also hire labour for livestock herding whilst they reside off-farm, typically in Qwaqwa. However, at least four elderly men were found herding their own livestock, without employing labour, in Farming System Four. The class implications of family labour in livestock herding are discussed further in Chapters Seven to Eight.

5.4.5 Farming System Five: Renting out arable land only, no livestock, no grain production

Table 5.21: Farm enterprise overview for farmers in Farming System Five

		Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Arable land rented out (ha)	Gross farm income (R's)
N	Valid	2	2	2	2
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		485,5	180	99,5	29375
Median		485,5	180	99,5	29375
Range		681	240	79	10750
Minimum		145	60	60	24000
Maximum		826	300	139	34750
Sum		971	360	199	58750

²⁰ As shown in Chapter Ten, the general tendency is that herders are paid low wages, which can be as little as R600 per month, including payments in food, and kind. At a macro political economic analysis, the predicament of the herders on these farms (regardless of their origins, as some of them are Lesotho nationals), illuminates the situation of fragmented classes of labour in a crisis of social reproduction within in the era of globalisation (Bernstein 2003).

A total of two farmers, or 3% of the sample, were found renting out their arable land, and producing no livestock and no crops (Table 5.21). One farmer in this group was found renting out 46% of their arable land, whilst the other rents out 100% of their arable land. The two farmers (and their dependents) live off rental income, combined with off-farm income from (precarious) small-scale petty trade and the old-age social grant, respectively. Farmers in Farming System Five have a limited base of off-farm income. They are seemingly the poorest of the farmers in the sample (see Chapter Seven).

5.5 The Significance of Livestock-centred Farming Systems in the Eastern Free State

This chapter highlights livestock-centred mixed-farming systems in the area of study that are subtly obscured by the dominant crop production narrative that seems imposed on land reform beneficiaries in South Africa, as a hegemonic agricultural developmental model. The researcher does not propose jettisoning the crop-centred state agricultural subsidies that support some farmers in the area of study. As discussed in relation to Farming System One, Two and Four above, maize production is crucial for livestock herding on maize residues in the post-harvest winter season. A main finding in this chapter is to highlight the significance of often neglected livestock production systems within South Africa's land reform (Atkinson and Ingle 2020, Hall and Cousins 2013) on the basis of empirical evidence from the area of study, showing the modest to substantial benefits that land beneficiaries draw from their differentiated livestock enterprises, in contrast to crop production.

This study argues that the relative success of livestock production for purposes of ensuring social reproduction is potentially more widespread than is commonly acknowledged (Hornby 2015). Much the same can be said about livestock production on land reform commonages outside small towns in the Free State (Atkinson and Ingle 2020); this could be widespread on other land reform municipal commonages elsewhere in the country. Furthermore, livestock production in the former Bantustans is often overlooked, overshadowed by the problematic dominant narrative of underutilised arable land in these areas, which ignores the fact that “[t]he largest financial investment in agricultural assets in these communal areas can be attributed to livestock” (Gwiriri et al. 2019, p. 1-2). The underutilised land narrative in former labour

reserves/Bantustans further undermines the (default) conversion of arable land into commonage grazing land for livestock production. This narrative, in the researcher's view, lacks nuance because it fails to sufficiently recognise livestock production. As the reader will see in Chapters Seven to Nine, the conversion of arable land to grazing land is common also on land reform farms. This study argues that the appearance of such pieces of land should not be dismissed as a mere failure to farm; far from it, as livestock continue to be produced.

Arguably, the underpinning philosophy of misleading narratives about the failure of black farmers on South African land reform farms and in the former labour reserves, is the dominant narrative of large-sale crop production that is imposed on land reform beneficiaries and small-scale farmers on communal land in the former labour reserves (Mtero 2014). It is also a historicised expectation of crop production to supply to agro-industrial sectors for processing into staples for working-class subsistence, as was the case in the Highveld region of the Eastern Free State which is still characterised as forming part of the maize-triangle. Accordingly, the chapter has highlighted the area of study's fragile suitability for crop production, given its capital intensity in an agro-ecological context that forces farmers to use high-input farming systems in order to compete in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, unlike livestock which can be relocated during a drought, rain-fed crop production in the area of study is at the mercy of variable climatic conditions.

The second part of this chapter described the farming systems practiced by the studied farmers and differentiated these into five farming systems, anchored in intersecting variables such as livestock production, arable land rentals for rent income, sometimes combined with crop production. The crux of farming systems in the area of study is the centrality of livestock production on the basis of a conducive grassland biome enabling modest to substantial livestock production, even for the poorest of farmers who lack sufficient off-farm income resources to invest in expanded livestock, or crop production (see Appendix 2). Realistically, the poorest of farmers in the sample cannot invest even in the smallest of grain/crop field given their lack of capital for purchasing inputs, hiring a tractor, and so on, but they know how to suffer to keep their livestock herd resilient in this grassland biome.

5.6 Conclusion

The first section of this chapter introduced the reader to localised agro-ecological and agro-economic contexts of the area of study and highlighted the significance of livestock production in the area, which is conducive to low input livestock production, in contrast to high input, capital-intensive crop production that is emphasised by some scholars, such as Claassen et al. (2014) but are affordable by only a privileged few farmers.

The second section of the chapter introduced the reader to the key farming systems that the studied farmers were found practicing, beyond the failure rhetoric to produce food crops. The description of these five key farming systems highlighted the centrality of combinations of activity in each, such as the combination of farm-rental income and livestock production for many and the combination of crop production, livestock income, and farm rental for some, as well as the exclusive reliance on farm-rental income for a few. Class implications were alluded to in each description and the reader was referred to the greater elaboration of the wider implications for class formation found in Chapters Seven to Nine below.

In the third section of the chapter the researcher argued that livestock production is often overlooked in the South African land reform discourse (Atkinson and Ingle 2020, Hall and Cousins 2013), being in the shadow of crop production, as evident in the work of Claassen and colleagues. Indeed, the dominant narrative in South Africa's land reform is that land reform must support the production of crops and be geared to ensure national food security. This emphasis on plant crops potentially undermines alternative farming systems anchored in livestock production. This contributes to lack of nuance in understanding the differentiated trajectories of land beneficiaries beyond the misleading rhetoric of failure to produce grain and other plant crops. This chapter hopes to provide such nuance, throwing light on what land beneficiaries do when they are constrained and unable to produce capital-intensive cropping on a massive scale.

The next chapter introduces the reader to the livelihood strategies of the main farmers at the centre of the studied family farms and discusses how these intersect with the wider material conditions of the immediate kin of farmers and the implications of these intersections for class formation (as discussed in Chapters Seven to Nine).

CHAPTER 6

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AND THEIR CLASS CHARACTER ON REDISTRIBUTED LAND IN THE EASTERN FREE STATE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports a first analysis of patterns of social differentiation on redistributed land in Eastern Free State. It is arranged into two parts. The first part analyses diversified livelihood strategies of the farmers or main decision makers on the studied farms. These family farms are laden with complex sets of familial relations and structured by the materiality of connections with the immediate kin of the farmers. The chapter highlights the differentiated livelihood strategies of the main farmers, which straddle farms and other off-farm spaces and are often supported or undermined by the material condition of immediate kin. The essence of this chapter is to show livelihood diversification of the main farmers on the studied family farms on redistributed land and how these diversified livelihoods intersect with the material condition of immediate kin in ways that directly and indirectly affect the capacity of family farms to reproduce as capitalist farm enterprises.

Key trajectories of change emerge from an analysis of intersecting and diversified livelihood strategies which can be summarised as agricultural households ‘hanging in’ (farming for basic survival), ‘stepping out’ (combinations of farm income with off-farm wages or an off-farm business), or ‘stepping up’ (agricultural households on upward trajectories of accumulation) (Dorward 2009, Dorward et al. 2009, and Scoones et al. 2012). The precise definitions of these livelihood strategies are context specific but are proving useful in analysing broad dynamics in African agriculture in general. According to Dorward and colleagues, within the ‘hanging-in’ livelihood strategy “assets are held and activities are engaged in to maintain livelihood levels, often in the face of adverse socio-economic circumstances” (Dorward et al. 2009, p. 242). This can entail poor household members’ holding onto a small piece of land for subsistence agriculture, whilst some of the immediate kin engage in different forms of selling their labour power or in various forms of

petty trade, locally and afar. The ‘stepping-out’ livelihood strategy denotes using current assets as a base in order to improve livelihoods by their diversification, for example, a beast may be sold to fund the education of off-spring or a trip to town and subsequent living expenses for those who migrate for wage work in order to send remittances back home (Dorward et al. 2009). The ‘stepping-up’ livelihood strategy denotes investments in current assets for their productive expansion, for example investments in the accumulation of livestock, or livestock expansion (*ibid.*, p. 242).

This conceptualisation of livelihood trajectories as hanging in, stepping out, or stepping up serves in this study as a heuristic lens towards finer-grained analysis and subsequent categorisation of the studied farmers using a class-analytic approach anchored in agrarian political economy (Bernstein 2010). The latter is introduced in the second part of this chapter and differentiates the sample into class categories for in-depth analysis in three sequential chapters, namely:

- i. Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=31) [Chapter Seven].
- ii. Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (n=16) [Chapter Eight].
- iii. Agricultural households engaged in accumulation (n=15) [Chapter Nine].

6.2 Livelihood Strategies on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

An analysis of livelihood strategies of main farmers in family farms on redistributed land in the area of study through a livelihoods typology lens (Scoones 2015) reveals trajectories of social differentiation that can be described as hanging in, stepping out and stepping up (Dorward 2009, Dorward et al. 2015).

Table 6.1: Main farmers' livelihood categories and strategies on family-owned land reform farms

Livelihood trajectories	Livelihood strategy	n	Description
(n=34; 54,8%)	Extensive livestock & social grant	2	Extensive livestock combined with social grant
	Extensive livestock, rent & social grant	11	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income & social grant
	Extensive livestock & rent	3	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income and insulated by kin's social grants
	Rent only	1	Living on arable land rent income without off-farm jobs
	Extensive livestock, rent & state pension	2	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income & state pension
	Mixed livestock & rent	2	PPP* subsidised dairy combined with farm-rental income & extensive livestock
	Mixed livestock, rent & social grant	1	Mixed livestock combined with farm-rental income & social grant
	Extensive livestock, rent & grain	1	Combination of extensive livestock, grain production & farm-rental income
	Mixed livestock, rent & grain	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock, farm-rental income & grain production
	Extensive livestock, rent, grain & social grant	1	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income, grain production & social grant
	Intensive livestock & grain	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with grain production
	Extensive livestock, grain & social grant	2	Extensive livestock combined with grain production & social grant
	Rent & social grant	1	Living on arable land rent income combined with old age social grant
	Mixed livestock, rent, grain & social grant	2	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock, farm-rental income, grain production & social grant
	Extensive livestock & state pension	1	Combination of extensive livestock & state pension
	Mixed livestock, rent, grain & social grant	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock, farm-rental income, grain production & social grant
Intensive livestock, rent & grain	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with farm-rental income & grain production	

Stepping out (n=14; 22,6%)	Extensive livestock, rent & wage	6	Combination of extensive livestock, farm-rental & off-farm wage
	Extensive livestock, grain & off-farm business	3	Extensive livestock combined with grain production & off-farm business
	Extensive livestock, rent & off-farm business	4	Combination of extensive livestock, farm-rental income & off-farm business
	Extensive livestock, rent & casual work	1	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income & precarious off-farm casual work
Stepping up (n=14; 22,6%)	Extensive livestock, rent & state pension	1	Combination of extensive livestock, farm-rental & state pension
	Extensive livestock, rent & grain	1	Combination of extensive livestock, grain production & farm-rental income
	Mixed livestock, rent & grain	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock, farm-rental income & grain production
	Mixed livestock, grain & off-farm business	2	PPP subsidised dairy combined with grain production & off-farm business
	Extensive livestock, grain & off-farm business	1	Extensive livestock combined with grain production & off-farm business
	Extensive livestock, rent, grain & social grant	1	Extensive livestock combined with farm-rental income, grain production & social grant
	Mixed livestock & grain	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock & grain production
	Extensive livestock, grain & state pension	2	Extensive livestock combined with grain production & state pension
	Extensive livestock, grain & social grant	2	Extensive livestock combined with grain production & social grant
	Mixed livestock, grain & social grant	1	PPP subsidised dairy combined with extensive livestock, grain production & social grant
	Extensive livestock, off-farm-rental & private pension	1	Extensive livestock combined with off-farm-rental income & private pension
		62	

*PPP = Public-Private Partnership between the Department of Agriculture and a milk processing organisation

Table 6.1 differentiates the sample through the livelihoods typology lens (Scoones 2015) and assesses the economic trajectories of the family farms, with the livelihood strategies of the main farmers who are at the centre of farm production. The livelihood trajectories column shows that 54,8% of the sample can be categorised as hanging in, 22,6% as stepping out, and 22,6% as stepping up. The livelihood strategy column shows

how main farmers combine farm production, farm-rental income, and off-farm income sources in differentiated ways, with outcomes expressed through the economic performance of the family farm as a capitalist enterprise. The description column essentially describes the livelihood strategy column, explaining how main farmers combine farm-derived income (through farm production and/or farm-rental) with off-farm income sources, as well as state and private sector agricultural subsidies in some cases. The next three sections of the chapter describe these hanging-in, stepping out, and stepping-up farm trajectories.

The main criterion for placing individual cases in these three categories is the use of farm income for meeting the consumption needs of family members (i.e. ‘social reproduction’) or for maintaining the productive capacity of the farming enterprise (i.e. ‘simple reproduction’) or for investing a portion in expanding the productive capacity of the farm (i.e. expanded reproduction, or accumulation). These criteria also indicate the direction of change or a lack of change in relation to agricultural production.

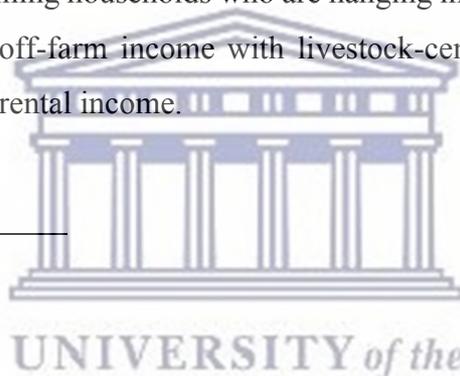
A key issue in discerning differentiated livelihood trajectories was the degree of access to off-farm income on the part of main farmers and his/her immediate kin. This implies that the nature and magnitude of off-farm income in terms of financial strength and capacity to aid farm production or to protect agrarian capital from the demands of social reproduction on the part of the (unemployed) immediate kin of main farmers is critically important.

For example, for the hanging-in category, off-farm income could be access to state social-grant income on the part of the main farmer; such social-grant income is insufficient for farm investment and can only serve to partially insulate agrarian capital from the needs of social reproduction of immediate kin, hence the location of these types of agricultural households within the hanging-in category. The stepping-out category is characterised by those main farmers who migrate off-farm for off-farm wages, which are significantly better than the social grants such off-farm wages are sometimes invested in farm production such as in the purchasing of livestock into the family-owned livestock herd or the purchasing of veterinary and supplementary feed for the livestock herd with wages from off-farm income. These off-farm wages also typically fund the wages of the employed herder of the livestock herd. For the stepping-up category, the reader will see below that farmers within this category tend to have

much more lucrative off-farm sources of income, as differentiated as they are terms of particular occupations.

6.2.1 The hanging-in category: farming for survival

The main farmers in the hanging-in category hold onto their land²¹, often tenaciously, to retain access to modest benefits such as farm-rental income from renting out arable and/or grazing land to differentiated fragments of agrarian capital in the area. Other benefits for this category of family farms include income derived from extensive livestock production, particularly the rearing of small herds of beef cattle and sheep using hired labour (and to a limited extent, family labour). Essentially the hanging-in category's main farming systems consist of combinations of Farming System Two, Three and Four, thus excluding Farming System One which includes crop production. In other words, those farming households who are hanging in do so through combining differentiated access to off-farm income with livestock-centred, mixed farming and renting out farmland for rental income.



²¹ This is against the backdrop of land reform 'dropouts' who opted to sell their land under pressure in order to settle loans or faced other material circumstances, or whose land was auctioned by the Land Bank in the area of study. These cases are referred to in the empirical chapters (Chapters Seven to Nine), particularly in reference to cases of farmers who purchased land from this stratum of farmers. However, there is not much in the way of empirical material on such land reform dropouts, other than references to their plight in the life histories of the studied farmers, many of whom were saved by renting out their arable land from Land Bank repossessions and auction sales. However, some farmers sell their farms for other reasons, such as funding education, as in one case where the offspring sold their family farm after the passing of their former farm-worker parents. They did so in order to fund their education. In another case, documented in Chapter Four, the offspring of the main farmer sold the farm in 2017, against the will of their deceased farmer, whom the researcher was fortunate to interview a year prior to his death. Furthermore, land reform dropouts in the area of study include some of the most elite individuals who may have obtained their farms through processes of accumulation from above in the first place and swiftly sold their land soon after the first democratic elections in 1994. Some of the latter continue to farm as fragments of agrarian capital renting in arable and grazing land in the area of study and form part of the local ruling elite controlling the distribution of scarce state agricultural subsidies.

Very few of those in the hanging-in category produce crops for sale and home consumption. The general tendency within the hanging-in category is the lack of substantive off-farm income sources that enable the main farmers to invest in expanding the scale of production. These main farmers therefore combine farm income from marginal farming and farm-rental income with social grants, as well as state old-age pensions for a small minority.

Altogether, a total of seven out of 34 main farmers in the hanging-in category obtain the old-age social grant. This is followed by only three main farmers who have access to a much more lucrative state pension available to former state employees, which is substantially more than the social grant. The remaining majority (n=24) had not yet reached the age of 60 to obtain the old-age social grant, nor did they have off-farm jobs.

For the hanging-in category, access to the old-age and other social grants on the part of immediate kin, such as child grants and sometimes disability grants, thus become crucial for the social reproduction of family members and also to help maintain the farm as a further source of income. For example, social grant income may be combined to help in the payment of herders and emergency sales of livestock can go a long way in ensuring the social reproduction of immediate kin who may have precarious forms of off-farm employment or are just living on social grants.

Under certain circumstances, such as where immediate kin have access to relatively stable off-farm work, it is possible for immediate kin to have shares in the family farm, often expressed in differentiated livestock ownership, depending on one's investment in the family farm. For example, a family member who works as a migrant truck driver may have a few head of cattle on the family farm and may intermittently send remittances to the main farmer. These intermittent remittances tend to insulate the family-owned livestock herd from emergency sales and potentially increases the prospects of accumulation from below in the form of livestock expansion (see Appendix 2). On the other hand, there are outward remittances derived from farm income from these family farms which contribute to the social reproduction of those (typically) unemployed immediate kin living off-farm.

Those agricultural households in the hanging-in category who do not have sufficient access to off-farm income sources on the part of immediate kin tend to resort to frequent

emergency sales of their livestock, which is often expressed by relatively small livestock herds, especially dwindling herd sizes of 20 heads and below. At least two of these households in the sample lost all of their livestock through emergency sales and typically survive on farm-rental income and precarious off-farm employment. However, this is very rare as shown in Table 24 above. The general tendency is a tenacious grip on the land and small herds of livestock, thanks to the social grants of immediate kin which serve as monthly income for survival whilst emergency livestock sales contribute to family income only intermittently, in combinations with farm-rental income for the majority of family farms in the hanging-in category.

The wider implications of these research findings suggest that, against the backdrop of generalised unemployment for classes of labour (Bernstein 2004) in the wider economy, the material conditions of the hanging-in category, regardless of their lack of accumulation or inability to increase the scale of farm production, may be better than those of their landless counterparts elsewhere in the country. For example, recently-evicted farm workers on the fringes of small towns in the Free State province, characterised by unemployment and access to only child support social grants (Murray 1994), are in a far worse economic condition than the households within the hanging-in category described in this chapter. This is because the hanging-in category's access to land expands their social reproduction base, particularly through obtaining some farm-rental income or engaging in marginal farming, typically expressed in small livestock herds of 20 animals and below. These small livestock herds serve as insurance against shocks as expressed through intermittent emergency sales.

6.2.2 The stepping-out category: combinations of farming with off-farm wages

The stepping-out category consists of those agricultural households whose main farmers migrate to engage in off-farm work or to operate businesses, whilst they rent out arable land and sometimes grazing land, engaging concurrently in marginal farming with livestock, using hired labour. As in Dorward (2009) and Scoones et al. (2012), stepping out connotes the diversification of livelihood sources to include non-agricultural sources. In these cases, farm-rental income is combined with intermittent livestock sales income and off-farm income for limited investment in farm production as well as being consumed to meet the social reproduction needs of the household. Similar to the hanging-in category, the material conditions of immediate kin within the

stepping-out category are in tension with ensuring the reproductive capacity of the family farm.

For example, in cases where there are numbers of unemployed kin, farm-rental income and off-farm income, as well as intermittent livestock sales, some income helps meet the social reproduction needs of the unemployed. On the other hand, those with (relatively) stable off-farm jobs are able to invest some farm-rental income in livestock production since their social reproduction needs are covered by secure sources of off-farm income (Table 6.2, below). Much the same can be said about those with off-farm business within the stepping-out category. However, for some of the latter their intermittent livestock sales and farm-rental income serves to meet many of the consumption needs of their households. The latter are typically those agricultural households who have fallen behind in farm production and are simply using the land to gain farm-rental income, and intermittent livestock sales income, which is only *partially* reinvested in livestock production. The dividing line between these first two categories of livelihood strategies is thus a little blurred in some cases.

6.2.3 The stepping-up category: successful commercial farming

The stepping-up category of the studied family farms consists of successful capitalist farmers that derive most of their income from capital-intensive livestock and cropping enterprises (Farming System One). This is due to their own efforts to expand production from below, such as their reinvestment of agricultural income in mixed farming enterprises, as well as (in some cases) through state and private sector agricultural subsidies, and extra-economic political connection with the state (Mamdani 1987) for a few. This allows for accumulation in agriculture through expanding the scale or scope of agricultural enterprises (Genis 2015).

The central underpinning force in the formation of the stepping-up category is their access to differentiated, off-farm capital resources, such as a business, state funds, or private sector pensions, as well as (early) retirement packages (Table 6.1). For example, some had educated themselves and obtained skilled off-farm jobs, from which they have retired to invest in increasing the scale of production on their family farms. These trajectories of class formation are inseparable from historicised efforts to initiate accumulation from below as demonstrated by farmers in the stepping-up'

category over the past 30 years. Not all have had access to skilled off-farm employment. Some have been reinvesting agricultural capital in increasing the scale of their farm production progressively over the past thirty years, sometimes only obtaining state support much later against the backdrop of the withdrawal of state-agricultural subsidies in the mid- to late-1990s in the area of study. Within the latter, a few have recently obtained state support through extra-economic relations with those holding institutional power. The latter will be elaborated on as a factor in the class formation of accumulators, in Chapter Nine.

6.3 Livelihood Trajectories and Farm Production Dynamics



Table 6.2: Livelihood trajectories and farm production dynamics

	Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Grazing land (ha)	Grain in 2015/2016 (ha)	Grain in 2014/2015 (ha)	Arable land rented out (ha)	Beef cattle (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Sheep (#)	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm- rental in gross farm income (%)	Grain sales in gross farm income (%)	Milk sales in gross farm income (%)	LSU sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Off-farm jobs (#)	Social grants (#)	Jobless kin	Herders (#)	
Hanging in	Mean	320,68	129,3	206,59	19	34	112,92	34,73	24,67	14,91	5,78	2	129944,84	61%	63%	62%	38%	5,85	2,34	1,71	2,28	1,75
	Med.	290	100	190	20	20	100	26,5	23,5	12	3	2	61200	65%	53%	59%	25%	5	2	1	2	2
	Max.	826	321	526	50	117	271	133	36	45	25	3	666860	100%	100%	88%	100%	13	6	4	5	4
Stepping up	Min.	72	10	41	1	4	26	3	15	3	1	1	3000	11%	45%	47%	3%	2	1	1	1	1
	Range	754	311	485	49	113	245	130	21	42	24	2	663860	89%	55%	41%	97%	11	5	3	4	3
	Mean	413,86	180,57	233,29	146	126,25	109,5	136,54	72,75	44,43	18,42	13,25	1291867,14	23%	87%	52%	20%	5,07	2,31	1,75	2	2,64
Stepping out	Med.	271,5	180	128	122	85	100	99	55,5	40	17,5	13,5	904100	23%	91%	54%	9%	5	2	2	2	2
	Max.	1063	450	843	430	432	170	550	160	74	40	20	3396600	45%	100%	94%	100%	8	4	3	3	10
	Min.	162	50	32	35	50	68	4	20	20	1	6	108750	1%	45%	5%	0%	2	1	1	1	1
Stepping out	Range	901	400	811	395	382	102	546	140	54	39	14	3287850	44%	55%	88%	100%	6	3	2	2	9
	Mean	395,38	108,71	279,08	75	42	98,11	27,64	41,67	7,6	6,33	88472,14	80%	82%	44%	44%	5,21	2,29	1,5	1,82	1	
	Med.	250	126,5	190	75	39	118	26,5	35	6	8	52425	79%	82%	29%	29%	5	2	1	2	1	
Stepping out	Max.	872	240	705	78	60	160	50	60	20	10	414800	100%	82%	100%	100%	8	5	3	4	1	
	Min.	98	10	22	71	30	4	7	30	1	1	4000	32%	82%	18%	18%	3	1	1	1	1	
	Range	774	230	683	7	30	156	43	30	19	9	410800	68%	1%	82%	82%	5	4	2	3	0	

Med. = Median; Max. = Maximum; Min. = Minimum

In terms of farm size, there is no distinct pattern of difference between the three livelihood trajectories as shown in Table 6.2. For example, the presence of an 826 ha farm within the hanging-in category suggests negligible farm production and the lack of capital resources to farm more productively in this particular case, implying that success in capitalist farming has more to do with farm capitalisation than land size. In this case the success of the hanging-in trajectory is strongly dependent on income derived from renting out arable land. However, this situation could change at any point in time given the resources that off-farm immediate family members could muster, for example through early retirement package investments in farm production.

Those farmers in the stepping-up category tend to have large livestock herds, in contrast to the stepping out and hanging-in categories. The latter tend to have smaller livestock herds. They also tend to sell fewer animals from year to year. For example, the mean number of cattle for farmers in the stepping-up category is 136 head, whilst those in the stepping out category have a mean herd size of 27,64 and those in the hanging-in category have a mean cattle herd size of 34,73 head. Similar patterns are expressed in the contrasts in gross farm income of those stepping up (mean = R1 291 867), hanging in (mean = R129 944), and stepping out (mean = R88 472). However, it should be noted that there is internal variation within each of these categories.

In terms of grain production, the stepping-up category tends to have more arable land cropped than the hanging-in and stepping-out categories. The stepping-up category tends to also have larger livestock herds and rents out the lowest amount of arable land. Furthermore, the stepping-up category tends to have a wider range of access to off-farm capital resources which forms part of the elements underpinning their increasing scale of production. All these elements are telling of class differentiation tendencies, as discussed in the next section below.

Similar dynamics are observed with regard to dairy-cow ownership across the three livelihood strategies. The stepping-up category owns a mean dairy-herd size of 72 head, whereas the stepping-out category owns zero dairy cows, whilst the hanging-in category owns a mean dairy-herd size of 24 head. Of course, the stepping-out category cannot own dairy cows given their commitments to off-farm jobs dairy farming, unlike extensive beef-cattle production which can be done remotely thanks to the employed herders, requires on-farm monitoring such as day-to-day milk quality checks. Those

dairy farmers in the hanging-in category tend to rely on dairy farming for the mere survival of their small-scale capitalist farms, thanks to the contract farming partnerships most dairy farmers in the sample have with a milk-processing company which guarantees monthly milk income.

Sheep-herd size dynamics are not significant in this area because of the high rate of sheep theft in the area of study which has contributed to dwindling sheep herd sizes, as are forced sales in anticipation of theft. Nonetheless, the stepping-up and stepping-out categories own larger sheep herd sizes than the hanging-in category (Table 6.2). Again, these dynamics are inseparable from off-farm income sources possessed by the stepping-up and stepping-out categories, in contrast to those farmers in the hanging-in category.

Gross farm income across the three livelihood categories shows that those farms in the stepping-up category have the highest level of gross farm income (mean = R1 291 867). Most of the latter is derived from actual farm production, i.e. crop production (mean = 87%), milk production (mean = 52%), farm-rental income (mean = 23%), and livestock sales (mean = 20%). There are internal differentiating dynamics within the stepping-up category depending on particular specialisations on each farm some specialise in dairy farming, combined with marginal sheep and beef-cattle farming, and some in crop production, especially the production of yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy-cow feeding.

However, one of the crucial differences between the stepping-up category on the one hand, and both the hanging-in and stepping-out categories on the other, is the proportion of arable land rented out to agrarian capital and the corresponding proportional contribution of farm-rental income to total gross farm income. The hanging-in category derives 61% of its gross farm income from rental income, with a range of 89% and maximum of 100%. On the other hand, the stepping-out category derives 80% of gross farm income from farm-rental income with a maximum of 100% and a range of 68%. Taken together these findings suggest strong reliance on farm-rental income on the part of the hanging-in and stepping-out categories, in contrast to those farms in the stepping-up category which have the wherewithal to invest in farm production, particularly capital-intensive crop production. Furthermore, the hanging-in category, as well as the stepping-out category, rely on less capital-intensive livestock production for a few

livestock sales in order to broaden their base of social reproduction, and insulate small livestock herd sizes from forced sales in response to the demands of social reproduction, typically from unemployed immediate kin.

6.4 Class Differentiation on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

This categorisation of the studied farmers into hanging-in, stepping out and stepping-up livelihood trajectories provides a useful lens for discerning the production pathways of different kinds of farm enterprises and how these intersect with the material condition of immediate kin. These diversified livelihood categories form the basis for further differentiation of the studied family farms into class-based categories. Accordingly, many of the households in the hanging-in and stepping-out categories were re-categorised as a class of *agricultural households engaged in social reproduction* on the basis of their constrained capacity to invest in maintaining or expanding their farms owing to the pressures on income (both farm and off-farm income) exerted by the social reproduction needs of (unemployed) immediate kin. This category denotes constrained simple reproduction of the farm enterprise, that is, the failure to reproduce the farm enterprise at the same scale of production in these cases there is strong reliance on farm income and other off-farm income for social reproduction, hence the category, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. (In Chapter Two, social reproduction was defined as all the activities that people engage in, in order to reproduce themselves on a daily basis, within societal structural relations).

Some of those farms in the hanging-in and stepping-out categories were re-categorised as a class of *agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction*, i.e. those who are able to maintain their family farms at the same level of production from year-to-year. Essentially this suggests that *agricultural households engaged in social reproduction* fail to sustain the simple reproductive capacity of their family farms owing to pressures exerted by the social reproduction demands on the part of immediate kin which are in tension with the simple reproductive capacity of family farms.

The stepping-up category was re-categorised as a class of *agricultural households engaged in accumulation* on the basis of their ability to invest in farm production on a progressive scale owing to their access to off-farm capital resources, as well as access

to agricultural subsidies from both the state and the private sector. Accumulation of capital denotes expanded reproduction of surplus value through reinvestments in expanded production of commodities to beget even more surplus value (see Chapter Two). Land size is not a significant variable in relation to accumulation, or expanded reproduction, in contrast to farm capitalisation, that is, farm capitalisation is a significant signifier of expanded reproduction in the area of study for example, some farmers on smaller farms are engaged in expanded reproduction and constrained by land size in their upwards trajectories of accumulation (see Chapter Nine).



Table 6.3: Social reproduction, reproduction and accumulation on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State

	Farm size (ha)	Arable land (ha)	Grazing land (ha)	Grain in 2015/2016	Grain in 2014/2015	Arable land out (ha)	Rent per ha (R's)	Arable land out (%)	Sheep (#)	Beef cattle (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Beef cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm-rental in gross farm income (%)	Grain sales in gross farm income (%)	Milk sales in gross farm income (%)	LSU sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Off-farm jobs (#)	Social grants (#)	Job-less kin (#)	Herders (#)	
Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=31) (50%)	Mean	320,17	112,93	218,87	16	39	107,05	457,05	88%	20	29,34	3,71	3,2	51976,03	82%	,	,	41%	5,94	2,37	1,67	2,36	1,17	
	Med.	237,5	100	185,5	2	20	112,5	400	100%	13,5	25	3	1	45700	81%	,	,	28%	6	2	1	2	1	
	Max.	872	300	632	46	100	200	800	100%	60	85	12	10	161000	100%	,	,	100%	13	6	4	5	2	
Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (n=16) (26%)	Mean	361,25	139,13	222,13	26	32,1	112,55	594	65%	22,25	38,07	24,67	9,7	5,5	217171,25	30%	67%	62%	41%	5,13	2,2	1,67	1,6	2,06
	Med.	319,5	121,5	197	20	27,5	100	600	69%	21	30	23,5	6,5	5,5	152550	32%	59%	59%	20%	5	2	1	1	2
	Max.	819	321	705	71	117	271	800	100%	35	133	36	25	8	666860	42%	100%	88%	100%	11	5	3	3	4
Agricultural households engaged in accumulation (n=15) (24%)	Mean	430,13	176,93	253,2	141	121,15	109,5	315	45%	44,43	130	72,75	18,54	13,25	1233396	23%	87%	52%	20%	5,13	2,36	1,75	2	2,53
	Med.	272	170	139	104	80	100	315	49%	40	94,5	55,5	20	13,5	902200	23%	91%	54%	9%	5	2	2	2	2
	Max.	1063	450	843	430	432	170	375	68%	74	550	160	40	20	3396600	45%	100%	94%	100%	8	4	3	3	10
Anova	Range	901	400	811	395	382	102	120	53%	54	546	140	39	14	3287850	44%	55%	88%	100%	6	3	2	2	9
	F	1.207	2.450	.187	7.524	4.728	.028	3.663	8.931	4.559	9.510	3.219	11.619	5.274	23.061	39.286	4.205	.245	2.354	1.05	.094	.027	1.874	5.312
	Sig.	.307	.096	.830	.003	.018	.972	.037	.001	.025	.000	.111	.000	.035	.000	.000	.060	.634	.107	.357	.911	.973	.167	.008

Med. = Median; Max. = Maximum; Min. = Minimum

6.5 Agricultural Households Engaged in Social Reproduction (n=31)

Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction consist of land beneficiaries who have fallen behind in farm production, as well as those constrained by their historical class positions as farm workers and similar class positions, within fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2003). These underpin their lack of access to off-farm income sources which would be otherwise invested in increasing the scale of farm production and enabling accumulation from below. These households use their improved access to land through land reform in order to expand their base of social reproduction through obtaining farm-rental income, as well as obtaining some income from intermittent and often emergency livestock sales from their small livestock herds (Table 6.3). This is often combined with social-grant income as well as off-farm income but often precarious forms of employment. Such material condition of immediate kin is what puts pressure on the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction to sufficiently reproduce as capital at the same scale of production.

For example, family-owned livestock herds decrease in size with every emergency sale for sending outward remittances from the family farm to unemployed immediate kin who are living off-farm. As shown in Table 6.3, joblessness amongst immediate kin is acute (mean = 2,36) amongst this category of farmers in the area of study, in contrast to agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (mean = 1,6), and agricultural households engaged in accumulation (mean = 2). These differences are more vivid when the internal variation of unemployed kin within the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction is taken into account, which shows a maximum of five unemployed immediate kin. Furthermore, in cases where there are jobs, it is often precarious off-farm work that provides insufficient income to allow for investment in farm production. In Chapter Seven, dedicated to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, details of these dynamics are provided by way of abbreviated case studies or vignettes.

Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction have a mean farm size of 320,17 ha, and a median of 237,5 ha. These are smaller farms than the agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (mean=361 ha), and those engaged in accumulation (mean=430 ha). This is attributable in part to the prevalence of former farm worker households within this category, who were historically allocated smaller farms (minimum of 72 ha, Table 6.3) in the area of study given their marginalised class position as former farm workers or labour tenants (see Chapter Four). Farm size is an important factor in relation to how much rental income can be

obtained from renting out both arable and grazing land, which puts former farm workers in a disadvantageous position, given their constrained capacity to muster off-farm capital resources towards increasing the scale of their farm production that is, towards greater capital intensiveness as the accumulators with smaller farms are doing in the area of study.

In terms of farm production, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction had the least area of land under crops (mean = 16 ha in 2015/16 season), and possess the smallest livestock herds (for example, they have a mean cattle herd size of 29,34 head), and are characterised by renting out the greatest proportion of their arable land (mean = 88%). This is in contrast to agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction which are characterised by a mean cattle herd of 38,07 head, and agricultural households engaged in accumulation, with a mean cattle herd of 130 head. Similar differences are apparent when the mean land size under crops for simple reproducers (mean = 26 ha in 2015/16 season) is taken into consideration, as well as the mean land size under crops by accumulators (mean = 141 ha in 2015/16 season), in contrast to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (mean = 16 ha in 2015/16 season).

Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction derive the greatest proportion of their gross farm income from farm-rental income (mean=82%), in contrast to simple reproducers (30%) and accumulators (mean=23%). Therefore, because of their strong reliance on farm-rental income for purposes of social reproduction, this study suggests that many of these households should be seen as an impoverished form of landed property. This, the researcher argues, applies to those agricultural households who have fallen behind in farm production and forced to rent out farmland in order to obtain rental income, which forms part of their diversified livelihood strategies. Furthermore, the concept of an impoverished landed property also applies to those households who are members of classes of labour (Bernstein 2004), such as former farm workers with improved access to land through land reform but who are unable to muster off-farm capital resources to invest in increasing the scale of farm production because of their disadvantageous educational levels. This bars them from securing relatively stable off-farm jobs in the wider economy and they are thus forced to rent out farmland. These dynamics will be elaborated on in Chapter Seven, dedicated to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction.

6.6 Agricultural Households Engaged in Simple Reproduction (n=16)

Agricultural households engaged in successful simple reproduction of their farms have a mean of two immediate kin with access to an off-farm job. In contrast to those whose farms enable mere social reproduction described above, members of agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction have access to more skilled and more secure off-farm jobs. Seemingly this is attributable to the economic histories of their households as petty commodity producers and operators of small-scale enterprises of various kinds, as well as the efforts of some former farm-worker households in making sure that their offspring educate themselves for their own social mobility towards better and often more skilled –off-farm jobs. However, these off-farm income sources are insufficient for significant investment in farm production towards accumulation from below and thus beyond the simple reproduction of farm enterprises. Nonetheless, these agricultural households experience less pressure to use their farm income towards the social reproduction of their immediate kin. Their simple reproduction is achieved through combinations of farm-rental income, livestock, and grain production, often in combination with off-farm income sources for the main farmer and their immediate kin.

In contrast to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction that derive the greatest proportion of their gross farm income from farm-rental income, agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction derive a mean of 30% from farm-rental income, 67% from grain sales, 62% from milk sales, and 41% from livestock sales. However, there is internal variation within this category of simple reproducers, depending on their specific farm specialisation within a mixed-farming system. This suggests that even though the agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction are not accumulating, they are investing some agricultural capital in simple reproduction. They also hire in more labour (mean = 2,06 herders) than agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (mean = 1,17 herders). Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction are in a better position to hire more labour, not only for their larger livestock herds (with a mean of 38,07 head of cattle) in contrast to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction with a mean cattle herd size of 29,34 head but also attributable to their access to relatively better off-farm jobs than their counterparts in the lower ranks of social differentiation. As will be seen in the case studies contained in Chapter Eight which is dedicated to agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction, off-farm income from skilled work in particular is crucial in the simple reproduction of these family farms. It goes a long way in ensuring payment of herders and the purchasing of essential

veterinary and animal-feed products necessary for the biological health of livestock herds and perhaps enabling livestock herd expansion.

In terms of their prospects for accumulation from below on the part of those agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction, the researcher posits that since they are characterised by a general tendency of access to off-farm jobs on the part of immediate kin, the latter seems more likely to be better able to muster off-farm capital resources towards increasing the scale of farm production, particularly in expanding their beef-cattle herds. Furthermore, it seems probable that we will see some of the immediate kin within this category of agricultural households taking early retirement packages in order to invest in expanded reproduction, following in the footsteps of some of the accumulators in the area of study (see Chapter Nine). The formation of simple reproducers as a class category is dealt with concretely in Chapter Eight with the aid of abbreviated case studies.

6.7 Agricultural Households Engaged in Accumulation (n=15)

Agricultural households engaged in accumulation tend to have the greatest arable land size under crops to rent out only a small proportion of their arable land (in cases where they do so), and to possess the largest livestock herd sizes on average, to produce higher quantities of milk (in cases where they engage in dairy production), and to derive the greatest proportion of their farm income from farm production (see Table 6.3). Agricultural households engaged in accumulation also tend to have the largest farms in the area of study, although some have smaller farms which they use to maximise farm output (i.e. through capital-intensive systems of farm production) and are thus often forced to rent-in more land as a base for expanded reproduction. Those with the largest farm sizes, especially those greater than 700 ha, tend to be those who were most politically connected when the first land allocations took place from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. For example, some were supermarket owners and can be categorised as 'elite land beneficiaries' (Murray 1996). On the other hand, many were differentiated, petty commodity producers and small-scale capitalist enterprises of various stripes (Chapter Nine). It would be thus misleading to label all of them as elite land beneficiaries.

The main accumulation strategy is expanding the scale of farm production by renting in more arable land for crop production and more grazing land for beef cattle and dairy cows. In Chapter Nine, an exposition of the internal dynamics of agricultural households engaged in

accumulation is provided, with a particular focus in differentiating them according to their commodity specialisation, tracing the contours of their trajectories of class formation over time. This history enables us to identify particular signposts of the trajectories of class formation in land reform contexts on the basis of life history interviews and historical as well as recent farm production data.

6.8 Farm Capitalisation and Mechanisation Differentiation

Table 6.4: Farm capitalisation and mechanisation differentiation

Class category		Current real cost of <i>bakkies</i> * (R's)	Current real cost of tractors (R's)	Current real cost of ploughs (R's)	Current real cost of trucks (R's)	Current real cost of harvesters (R's)
Households engaged in social reproduction	Mean	17810,71	23407,52	1384,46	2373,55	124,87
	Median	0	0	0	0	0
	Maximum	153600	581216,13	39168	62244	3000
	Range	153600	581216,13	39168	62244	3000
Households engaged in simple reproduction	Mean	45308	37249,03	622,2	5499	237,42
	Median	37823,5	6000	0	0	0
	Maximum	136800	194104,84	4512	87984	3798,71
	Range	136800	194104,84	4512	87984	3798,71
Households engaged in accumulation	Mean	132258,8	641068,07	17316,45	53972,27	4696,02
	Median	91200	362177,74	0	0	0
	Maximum	502990	3323870,97	249697,2	783360	35688,71
	Range	502990	3323870,97	249697,2	783360	35688,71
Anova	F	11,723	10,776	1,483	1,478	3,173
	Sig.	0	0	0,235	0,236	0,049

* a *bakkie* is a small pick-up truck in South Africa

There are fundamental differences both between and within the three class categories in terms of farm capitalisation and machinery. Farm capitalisation can be expressed in many different ways but here we simply focus on the five key types of farm equipment and machinery in Table 6.4 (*bakkies*, tractors, ploughs, trucks and harvesters). The amount of capital spent on acquiring these, expressed at current values, sheds light on the highly differentiated levels of farm capitalisation and mechanisation amongst this sample of land reform beneficiaries.

6.8.1 Current real cost of *bakkies* [pick-up trucks]

So-called '*bakkies*' or light pick-up trucks are modern day horses used for the transporting animal feed, workers, crops, livestock, and so on. The gravel, rural-access roads found between and within farms demand investment in these vehicles and their ownership partially reflect the class position of farmers in the area of study. The mean real cost of *bakkies* at current values across the three classes of farmers show major differences, for example, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (mean = R17 810,71), simple reproduction (mean = R45 308), and accumulation (mean = R132 258,8). These differences show increasing investments in *bakkies* from the poorest to the wealthiest classes of farmers. There are various forces underpinning these differences, for example, it is quite rare for agricultural households engaged in social reproduction to own a *bakkie* in the first place, given their class position as constrained simple reproducers and as an impoverished form of landed property, forced as they are to consume much of their minute agricultural capital rather than investing it in expanding the scale of production. The simple reproducers and accumulators can invest in newer and in good working-order, though mostly second-hand *bakkies*, in contrast to the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. The accumulators tend to invest in new *bakkies* and this contributes to their social standing in the area of study, since driving a new 4x4 pick-up truck worth more than R500 000 is seen as an expression of the lifestyle that many aspire to.

6.8.2 Current real cost of tractors

Some of the farmers in the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction had made some investments in tractors in the past (mean = R23 407,52) but most of these tractors have aged and are not in working order at present, which partly explains their renting out of arable land. However, at least one farmer within this category has recently purchased a tractor, although other factors constrain him from producing crops and he is thus forced to continue to rent out arable land.

Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction also tend to rent out arable land but some within this category do produce crops on their arable land, although they often do not use their arable land to full capacity, as many of the accumulators do. The mean real cost at current values of the simple reproducers' tractors is R37 249,03, which suggest the second-hand ownership and relative aging of their tractors. However, there are significant differences within the simple reproducers, as will be explained further in Chapter Eight, for example, one such

difference is the maximum current real cost of a tractor of R194 104,84. This suggests that some simple reproducers are investing in working-order but second-hand tractors for crop production on their arable land, sometimes with a proportion of the latter rented out to fragments of large-scale agrarian capital.

The mean real cost of tractors for accumulators in the area of study is R641 068,07, which suggests significant investment in newer, working-order tractors on their part. The reasons for this are that their relative specialisation in crop production means that since most do not rent out their arable fields, so they need to own their own tractors, as well as ploughs and planters, in order to put their arable land under crop production in time and not rely on the competitive hiring of crop production service companies that conduct soil preparation and planting of crops, at a service fee. Farmers in the area of study invest in tractors primarily for these reasons. Those who invest in the most powerful tractors reap the benefits, attendant to the timing and scale of crop production, in contrast to those owning tractors of lower capacity.

The combination of all these factors says much about the class positions of the farmers in the area of study. Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction tend to rent out arable land because they cannot afford to hire or purchase their own tractors and other crop production machinery in order to produce crops themselves. Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction are also constrained by the cost of good, working-order tractors and are sometimes forced to purchase second-hand machines, whilst many of them resort to renting out arable land for the same reasons as agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. Those agricultural households on upward trajectories of accumulation can afford the hiring and/or purchasing of tractors and other crop/grain production machinery and therefore tend to have more arable land under crop/grain production.

6.8.3 Current real cost of ploughs, trucks and harvesters

Similar dynamics can be observed with regard to investments in ploughs, trucks, and harvesters across the three class categories in the area of study. For example, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, together with those engaged in simple reproduction, show similar dynamics with regard to their investments in ploughs, which is partly explained by the fact that most farmers in these categories rent out their arable land and do not focus on grain/crop production themselves, with the exception of a few farmers within the simple reproduction category. Similar observations can be made with regard to

ownership and investment in trucks and harvesters. The ownership of trucks is the business of accumulators in the area of study who are in need of this type of vehicle in order to transport their crops (particularly maize, and beans) to nearby agribusiness processing companies and those further afield. Trucks are typically purchased second-hand and are seldom new. Much can be said with regard to the ownership of harvesters these are generally second-hand harvesters, many of which are not in working order and are owned by a few, typically well-off farmers in the accumulator category. Otherwise these farmers, as well as a few in the simple reproducer category who produce crops, prefer to hire service companies for the planting, harvesting and transportation of their crops from the farms to agribusiness processing companies in nearby towns and further afield.

6.9 Farm Labour Dynamics on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

This section is in conversation with the literature on redistributive land reform impacts on farm workers, with an attempt to move beyond the notion of ‘farm worker marginalisation’ in South African land reform (Sender & Johnston 2004, Bernstein 2004) but cautiously, without losing sight of it. The purpose is to illuminate farm employment on redistributed land in the area of study. The researcher argues that the incidence of this is on average a modest one-herder-per-farm, plus the employment of casual workers during peak grain/crop harvesting times on arable fields.

The one-herder-per-farm average clearly indicates that job creation on redistributed land is not massive in scale, although it is better than nothing, given the current wider crisis of social reproduction and structural unemployment experienced by classes of labour (Van Onselen 2020, O’Laughlin et al. 2013, Slater 2002, 2001, Murray 1996). Furthermore, the researcher argues that in the area of study, livestock herding work is characterised by immigrant and ‘footloose’ (Breman 1998) herders originating in a neighbouring country, Lesotho. This dynamic is also inseparable from wider crises of social reproduction and generalised unemployment in Southern Africa attendant on deindustrialisation.

Table 6.5: Livestock herding farm work on New Qwaqwa Farms

		Herders (#)
Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=31) (50%)	Mean	1,17
	Median	1
	Maximum	2
	Minimum	1
	Range	1
Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (n=16) (26%)	Mean	2,06
	Median	2
	Maximum	4
	Minimum	1
	Range	3
Agricultural households engaged in accumulation (n=15) (24%)	Mean	2,53
	Median	2
	Maximum	10
	Minimum	1
	Range	9
Anova	F	5.312
	Sig.	.008

The general tendency on New Qwaqwa Farms is to employ one or two herders per farm, across the three class-based categories of farmers. However, as Table 6.5 illuminates, this increases from agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, to those engaged in simple reproduction, and the highest levels are found amongst those engaged in accumulation. This is explained by the incidence of increasing livestock herd sizes from the lowest to the upper echelons of class differentiation in the area of study, as well as the incidence of agricultural subsidies supporting dairy farmers in the simple reproducer and accumulator categories.

Farm workers in the Eastern Free State regions are a gendered labour force (Johnston 2015, 2007). Livestock herders are mainly men and casual workers on crop/grain fields are mainly women. This region, given its spatial proximity to a neighbouring country, Lesotho, is characterised by immigrant, farm-working men and women, who are preferred by the studied farmers for their relative docility (*ibid.*).

The next section on farm labour provides an overview of grain/crop production labour requirements on New Qwaqwa Farms, highlighting the prevalence of female casual work teams (Johnston 2015, 2007). This will be followed by a section on labour hiring practices in general in the area of study which will highlight the general pattern of one herder per farm. The third and last section takes the reader through portraits of livestock herders on New Qwaqwa Farms.

6.10 Grain/Crop Production Labour Requirements

For the few grain/crop producers in the sample, even though they also have livestock enterprises which require herdsmen, labour dynamics are slightly different in respect of grain/crop production. Some, though very few, crop producers have their own tractors and other crop production machinery, as well as the skill and time to operate such themselves, although they sometimes also hire tractor operators/drivers. Very few accumulators own low-capacity combine harvesters for the harvesting of crops. Technologically-advanced combine harvesters are expensive and none of the farmers under study were found to be in possession of the latter. Instead, most crop producers in the sample hire service companies for soil preparation, planting, and harvesting of crops and in some cases, transport of grain to nearest grain silos ('grain marketing companies, the former co-operatives' see Bernstein 1996).

For those farmers who do not or cannot afford to hire a combine harvester for harvesting, the employment of casual labour, mainly women from Qwaqwa, and Lesotho (Johnston 2015, 2007) is crucial. Workers engage in the handpicking of grain (specifically, ripe bean stalks) and the stacking of it in furrows to be ready for the (low capacity) combine harvester to engage in mechanical cleaning, and grading, or the hands of the same women for hand cleaning, and grading of dry/sugar beans and careful filling into mainly 50 kilogram sacks to be ready for transportation to grain agribusiness silos. As mentioned above, low-capacity combine harvesters are affordable by some crop producers in the sample and at least three farmers have them in their list of crop production machinery, particularly farmers on upward trajectories of accumulation. In these cases, the women who are employed as casual workers to handpick beans or maize are usually paid R60-R120 per day and each work team can have as many as 20 women, depending on the cropped field size and crop yield per hectare. In any case, a team of handpicking women is often employed after harvest, even after harvesting by a hired technologically advanced combine harvester, particularly for harvesting maize, since the maize crop does fall onto the ground during mechanical harvesting and not all of it is harvested by the machine, and needs a human hand.

6.11 Social Relations of Labour and Hiring Practices

The predominance of men working as livestock herders in the area of study is no coincidence but an expression of livestock specialisation in the area, as discussed above. The employment of herders in livestock enterprises is a key feature in the area of study, with the exception of a few cases of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction that use family and sometimes female labour, especially those immediate kin without stable off-farm sources of income. The latter are petty commodity producers proper, with the capital-labour relation internalised within one individual or family, whilst the rest are small- to medium-scale capitalist farmers employing labour.

Locating the plight of herdsmen and casual female farm workers working on black-owned farms in the area of study within the materialist analytical lens of fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2003, 2010) acknowledges their vulnerability within the wider economic context of joblessness and attendant crises of social reproduction on a world scale and particularly in the Global South (Ferguson & Li 2018, Ferguson 2013, Johnston 2007, Bernstein 2017, 2003, 2010).

Livestock, especially beef-cattle and sheep production, appears to be thriving on the studied farms, thanks in part to the immigrant workers from Lesotho and Qwaqwa who are employed as livestock herders. However, quantitative data on immigrant labour from Lesotho working as herders on farms in the Eastern Free State and Free State province at large (and beyond), is sketchy, given the under-researched nature of the topic. Most immigrant herders interviewed for this study have legal documentation and are proactive in making this known once connected to a trained researcher. For example, in one instance, a farm worker was asked about whether he knew any Lesotho nationals working on farms in the Eastern Free State region. He suspiciously said he didn't know any. However, as the researcher was about to leave, he said: "I'm actually from Lesotho. What can you do to help us?" (Farm worker X, 14/04/2016). It is thus difficult to interview this labour force, especially if the research questionnaire is centred on the main farmer.

The main reason behind this, beyond the issue of immigrant legality, is the tendency to pay low wages to farm workers on land reform farms in the area of study. This makes it more difficult to interview the main farmer about their labour force, its origins, and the wages accruing to it, as farmers generally become suspicious when researchers ask them about their

labour-hiring practices. This might perhaps be due to farmers' knowledge of government regulations on the minimum wage of R150 per day at the time of research (Visser and Ferrer 2015). However, some farmers spoke openly about their labour force, especially those that were interviewed as part of the intensive study, whose abbreviated case studies are presented in Chapters Eight to Nine. For example, one farmer openly stated: "I pay my herder R800 per month because his whole subsistence depends on me. He gets his maize meal from me, everything, even the soap he uses to wash his body" (Farmer T, 16/04/2016).

On most of the studied farms in the area of study, a farm worker is paid around R800 per month, and sometimes as low as R600 per month. However, a few are paid up to R2000 per month. These payments typically include some payments in kind: a 50-kilogram sack of maize meal, one or two litres of milk daily, heads of cabbage, canned fish and beans, and so on. These labour-hiring practices and remuneration norms are common in the area of study and form part of a longer history of capitalist farming and farm labour tenancy in this region. For example Keegan (1986a, b, c) documented that many of the mid-20th century sharecroppers and labour tenants of the Highveld originated from Lesotho, some moving back and forth between Lesotho and South Africa, working as casual workers for harvesting grain/crops with their own sickles on border farms. These gendered, labour-hiring practices continue to this day, with women working as casual workers for harvesting of grain/crops and vegetables (Johnston 2015, 2007), and men employed as long-term herders.

Immigrant farm-worker movements between South Africa and Lesotho have become more widespread than before, extending into the Western Cape citrus and grape-producing districts, as well as Kwazulu-Natal and some parts of the Eastern Cape. The Western Cape citrus and grape-producing regions and the Eastern Free State vegetable districts are characterised by women casual workers who migrate between Lesotho and these farms during harvesting. On the other hand, the Basotho men tend to seek employment as livestock herders in the grassland biome regions of the Free State province on both black- and white-owned farms, as well as in the former homelands of Matatiele in the Eastern Cape and Qwaqwa, and on the commonages of small towns throughout the Free State province, for example, municipal commonages surrounding small towns such as Ficksburg, Harrismith, Rouxville, Wepener, Dewetsdorp, and so on.

The issue of spouses and female relatives who have joined the Basotho herders living and working on the studied redistributed land in the Eastern Free State in order to strategically

locate themselves close to casual-work opportunities on nearby farms and elsewhere, is under-researched, albeit seemingly significant to reflect on. Many have settled on these farms and use them as a base to access casual-work opportunities on neighbouring farms, especially for harvesting grain/crops and potatoes, as well as accessing other off-farm piece jobs in small towns. Of course, this is not a novel observation Deborah Johnston (2015, 2007) observed the strategic relocation of Basotho women to urban settlements on the peripheries of small towns in the Eastern Free State (Fouriesburg and Ficksburg) in order to be first in line for recruitment in harvesting on vegetable districts of the Eastern Free State

The next section takes the reader through portraits of herdsmen on New Qwaqwa Farms whose life stories illuminate a wider macro-economic context characterised by deindustrialisation and crises of unemployment for classes of labour, not only farm workers but countless immediate kin of the studied farmers. These findings are not meant to ridicule the New Qwaqwa farmers' tendencies to engage in labour exploitation but to illuminate the one-herder-per-farm tendency in a nuanced manner, against the one-sided view of generalised farm-worker victimisation in post-land reform contexts (Mtero et al. 2019, Sender and Johnston 2004, Bernstein 2004).

6.12 Portraits of Farm Worker Lives on Black-owned Land in the Eastern Free State

These farm workers on the studied farms are typically livestock herders (see Appendix 3) because their employers on redistributed land typically rent out their arable land to differentiated fragments of agrarian capital whilst they focus mainly on livestock enterprises, typically beef-cattle production geared for informal, weekend ceremonial markets and weekly livestock auction sales in nearby towns. Weekend ceremonial markets include funerals, weddings, sport derbies, and cleansing ceremonies in nearby black townships of Qwaqwa, Harrismith, Senekal, and Bethlehem. Some of these herders are under the employ of a few large and small cattle-herd owners who rent in the grazing land of the land beneficiaries in the area of study. The latter have been loosely described as 'grazers on rent' or 'rentier grazers'

who are essentially urban-based, middle-class individuals with off-farm income from skilled jobs or retirement funds, owning livestock grazing on rent on the studied farms and beyond ²².

The material circumstance of immigrant farm workers forces them to leave their home country to seek employment on farms in South Africa (Pilossof 2018, Johnston 2015, 2007, Hall et al. 2013, Rutherford and Addison 2007). Some have a longer history of farm work than others who have only recently become farm workers after losing their jobs in other sectors of economy. For example, some of the labour force originating in Lesotho are descendants or relatives of people affected by the massive retrenchments in the South African mining sector which can be traced to the 1980s (Murray 1981, Boehm 2000, Turner 2005, Ferguson 1999 in Ferguson 2013, p. 170).

The intention is not to sharply distinguish the material conditions of farm workers originally from Lesotho from those originating from Qwaqwa, for they share similar attributes of poverty and crises of social reproduction but to highlight the relative 'docility' (Johnston 2007) of immigrant farm workers. They are more confined within farm boundaries for prolonged periods of time without seeing their families, unlike those originating from Qwaqwa, who can opt to go home at any moment. It is such differences that seem to suggest that the immigrant labour force is more desirable on the part of the employer, the land beneficiary (Johnston 2007). However, it must be noted that in their everyday struggles to survive, farm workers, regardless of origins, are forced to assist one another, for example, in sharing livestock herding duties, food, and responsibility for farm work. This includes, for example, workers engaging in unofficial rotational visits to Lesotho, sometimes entrusting one worker to deliver three months

²² It is common for retired state employees or other workers from other sectors to invest their retirement packages (or wages) in livestock (Murray 1981) for which they seek grazing rights on municipal commonages, and land reform farms in the area of study (Atkinson and Ingle 2020). These renters are differentiated by the numbers of livestock (cattle) they own but share similar aspirations towards becoming beneficiaries of land redistribution. In fact, some of those renting municipal commonage land in the area of study have been promised land by the state whilst they rent municipal commonage grazing land in waiting for their own farms. There is a common strategy to acquire land by commonage livestock farmers grazing their livestock on rent on commonages owned by the state in Free State province (Atkinson and Ingle 2020).

or more of remittances to families in Lesotho, whilst their duties back on the farm are shared amongst farm workers remaining behind.

However, there is no romance involved in such shared responsibility. It evolves out of pragmatic compromises, including being confined on the farm for prolonged periods of time, if not the entire year. Some immigrant farm workers send their remittances back home via the Shoprite money market and the money is almost immediately withdrawn from the same supermarket in Lesotho, which seems convenient for family members in Lesotho to immediately purchase groceries and not wait for another worker to arrive from the Eastern Free State farms.

6.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has deployed Dorward and colleagues' livelihood trajectory categories to help discern patterns of economic differentiation of the studied family farms as single familial capitalist enterprises operated by main farmers, within a wider context in which immediate kin have real interest in and claims on the operations of the family farm. The researcher has shown that the interest of immediate kin as investors in the family farm or as consumers of agricultural income, can be in tension with or in favour of increasing the scale of farm production. Dorward and colleagues' categorisation of farmers' livelihood trajectories into those hanging in, stepping out, or stepping up have been particularly useful as heuristic lenses in the further classification of the researcher's sample (n=62) into three class-based categories using an agrarian political economy analytical framework (see Chapter Two). This analysis has borne fruit by first deploying Dorward's formulation in analysing the sample and laying bare its social differentiation dynamics and then using the latter as a foundation for the analysis of processes of class differentiation.

The next three chapters focus in more depth on such processes. They are concerned with agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (Chapter Seven), agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (Chapter Eight), and agricultural households engaged in accumulation (Chapter Nine). The aim of this study is to illuminate the class formation trajectories of the studied farmers who have occupied land reform farms for the past thirty years or so.

CHAPTER 7

AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of three empirical chapters in which the analysis of agricultural households on redistributed farmland in the Eastern Free State shifts focus from livelihood trajectories to processes of class differentiation. The chapter reports on the class of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. In these, the function of agricultural land is to expand the base of social reproduction for households that can be classified as being classes of labour' rather than capital (Bernstein 2003). In this conception, classes of labour are essentially working-class people currently experiencing crises of social reproduction, including in rural areas in the economies of the Global South (Chapter Two). Essentially this chapter illuminates the social reproduction impacts of improved access to land through land reform for classes of labour.

Of course, there can be anomalies within agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, such as middle-class households with stable off-farm income sources, who are engaged in marginal farming, often temporarily. These tend to use agricultural land for mere social reproduction but are analytically distinct from classes of labour at the lower ends of social differentiation who constitute the bulk of agricultural households described in this chapter. In class analytical terms, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction denote that the simple reproduction of their agricultural enterprises is highly constrained, as manifested in marginal farming operations that fail to maintain the same level of production over time, typically they lack the resources required for substantive farm investments. These agricultural households are analytically distinct from the simple reproducers proper described in the next chapter, who are able to successfully reproduce themselves as capital on the same scale of production (Chapter Eight). They are also analytically distinct from those engaged in accumulation of capital from an expanded base of agricultural production, as described in Chapter Nine.

In a sample of 62 cases, a total of 31 agricultural households were found to be using their improved access to land for purposes of expanding their social reproduction through fluid combinations of farm-rental income, marginal livestock farming, social grants, and a range of differentiated off-farm income sources. The significance of farm-rental income for 26 or 87% of these 31 households, suggest their theorisation as an impoverished form of landed property which is, of course, internally differentiated. An impoverished landed property denotes a landowner who lacks the wherewithal to invest in successful simple and expanded reproduction and is thus forced to lease out land for rental income in order to afford the expenses of social reproduction.

This category of impoverished landed property emerges because of severe constraints on the simple reproduction of farm enterprises on the basis of small livestock herds, the principal commodity in the area of study. As the reader will see, the socio-economic status of the next of kin of those holding farms within the category impoverished landed property tends to be impoverishment and consequent crises of social reproduction. This is tension with the simple reproductive capacity of their small livestock herds, forced as they are, by the dull compulsion of economic forces to consume much needed agricultural income from occasional livestock sales which could otherwise be reinvested in successful reproduction of the family farm enterprise.

Without state agricultural subsidies, accumulation from below cannot take place for these agricultural households. However, their resilience and the tenacious grip they hold on land for the access to farm-rental income it provides should not be underestimated. These findings suggest that a central tendency for classes of labour with improved access to land in South Africa is that land allows constrained, relative, but also successful simple reproduction of small-scale capitalist agriculture, on the basis of small livestock herds.

Table 7.1: Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=11 of 31)

Farm size	Beef cattle (#)	Sheep (#)	Grain in 2015/2016	Grain in 2014/2015	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm rental in gross farm income (%)	LSU* sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Off-farm jobs (#)	Social grants (#)	Jobless kin	Herders	Social reproduction strategy
Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	
512	68	45	0	0	0	1	45700	97%	3%	13	2	3	1	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
150	10	0	2	8	4	0	74600	78%	22%	4	2	2	0	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
505	31	0	0	47	0	0	61200	100%	0%	6	2	1	3	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
380	9	11	0	0	2	0	55740	80%	20%	7	2	1	4	0	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
72	14	12	0	0	0	0	3000	100%	0%	6	1	2	3	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
407	9	0	0	100	2	0	42450	74%	26%	5	4	1	0	2	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales

200	12	15	1	0	3	0	31380	41%	59%	12	2	1	2	0	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
700	33	0	0	0	0	0	80000	100%	0%	5	3	1	1	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
280	50	6	0	0	1	1	96975	89%	11%	6	5	,	1	2	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
166	5	3	0	0	1	0	11500	43%	57%	4	0	2	3	0	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
276	15	0	0	20	3	0	37000	65%	35%	6	1	2	3	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales

*Livestock Unit

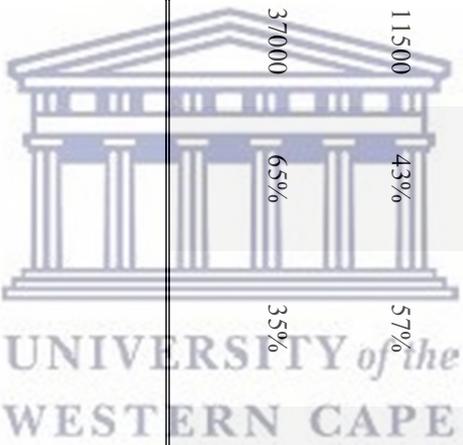


Table 7.2: Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=10 of 31)

Farm size	Beef cattle (#)	Sheep (#)	Grain in 2015/2016	Grain in 2014/2015	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm rental in gross farm income (%)	LSU* sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Off-farm jobs (#)	Social grants (#)	Jobless kin	Herders	Social reproduction strategy
140	85	0	0	0	0	0	45000	100%	0%	10	6	1	3	1	Farm-rental income, social grant & minute LSU sales
211	50	0	0	0	2	0	12000	0%	100%	6	4	1	1	1	Social grant & minute LSU sales
198	23	3	0	0	3	0	12000	0%	100%	4	0	2	2	0	Social grant & minute LSU sales
184	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	5	0	4	4	1	Social grant & minute LSU sales
826	0	0	0	0	0	0	34750	100%	0%	8	4	1	3	0	Farm-rental income & social grant
400	55	0	0	0	0	0	55000	45%	55%	5	0	1	5	2	Farm-rental income & minute LSU sales
534	55	0	0	20	7	0	131500	76%	24%	6	1	4	0	2	Farm-rental income & minute LSU sales
145	0	0	0	0	0	0	24000	100%	0%	4	1	0	3	0	Farm-rental income dependent household
250	50	0	0	0	7	0	161000	75%	25%	6	3	0	1	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm wage & minute LSU sales
180	28	60	0	0	0	10	67500	78%	22%	4	3	0	0	1	Farm-rental income, off-Farm wage & minute LSU sales

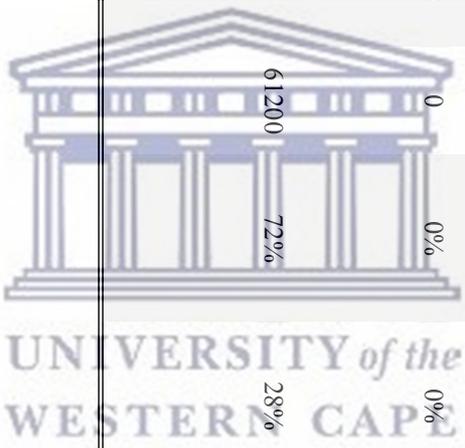
*Livestock Unit

Table 7.3: Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=10 of 31)

Farm size	Beef cattle (#)	Sheep (#)	Grain in 2015/2016	Grain in 2014/2015	Beef-cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm rental in gross farm income (%)	LSU* sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Off-farm jobs (#)	Social grants (#)	Jobless kin	Herders	Social reproduction strategy
225	30	0	0	0	1	0	23000	65%	35%	4	1	1	1	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm wage & minute LSU sales
150	20	0	0	0	0	0	4000	100%	0%	5	1	1	2	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm wage & minute LSU sales
208	23	0	0	0	0	0	40000	100%	0%	4	2	0	2	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm wage & minute LSU sales
98	9	0	0	0	3	0	51350	67%	33%	6	1	0	4	0	Farm-rental income, off-farm wage & minute LSU sales
350	18	0	0	0	0	0	109200	100%	0%	3	2	2	0	1	Off-farm business & minute LSU sales
537	25	30	0	0	12	1	53500	0%	100%	5	2	0	1	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm business & minute LSU sales

135	7	0	0	0	7	0	36000	100%	0%	8	2	0	3	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm business & minute LSU sales
872	30	0	0	0	2	0	46760	81%	19%	7	5	1	1	1	Farm-rental income, off-farm business & minute LSU sales
114	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	2	1	0	0	1	Minute LSU sales & state pension
350	26	15	0	0	3	3	61200	72%	28%	8	1	0	2	1	Farm-rental income, state pension & minute LSU sales

*Livestock Unit



Altogether, all but one (i.e. 98%) of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction farm with livestock, however marginal these are in terms of herd size, as shown in Table 7.1-31 above. The prevalence of livestock production is an economic choice in the area of study, which is attributable in part to a compatible localised grassland biome and in part to the less capital-intensive production system that livestock farming constitutes, particularly beef cattle and sheep, in contrast to the much-touted large-scale crop production systems in South African land reform discourse (see Chapter Five). Within this context, the degree of access to off-farm income from differentiated sources on the part of immediate kin tends to exert or release pressure on the capacity of the family farm to have some form of production, typically manifested in differential livestock herd sizes. Households with access to relatively stable off-farm income tend to experience less pressure to sell livestock through emergency sales for social reproduction than those characterised by unemployment, and precarious forms of off-farm employment.

Research findings presented in this chapter show the importance of access to land for classes of labour and fragments of the middle class who lack significant capital to invest in increasing the scale of farm production. Access to land enables them to obtain farm-rental income, with which they purchase groceries, pay transportation fees for their children's schooling, and rear small livestock herds, from which intermittent (emergency) sales are made to widen the base of social reproduction. However, their prospects for accumulation from below will depend on the capacity of immediate kin to muster off-farm capital resources or secure the aid of state agricultural subsidies for use towards increasing the scale of farm production.

7.2 Livelihood Diversification and Social Reproduction

Some of the households within the 'hanging-in', and 'stepping-out' category described in the previous chapter were refined and recategorised into agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, given the shared attributes described in this chapter. This section describes the constituent parts, internal dynamics and determinations of this category, laying bare the material conditions that underlie their existence as a class of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction.

Altogether, a total of 26 (or 87%) of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (n=31) rent out their arable land, and sometimes portions of grazing land as well, given their lack of capital resources to invest in increasing the scale of their farm production (see Table

7.1-7.3 above for this and subsequent statistics). Farm-rental income is typically combined with differentiated off-farm income sources, and intermittent livestock sales income. This strong dependence on farm-rental income for social reproduction suggests an impoverished form of landed property without the wherewithal to invest in successful simple and expanded reproduction, and thus forced to rent out farmland for farm-rental income.

A total of 12 (or 39%) of the main farmers in the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction combine farm-rental income with social grant income and livestock production. These are typically household heads above the age of 60 years, some of whom have offspring in skilled off-farm jobs, who have cattle of their own within the family-owned beef-cattle herd. However, some of these households do not have immediate kin with (stable) off-farm jobs, and this puts pressure on the family-owned livestock herd through emergency sales for survival. These emergency sales typically allow family members to cope with the vicissitudes and shocks of social reproduction and can be seen as outward remittances, from the family farm to the township.

In contrast to the above, a total of six (or 19%) of the main farmers in the agricultural households in this category combine farm-rental income with livestock production and off-farm wages. These are typically second-generation farmers who rent out arable land and migrate to earn wages through off-farm employment, whilst farming marginally with livestock using hired labour. These second-generation farmers may invest their (early) retirement packages into increasing the scale of farm production and may embark on accumulation from below in the near future, as some of their peers succeeded in doing (see Chapter Nine). However, this depends on the nature and security of their off-farm jobs those with precarious off-farm jobs may not be in the position to muster significant off-farm capital resources and their family farms may not be able to accumulate from below without the aid of state agricultural subsidies.

A total of three (or 10%) of the main farmers in the agricultural households described in this chapter combine farm-rental income with livestock production and off-farm business. These are essentially small-scale, off-farm businesses which are insignificant for capital investments towards increasing the scale of farm production, hence the location of these households within the category of households engaged in social reproduction. This suggests that they are not able to reproduce their farm enterprises at the same scale of production owing to constraints wrought by the social reproduction needs of unemployed or under-employed immediate kin.

A total of two (or 6%) of main farmers in the agricultural households described in this chapter combine livestock production and a state pension. At least one of the latter also earns farm-rental income. These are retired civil servants who lack capital to invest in increasing the scale of farm production, particularly livestock production. Their livestock herds are more likely to be expanded using their access to monthly state-pension stipends which supplement their social reproduction and contribute to payment of herders, thus reducing pressure on livestock herds in terms of emergency sales.

A total of two (or 6%) of main farmers within agricultural households in this category do not have off-farm sources of income and thus combine farm-rental income with livestock production. Essentially, these are main farmers who have no other source of income other than farm-rental income and intermittent livestock sales income. They are unemployed in the wider economy and yet are too young to receive the old-age social grant. The social reproduction of their households partially depends on the social grants of other family members, such as children and elders. This is then combined with farm-rental income, and intermittent livestock sales income for social reproduction of the household.

A least one (or 3%) of main farmers in agricultural households described in this chapter own no livestock. It combines farm-rental income with the social grant to secure social reproduction. The immediate kin of this households tend to have precarious forms of off-farm jobs. The livestock herds of these families have been depleted through emergency sales. A further 3% of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction also do not have livestock and survive only on farm-rental income, without access to social grants. Here too, livestock herds have been depleted through emergency sales for purposes of survival. These appear as the most destitute households within the category of impoverished landed property described in this chapter.

The next section explores the economic histories of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction.

7.3 The Economic Histories of Agricultural Households Engaged in Social Reproduction

Table 7.4: The economic histories of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction

Income source of household head prior to settlement		
	Freq.	Percent
Farm worker/labour tenant	11	35,5
General dealer	3	9,7
Civil servant	2	6,5
Small-scale brick industrialist	4	12,9
<i>Bakkie</i> * trader	1	3,2
Small-scale capitalist farmer	2	6,5
Taxi owner	2	6,5
Other businesses in Qwaqwa	2	6,5
Unskilled permanent work	4	12,9
Total	31	100

* A *bakkie* is a small pick-up truck in South Africa

It is no coincidence that 35,5% of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction are former farm-worker households but an historical pattern of great significance. This is dealt with in detail in Chapter Four but is worth invoking again here. The farm workers in the area of study and in particular those shown in Table 7.4 above, were almost invisible to land-redistribution advocates who were concerned with redistributing land to the economic and political elite from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s (Murray 1996).

In the Eastern Free State, many farm workers were evicted to make way for elite land beneficiaries in the late 1980s and early 1990s but some remained and were later allocated land in the early 2000s. The latter form part of the former farm workers who now own the land on which they had worked. However, core aspects of their marginalisation remained in force, and were reflected in their allocation of the smallest farms. This occurred, perhaps unintentionally, through the subdivision of the farms on which they had lived and worked, into much smaller farm sizes, in contrast to neighbouring land beneficiaries. For an example, the smallest land size in the sample is 72 ha, owned by a former farm-worker household and the largest is 1050 ha, owned by a wealthy business family which was part of the initial land beneficiaries of the late 1980s. As argued in Chapter Four, these farm sizes are problematic in an agro-ecological

context with no more than 700mm of summer rainfall, characterised by dryland cropping and little irrigation infrastructure. This localised agro-ecological context comprising a grassland biome, is arguably more suited for extensive livestock production, if not communal grazing (Atikson and Ingle 2020, Hall and Cousins 2013, Keegan 1986). Subdivision of a grassland biome can result in marginal livestock farming operations, especially when this coincides with land allocation to former farm workers without access to capital resources in order to resort to capital intensive agricultural. Small farm size in this context also constrains the magnitude of the farm-rental income they could be obtaining from renting out arable, and grazing land; indeed farm-rental income is determined per hectare and per head of animal and therefore increases with land size and total animal carrying capacity.

Table 7.4 shows that a total of 14 (or 45%) of the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction share a common history of having engaged in forms of petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist endeavours in Qwaqwa (Chapter Four). In Table 7.4, these are listed as former general dealers, small-scale brick industrialists, *bakkie* traders (A *bakkie* is a small pick-up truck in South Africa), small-scale capitalist farmers, taxi owners, and other businesses in Qwaqwa. These findings illuminate that the initial thrust of land reform policy was to open opportunities in farming for these petty commodity producers as well as classes of labour, though this was not free of some aspects of elite capture.

A total of four (or 13%) of this category of agricultural households have household heads who were migrant workers prior to farming on land reform farms. These are household heads who were articulate enough in expressing their need to be allocated farms or had some form of political connection with state officials, given that they did not have the business credentials required for allocations of farms by the screening committee.

In general, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction have tended to fall behind in relation to agricultural production, especially since the collapse of the state-owned agricultural company, AgriQwa, which had provided them with agricultural subsidies in the early 1990s (Chapter Four). However, the researcher also found that at least two former civil servants form part of this category of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction. They can be considered as anomalies, given the large monthly state pension they receive which differentiates them from an impoverished landed property proper, which are defined and discussed below.

7.3 Insights from In-depth Interviews: Vignettes on the Dynamics of Social Reproduction

Let us now turn to the exposition of the intricacies of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction by way of abbreviated case studies (Vignettes 1-6). These abbreviated case studies were constructed from in-depth qualitative interviews which used the life history (retrospective) method, in combination with the circumspective, and prospective methods described in Chapter Four.

7.3.1 Vignette 1

Farmer A is a 67-year-old man, a former farm worker/labour tenant co-owning a 166 ha farm received through land redistribution in the early 2000s. The farm is used for livestock production herded by Farmer A himself, who works full-time on the farm. He herds a small, family-owned, beef-cattle herd of five head and three sheep. In 2016 he sold a bull from his herd for R6500 at a ceremonial market in Qwaqwa and purchased three sheep with the proceeds. Farmer A's livestock sales income is constantly sent off-farm to his wife (aged 57) and two daughters, aged 20 and 13 respectively. This is combined with an annual rental income of R5000 from a grazing-land rent agreement with a former farm worker who is grazing cattle on this rented land.

Farmer A's wife and eldest daughter are unemployed they live on farm income from livestock sales and renting out grazing land. They combine this with the child social grant for the youngest daughter in Bochabela Township, Qwaqwa. In a single year, Farmer A generates no more than R10 000 from selling livestock, unless it's a good year, for example, if he manages to sell at least three head of cattle, with a careful eye so as not to deplete the entire herd through emergency sales. He employs no labour. Their livestock herd was initially sponsored and established by the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs which sponsored Farmer A's family and other neighbouring former farm worker families with three to five cattle in the early 2000s.

By 2017, one might have expected Farmer A's small livestock herd of five cattle and three sheep be far larger but the social reproduction pressures exerted on Farmer A's farm enterprise by his unemployed dependents living off-farm have been constrained herd expansion. Nonetheless, the initial sponsorship of Farmer A's household with five heads of cattle by the state has contributed quite significantly and sustainably over time to the social reproduction of Farmer A's household, through emergency sales for essential needs such as purchasing food.

Farmer A also rents out grazing land to a former farm worker who has settled permanently on Farmer A's portion of redistributed land. From this rental agreement, Farmer A receives one cow per annum, which has a cash value of around R5 000. The latter is combined with his monthly old-age social grant of R1 650. Both these sources of income, especially when combined with minimum, though intermittent livestock sales, go a long way into the social reproduction of Farmer A's household, characterised by the unemployment of other family members.

Similarly to Farmer A, most former farm workers who are beneficiaries of redistributed land in the Eastern Free State use the land primarily for maintaining their small livestock herds (sheep and cattle) and typically combine the latter with farm-rental income (from renting out arable and/or grazing land often contributing to the social reproduction of immediate kin living and either working or unemployed, off-farm. The latter can be described as outward remittances from farm income.)

When probed about his future plans Farmer A responded by saying: "I have lots of plans but not enough money. *Bothata kechelete* [money is the problem]. I want to buy sheep to resell in Qwaqwa [informal] markets. But the problem is that I do not have enough money!" (Farmer A, 19/04/2017).

A follow-up interview was conducted with Farmer A on 5 April 2019, when he revealed that his wife had not yet reached the age of 60 and thus still did not qualify for an old-age social grant. His eldest daughter was still unemployed and the youngest was still in high school. They all continue to depend heavily on farm income for survival. The farm enterprise remains small but appears to be improving its level of output. Farmer A sold eight sheep in 2017 and bought two cows which produced two calves recently, increasing the herd size to nine head. Material conditions on the farm may improve in the near future, perhaps towards the family being able to at least engage in 'simple reproduction' of their farming enterprise (see Chapter Eight). As soon as Farmer A's wife reaches the age of 60 which will entitle her to an old-age social grant or when one of their offspring finds stable off-farm employment, they may be able to maintain the farm enterprise at the same scale of production without putting too much pressure on it in terms of the consumption fund (Bernstein 2010). Otherwise they may be forced to sell the farm, as some of their neighbours have done.

7.3.1.1 The wider significance of Vignette 1. Farmer A's current class position places him in the lower ranks of class differentiation. His farm enterprise struggles to sustainably reproduce itself. Unlike the simple reproducers (Chapter Eight) and accumulators (Chapter Nine) in the area of study, Farmer A has no off-farm sources of capital on which to anchor his farm enterprise; the old-age social grant is his only source of off-farm income. Instead, his efforts to keep the farm at the same level of production (i.e. simple reproduction) are undermined and constrained by the demands on the "consumption fund" (Bernstein 2010, p. 125) exerted by his household members based in Bochabela township, Qwaqwa, where his wife and daughters live.

Farmer A's family-farm class position resemble farm enterprises that seem to be in a state of a "simple reproduction squeeze" (Bernstein 2010, p. 129), in this case a situation where simple reproduction is achieved at an unsatisfactory and insignificant scale, sometimes forcing the main farmer or farm owner to seek employment off-farm in mainly casual, unskilled labour on a temporary or long-term basis (see also Vignettes 2-4 below). Nonetheless, access to land for minimum livestock sales, and farm-rental income from renting out grazing land, forms a buffer against extreme poverty for Farmer A's household members who are unemployed and living off-farm.

In other words, though impoverished and unable to reproduce as capital at the same scale of production, Farmer A's immediate kin living off-farm benefit from farm-rental income and marginal livestock sales income. The researcher has characterised these outward farm income flows as outward remittances towards the social reproduction of immediate kin living off-farm within a wider context of crises of social reproduction and structural unemployment in the wider economy of South Africa.

7.3.2 Vignette 2

Farmer B is a 44-year-old woman who inherited the family farm from her deceased in-laws (the parents of her husband), and her deceased husband. They were farm workers who became beneficiaries of subdivided land in the early 2000s. The family farm is one portion of a subdivided Weltevrede farm, with 145 ha of land, internally divided into 60 ha of arable land and 85 ha of grazing land (see Appendix 1). Farmer B rents out 100% of the farm's arable land to a white farmer for R400 per hectare in an annual, renewable contract. No livestock are currently kept on the farm.

Arable land-rental income (R24 000) goes a long way to ensure the daily social reproduction of this household, through payments for groceries consumed by both on- and off-farm immediate kin. For example, R600 per month from farm-rental income is sent to the two offspring who are unemployed off-farm, and some of the rental income helps maintain the diets of the other two household members residing on the family farm, including Farmer B.

Given their unemployment, plus the lack of livestock to earn income from, arable land-rental income forms the only buffer against extreme poverty for members of this household. Unlike the majority of farmers who rent out their arable land and focus on their livestock enterprises, Farmer B has no livestock, all having been lost to stock theft plus emergency sales to earn cash with which to purchase food.

In addition to arable land-rental income, Farmer B formerly made a living through precarious informal (small-scale) street trading, selling apples in the streets of Johannesburg. However, follow-up interviews in April and June 2019 revealed that this off-farm petty trade was terminated at the end of 2016 and Farmer B had since retreated back to the family farm to reside there on a full-time basis with one of her three unemployed sons.

7.3.2.1 The wider significance of Vignette 2. Farmer B's case shows that access to land for farm-rental income can form a buffer against extreme poverty. It suggests that seeing such households as a form of impoverished landed property would be appropriate, given for their absolute dependence on farm-rental income for purposes of social reproduction. However, in contrast to landless classes of labour on the fringes of small towns and cities of South Africa, without access to land from which to obtain farm-rental income, Farmer B's household is relatively better-off and their situation might improve if Farmer B's sons were able to obtain stable off-farm income, some of which could be invested in a small herd of livestock.

7.3.3 Vignette 3

We use the [farm] rental income to buy maize meal and we also save some for our grandchildren who need it for school transportation costs, and food. We spend R500 per month on our grandchildren. We also use farm-rental income to buy veterinary medication (Farmer C, 05/06/2019).

Farmer C, aged 62 and his wife (aged 56) are former farm workers who lived on the same farm which they now own a portion of, which they received through the land redistribution programme in the early 2000s. Their farm is 200 ha in size, with 26 ha of arable land and 174

ha of grazing land. They rent out 100% of their arable land to a rich, neighbouring, black farmer for R10 000 per annum, in a three-year renewable contract. They rent out their arable land because they lack the capital resources required to invest in the means of crop production: “We don’t have farming implements [nor capital to hire them], that’s why we rent out [arable land] if only we could get farming implements, things would be much better”. (Farmer C, 27/04/2016).

However, they do produce white maize on 1 ha for purposes of home consumption, using their tenant’s grain production machinery. While their arable land is rented-out, Farmer C and his spouse specialise in livestock enterprises: a cattle herd of 15 head and 15 sheep. As former labour tenants on the same farm, they had always had their own livestock, though with limitations in terms of the numbers permitted on the farm. This changed when they were granted a portion of the farm on which they had lived and worked, through land reform and given a state subsidy in the form of livestock: “When we were granted the land, we were sponsored with 12 cattle by the state, but some died over time” (Farmer C, 27/04/2016).

Nonetheless, their sponsorship with livestock by the state was a significant contribution to their farming enterprise, given the restriction on keeping more than four beasts under the labour tenant contract in terms of which they had lived and worked on the farm prior to redistribution.

In December 2016, Farmer C and his spouse sold two beef cattle for R3500 each at the farm gate to an individual who was increasing his cattle herd in Qwaqwa. In the same year Farmer C and his spouse had sold two sheep for R1500 each, also a farm gate sale. Farmer C and his spouse do not hire labour for the herding of livestock. This is the responsibility of Farmer C who does it with ease, given the farming skills he developed over decades of labour tenancy.

From a combination of livestock sales and arable land-rental income in the year 2016, Farmer C and his spouse received a cumulative gross farm income of R28 000. This was combined with Farmer C’s state old-age pension grant of R1650 per month. It is unsurprising that Farmer C’s three daughters, now in their 30s and 40s, are forced to sell their labour in unskilled and precarious off-farm work in the nearest town, Harrismith. In an interview, Farmer C, their father explained: “My children saw that there is nothing to do on the farm, and so they left”.

Two of his daughters work in an abattoir in Harrismith. “The wages from the abattoir are too low, they can’t remit anything”. The latter was their father’s response when probed on whether or not his daughters send him any remittances. One of his daughters is unemployed but resides

off-farm with her sisters, close to town because it provides access to occasional (piece) job opportunities.

The total size of this particular household is 12 people, comprising five adults and seven grandchildren. The grandchildren are financially supported by their grandparents through combinations of livestock sales income, the old-age social grant and rental income from renting out arable land. In terms of class differentiation, the situation of Farmer C's offspring is notably different from that of the offspring of accumulators in the area of study (see Chapter Nine). The latter had at least enough off-farm income and agrarian capital to fund the education of their offspring, sometimes in higher quality schools, such as the so-called former Model-C schools and even in tertiary education institutions, in some cases, which often leads to much better futures (especially in off-farm skilled employment) for the off-spring.

Indeed, very often, the causal dynamics underpinning the plight of former farm workers' offspring involve inheriting the class positions of their parents prior to farming that is, prior to receiving subdivided land through land redistribution. In other words, those farmers whose income sources prior to farming did not involve poorly paid farm work (or other similar class positions) but rather off-farm skilled work, for example in the civil service or in running a small business, are more likely to be able to fund the education of their children beyond the level of primary and secondary schooling. The latter are also most likely to be doing well in farming, especially given their access to differentiated forms of off-farm capital, especially from skilled employment and even more so as second-generation farmers returning to their family farms and able to invest some of the resignation or early retirement funds derived from their off-farm skilled employment (Chapter Nine).

However, some former farm-worker households, due to fortuitous coincidences such as offspring gaining access to tertiary education, contain members who are currently in skilled employed and earn higher wages. Some of these are making significant investments in the farming enterprise and their family farms can thus successfully reproduce as capital i.e. engage in simple reproduction (see Chapter Eight).

7.3.3.1 The wider significance of Vignette 3. The ability of Farmer C's livestock enterprise to simply reproduce itself is squeezed by the social reproduction demands made by his unemployed immediate kin. However, through combinations of farm-rental income and intermittent livestock sales, the family farm enterprise is usually able to meet the family's social reproduction needs, especially when combined with Farmer C's old-age social grant, as well as his grandchildren's child support grants, together with the intermittent off-farm income of his three daughters. The wider significance of this case is that it shows clearly how access to land for farm-rental income and marginal farming forms a buffer against extreme poverty.

7.3.4 Vignette 4

We want money. There are no jobs. That's why we rent out land. (Farmer D, 27/04/2016)

We share the farm-rental money amongst family members. But it is not much money. The land is too small - 26 ha [of arable land] is far too small. (Farmer D's brother, 14/06/2019)

Farmer D, a 32-year-old man (the main farmer) and his five siblings, who are in their late 20s and 30s, inherited the 98 ha family farm from their deceased parents. Their parents were both farm workers and labour tenants on the same farm on which they later became beneficiaries. This occurred in the early 2000s. They were allocated a portion (through subdivision) of the same farm on which they lived and worked as labour tenants. Farmer D's family farm is divided into 26 ha of arable land, and 72 ha of grazing land, and 100% of arable land is rented out for R675 per hectare.

Farmer D also rents out some grazing land to three landless, small-herd owners (or 'graziers on rent') who keep cattle on the farm for R50 per livestock unit per month. Arable land and grazing land-rental income is used for various purposes, such as purchasing groceries, furniture, clothing, and sometimes funds modest renovations of their family house in a township in Qwaqwa.

In 2016 Farmer D sold three head of beef cattle in the informal ceremonial market for R17 000 and was left with nine beasts. As in the case of other livestock farmers engaged in informal weekend ceremonial markets for livestock in the area of study, buyers have purchased livestock at the farm-gate and transported it themselves to their homes in the townships of Qwaqwa, Harrismith, Kestel and Bethlehem for overnight slaughter in preparation for weekend social

events such as funerals, weddings, sport derbies, and parties all events that constitute part of the ceremonial economy of the Eastern Free State.

Farmer D's gross income for 2016 was R34 550 from rental income combined with livestock sales. In addition, Farmer D sometimes finds off-farm unskilled casual work during harvesting on neighbouring farms and has also participated in the Community Work Programme of the Department of Social Development, as well as the Working for Water programme of the Department of Environmental Affairs, in order to secure intermittent income to assist with social reproduction.

It is clear that limited farm size (98 ha) is a constraint on simple reproduction, for even were Farmer D to opt to convert the whole farm into grazing land, as some of his neighbouring farmers have done, the farm would soon reach its maximum livestock carrying capacity. This is the downside of the subdivision of agricultural land into small farms in this agro-ecological context of a grassland biome suitable for extensive livestock production.

Farmer D has five siblings in their late 20s, and late 30s. Only one of them resides on the farm, having recently found employment as a livestock herder on a neighbouring land reform farm for a monthly wage of R1000. The other four siblings are unemployed and do not reside on the farm or participate in farm activities but benefit from farm income for their social reproduction, though this is variable, and gendered, as their sisters who are married do not receive benefits. (However, in extreme circumstances, such as lack of food, married sisters may have no choice but to ask their brothers for money these can be conceptualised as outward remittances from the family farm to immediate kin in precarious material conditions off-farm). Nonetheless, there seems to be nothing to do on the family farm, other than herding livestock (conducted by Farmer D himself, sometimes with his spouse, without hired labour).

All of their arable land is rented out due to the lack of capital to invest in crop production machinery or to hire it in and there are limited chances for off-farm skilled employment given the limited education of Farmer D's siblings (including Farmer D). This is in contrast to the better opportunities for skilled employment awaiting the offspring of accumulating farmers in the area of study who have been able to fund the education of their off-spring to ensure they ultimately find skilled employment with higher wages.

When Farmer D, who is very aware of the profit that those who rent his arable land are making in crop production, was asked about new possibilities he wants to see on his family farm, he

remarked: “I want to get tractors and use the [arable] land myself, and also to diversify into dairy” (27/04/2016).

The desire to obtain tractors suggests strongly that lack of capital to hire or purchase crop production machinery is a common problem amongst farmers who tend to rent out arable land in the area of study. The desire to diversify into dairy production probably arises because it promises access to subsidies, as is the case for a few dairy farmers in the area of study who produce milk under contract for Nestle.

7.3.4.1 The wider significance of Vignette 4. Farmer D’s family farm is one of those farms that can be described as struggling and unable to reproduce itself as capital on a sustained basis. The underlying dynamic appears to be the fact that Farmer D is unable to get maximum economic returns from the farm, since he has no crop production machinery, nor capital to hire in such machinery, nor capital to be invested in the expanded reproduction of the family-owned beef-cattle herd of nine head. Renting out arable land as well as grazing land, seems to be a ‘survivalist’ (Ferguson and Li 2018) strategy on his part.

Furthermore, the wider significance of this case lies in the clear absence of the state in providing support to secure access to crop production machinery, linked to the problem of elite capture of such machinery by the elite farmers in the area of study. Nonetheless, against the backdrop of high levels of unemployment in South Africa and thus limited prospects for off-farm employment (also owing to the low levels of education obtained by Farmer D and his siblings), access to land provides a buffer against extreme poverty, as is the case in the vignettes described above.

7.3.5 Vignette 5

Farmer E is a 73-year-old widow owning a 72 ha farm. She is a former labour tenant and former farm worker on the same farm that she received a portion of through land redistribution in the early 2000s. Her deceased husband was also a farm worker on the same farm his job was livestock herding. He also worked off-farm and his last off-farm job was general work for Eskom in Phuthadijhaba, which he did with ease, returning to the farm in the evenings.

On the farm, Farmer E stays with two of her four sons and five grandchildren. One of her sons is a former mineworker who was retrenched from a gold mine in Klerksdop in the 2000s. He herds the family livestock of 15 cattle and 12 sheep. He is financially supported by his mother’s

social-grant monthly income, as does his unemployed brother, who also lives on the family farm. The latter has three cows of his own within the family herd, having purchased one when he was still employed. As an extra source of income, in addition to the old-age social grant and the child social grant received by one of the grandchildren, they also have head of three cattle grazing on their farm for a rental fee of R150 per month. They also sell small quantities of livestock whenever the need arises.

In the above quote Farmer E suggests that former farm-worker households who became beneficiaries of redistributed land from the late 1990s to the early 2000s in the Eastern Free State province actually survived attempted evictions, to make way for a preferred black elite as beneficiaries of land redistributed from white farmers by the state in that part of the country, as stated by Farmer E: “We [farm workers] were the last to be allocated land. That is why I received a small farm. In fact, they [state officials] wanted to evict my household from this farm.” (Farmer E, 25 May 2016).

7.3.5.1 The wider significance of Vignette 5. Farmer D’s family farm of 72 ha appears to be too small for livestock production on a significant scale. Land size thus appears to be a long-term constraint. Nonetheless, what we see in this case is the retreat of unemployed offspring back to the family farm and becoming family labour in herding livestock, after the event of a shock such as retrenchment from off-farm work. A retreat to family labour on a family-owned farm, no matter how insignificant in terms of cash benefits, would be impossible without access to land on which to raise small herds of livestock and at least being able to enjoy the possibility of deriving some form of livelihood. Combinations of income from meagre livestock sales, grazing land-rental income, and the old-age social grant received by their elderly mother, together with the child grant received by one of the children, form an important buffer against extreme poverty.

However, in this case and indeed most of the cases within this category of agricultural households, the social reproduction needs of the household are in tension with the simple reproductive capacity of the farm enterprise (Bernstein 2010). This leads to simple reproduction of the farm enterprise being highly constrained, especially since livestock herd expansion is undermined by emergency sales in order to purchase food or fund other crucial necessities for the family. Nevertheless, access to land is a key buffer against extreme poverty for this household.

7.3.6 Vignette 6

Farmers F1 and F2 are second-generation farmers and co-owners of a portion of subdivided land, now a farm of 184 ha, originally transferred to their former farm worker/labour tenant parents, on which the current generation reaps some form of benefit. The first co-owner/main farmer is a 57-year-old farmer who inherited Unit 3 of the former Humewood state farm. He left his security guard job and other piece jobs (unskilled casual work) in Johannesburg in order to farm on a full-time basis after the death of his father in 2008. This is another example of land reform that benefits classes of labour first for the latter's parents (former farm workers), and more recently for himself, and siblings in terms of the livelihood trajectory of a household, in the historical and contemporary sense.

Farmer F1 has four brothers who are all older than him. They live on old-age social grants and all have shares in the family cattle herd. Their family-owned cattle herd was originally inherited from their parents and its size has been subsequently increased by contributions in the form of investments in beef cattle, from each of Farmer F1's siblings. For example, on his return from Johannesburg, Farmer F1 purchased two heifers using his savings from years of off-farm work into the family herd. They employ a labourer for livestock herding, an immigrant worker from Lesotho who lives full-time on the farm together with his spouse who is also from Lesotho, paying him a monthly wage of R1 200, paid through contributions from Farmer F1's siblings' old-age social grants.

On the farm there are 34 beef cattle co-owned by Farmer F1 and Farmer F2 in unequal proportions. They sell their cattle occasionally but only in small quantities, between one and three heads, typically in informal weekend ceremonial markets in Qwaqwa, mainly to meet basic living expenses and ensure their survival. For example, Farmer F1 remarked: "We sell a cow whenever we have problems. My brothers support me with food since I do not yet earn the old-age social grant" (Farmer F1, 14 June 2019).

Farmer F2, the co-owner, is also a second-generation farmer who inherited a share in the farm from her elderly parents. She does not reside on the farm, however, but has her brother-in-law as her representative there, residing on the farm and herding cattle in an arrangement that appears as family labour, whilst she works in a factory in Tshiame industrial area, close to the town of Harrismith.

7.3.6.1 The wider significance of Vignette 6. Farmers F1 and F2 are second-generation farmers with limited off-farm income to invest in expanding their family-owned beef-cattle herd. For example, the siblings of Farmer F1 are much older and currently live on old-age social grants and are thus unable to make much investment in the family farm, neither financially nor physically. Farmer F2 on the other hand is forced to keep on working in the factory in order to survive and to hold onto her share of the land she inherited from her parents.

Nonetheless, for both Farmers F1, and F2, access to land through land reform forms a buffer against extreme poverty. In contrast to the offspring of the better-educated and well-resourced offspring of the accumulators in the sample (see Chapter Nine), Farmers F1 and F2 do not have much in the way of resources with which to anchor farm investments such as skilled off-farm employment. Their historical class positions were inherited from their former farm-worker parents and are being reproduced.

7.4 Theoretical Insights from Analysing Rental Income: An Impoverished Landed Property?

An impoverished form of landed property denotes strong dependency on (farm)land-rental income for purposes of social reproduction, especially by marginal farmers or marginal members of communal property associations who nominally derive dividends from their collective rights over a piece of land (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014). This notion of impoverished landed property is fundamentally different from the concept of landed property proper, as the powerful ‘third class’ of capitalism, in the Marxian sense, as discussed in Chapter Two. It simply denotes new property owners, especially in post-land reform contexts, who lack the inherited wealth in land that defines landed property proper and thus rent out farmland to forms of agrarian capital. Their objective is not to ensure a luxurious living on the basis of labour exploitation, as in the old tenant-landlord social relations, but the opposite mere survival to cover the basic needs of social reproduction (Lenin 1977).

The research findings in this study suggest that access to land constitutes a buffer against poverty for classes of labour and fragments of the middle class who have obtained land through land reform and fallen behind in farm production, for it gives them leeway to obtain farm-rental income and often to rear small herds of livestock. The researcher argues that title to subdivided land gives them both secure land tenure and freedom in obtaining farm-rental income, affording them the authority to make decisions such as renting out arable and grazing land, whilst also

focusing on farming small herds of livestock. However, the downside of agricultural land subdivision in a grassland biome, such as in the area of study, is that it precludes expanded livestock production on the basis of extensive communal forms of property rights, with shifting pastoralism.

Nonetheless, secure land tenure on the basis of private title (see Appendix 4) is in contrast to situations where former farm workers have been allocated land through redistributive land reform elsewhere in South Africa, for example, in cases where former farm workers hold land collectively through the so-called Communal Property Associations, or CPAs, (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014, Ngubane 2012). In these cases, the general tendency is to restrict decision making to the CPA governing structure which tends to be controlled by local elites, often excluding marginalised beneficiaries who are not permitted to practice marginal farming on the land they hold collectively whilst it is rented out to fragments of agrarian capital. The distribution of dividends from renting out land in these cases is insignificant for marginalised beneficiaries, nor have the promised farm job opportunities materialised (*ibid.*).

The concept of an impoverished landed property is also applicable to marginalised beneficiaries in CPAs. It is on this basis that the researcher argues that the form of impoverished landed property documented in this chapter offers real opportunities to individual beneficiaries, because they have the freedom to make individualised decisions to rent out their land for rental income that accrues directly to their households, not to a representative entity such as the CPA. The researcher argues that these are the fruits of individual title obtained through subdivision of agricultural land and the redistribution of individual portions to households.

However, it is also plain that their allocation of marginal land on small farms constrains their prospects for accumulation from below and thus they remain impoverished. Central to these contradictions is the subdivision of prime livestock rangelands into smaller portions, which constrains extensive livestock expansion through mobile, shifting forms of pastoralism (Keegan 1986). On this note, the researcher cautions that the subdivision of agricultural land is perhaps best in particular suitable agro-ecological contexts, such as high rainfall areas with irrigation infrastructure (Cousins 2015). These contradictions are central to the South African land reform policy that falls short of livestock production systems problematisation for differentiated classes of land beneficiaries (Hall and Cousins 2013). In other words, South African land reform has paid little attention to communal forms of livestock production, beyond the reforms of small-town commonages whereby access to marginalised classes of

livestock producers have been improved with the transition to democratic rule (Atkinson and Ingle 2020).

However, beyond their theorisation as an impoverished form of landed property, the main point to be grasped is that the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction discussed in this chapter use their improved access to land in order to widen the base of their social reproduction. Their juxtaposition with even more marginalised members of a class of impoverished landed property elsewhere in the country is the researcher's attempt to illuminate that access to land with secure tenure for classes of labour, particularly former farm workers and non-elite land beneficiaries, is crucial in their social reproduction strategies anchored in diversified and often precarious livelihoods. Fundamentally, institutionalised collectivisation of land reform farms in South Africa, in their manifestations as Communal Property Associations, trusts, and so on, which tend to serve the needs of a core elite, further marginalise members of the class of impoverished landed property within the 'community'. In other words, redistribution of agricultural land and its allocation to classes of labour on the basis of individualised title deeds secures land tenure and potentially widens their base of social reproduction since land beneficiaries can obtain farm-rental income, however marginal, and also practice marginal farming, which goes a long way to ensure their social reproduction. However, this is not an anti-communal landownership analysis but an attempt to lay bare the contradictions of elite capture in communal forms of ownership which can be improved by deepened democracy in communal property relations.

7.5 Class Politics of Agricultural Households Engaged in Social Reproduction

The agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, many of whom constitute a class of impoverished landed property, are generally not members of the local farmers' associations and many see their non-participation as a way of boycotting the institutions which ensure the capture of public goods in the hands of a few elite farmers. This is because state agricultural subsidies are funnelled via the local farmers' associations. These boycott tactics are seen by the local ruling elite as reflecting only 'apathy' and indeed, those that the researcher had classified as impoverished landed property have acquired a negative reputation as farmers who just 'sit on their farms and wait for state support'.

On the other hand, such views fail to understand the material conditions of the category of impoverished landed property, that often bar them to attend farmers' day meetings which

require transportation to host farms. Most members of the category of impoverished landed property do not own vehicles and travel to meetings is difficult for them, especially to meetings which clearly have middle- and upper-class agendas in which their needs and aspirations in class terms are not accommodated. Furthermore, these agricultural households at the lowest ends of class differentiation in the area of study have witnessed the maldistribution of agricultural subsidies, such as drought-relief packages, state-sponsored tractors, and state-sponsored cattle loans, from which they should be also benefitting but are barred from gaining access to by a minority of elite farmers in control of decentralised state agricultural subsidies.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, households engaged in the expansion of their social reproduction bases with improved access to land were further delineated into a category of an impoverished form of landed property and one of ‘constrained simple reproducers’. Both categories are constrained simple reproducers given their marginal income from farming but are distinguished by the rent dynamic, that is, whether they rent out farmland or not. Those who rent out farmland and practice marginal farming are an impoverished landed property proper. Their constrained simple reproduction is further internally differentiated by livestock herd sizes, an expression of differentiated degrees of access to off-farm income, the prevalence of unemployment in each household, and the value of farming or farm-rental income in reproduction of the farm enterprise or social reproduction of the household.

Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction are often mistakenly seen as ‘failed’ land reform beneficiaries within mainstream land reform analyses. This is mainly the symptom of a fixed and dogmatic consensus within mainstream approaches about what a successful land reform farm should comprise: a large-scale, industrial farm replicating its character under its previous owner. This chapter has shed light on the often-neglected contribution of improved access to land for classes of labour in widening their base of social reproduction, against the backdrop of generalised unemployment and precarious forms of employment in the wider economy. Furthermore, this chapter has proposed a concept of an impoverished landed property to denote land beneficiaries who lack the wherewithal to invest in increasing the scale of farm production and are thus forced to rent out farmland for much-needed rental income which goes a long way to ensure the social reproduction of immediate kin who are, in most cases, living precarious lives off-farm.

This chapter concludes that prospects for successful simple reproduction and accumulation from below are slim on the part of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, unless they can muster significant off-farm capital resources or receive much-needed state agricultural subsidies. However, the chapter has also shed light on the highly constrained opportunities for these households to obtain significant off-farm income, given their limited educational opportunities and qualifications which bars many from obtaining stable off-farm jobs. The researcher argues that sustained state agricultural subsidies could unleash accumulation from below for the agricultural households described in this chapter but only if such state support is distributed more transparently than in the current conjuncture, characterised by elite capture of agricultural public goods in the South African land reform project.

However, beyond the intricate, localised forms of class politics that further marginalise agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, their existence illuminates their tenacious grip on their land, ensuring modest benefits such as farm-rental income and small herds of livestock from which intermittent and often emergency sales are made. These illuminate the progressive impacts of allocating land to classes of labour (Bernstein 2010) in terms of poverty alleviation and pro-poor land reform, within the context of a jobless macro-economic context where prospects for off-farm income are slim. However, the absence of the role of the state, especially in the provision of state agricultural subsidies, means that key opportunities for this class of farmers are often missed as they are unable to maximise the benefits they could be deriving from improved access to land.

CHAPTER 8

SIMPLE REPRODUCTION OF SMALL-SCALE CAPITALIST FARMS ON REDISTRIBUTED LAND

8.1 Introduction

Simple reproduction denotes mere reproduction of profitable capitalist enterprise at the same scale of production, without accumulation of capital taking place for various reasons and sometimes in cases where the capitalist consumes greater part of surplus value that could be otherwise invested in the expansion of production towards accumulation (Fine & Saad-Fihlo 2010). This chapter analyses agricultural households which were found to be reinvesting agricultural capital and maintaining the same scale of farm production and thus categorised as 'simple reproducers', as distinct from those classified as 'accumulators' engaged in expanded reproduction. The latter are described in the next chapter. These 16 households, comprising 25,8% of the total sample of 62 households, are not accumulating capital but are economically better off than those classified as engaged in social reproduction, with the majority belonging to a class best described as a form of 'impoverished landed property', as described in Chapter Seven.

Simple reproduction in farming involves maintaining profitable farming operations over time which contribute significant income to household members, without being able to re-invest some of the profits back into their farms in order to expand their scale or scope of production (what Marx calls 'expanded reproduction', or accumulation see Chapter Two). The simple reproduction of farming enterprises described in this chapter depends on access to differentiated, intersecting and variable capital resources such as scarce public-private agricultural subsidies for a selected few, off-farm income (social grants and wages) and farm-rental income as well as agricultural capital derived from farm income. Three broad simple reproduction strategies can be discerned in the area of study, namely:

- i. Dairy-centred simple reproduction, where income from milk production is crucial for the functioning of other marginal farm enterprise combinations in mixed-farming contexts (9,6% of households in the whole sample fall within this category).

- ii. Crop-/livestock-centred simple reproduction, where crop farming is combined with the production of beef cattle and sometimes sheep, as well as farm-rental income, towards simple reproduction of the farm as a single, mixed-farming enterprise (6,4% of households in the sample fall within this category).
- iii. Beef-centred simple reproduction, which typically rests upon the sole production of beef cattle but can include farm-rental income from renting out arable land (9,6% of households in the sample fall within this category).

The first part of the chapter describes these three simple reproduction strategies and their intersections with the livelihood strategies of the main farmers and immediate kin, which usually includes different kinds of off-farm income sources. The second part provides a high-resolution analysis of these simple reproduction strategies with the aid of quantitative and qualitative data. The latter are presented in the form of vignettes (abbreviated case studies). This chapter concludes with a synthetic overview of the three main simple reproduction strategies found in the area of study and their implications for the potential for accumulation from below. In particular, the analysis focuses on those immediate kin of current main farmers who are engaged in skilled off-farm employment and who are more likely to invest some of their (early) retirement funds into farming and thus potentially stand a good chance of providing capital investments needed to enable accumulation from below, following the footsteps of their peers in those family farms which are on upward trajectories of accumulation (see Chapter Nine). This chapter seeks to illuminate the dynamics of simple reproduction on redistributed land under study, showing how these strategies of simple reproduction are anchored in complex farmer livelihood strategies, as well as the material condition of immediate kin. The hypothesis regarding the possible role the latter could have towards accumulation from below should they decide to follow in the footsteps of some of their neighbouring peers, described in the next chapter, is a proposition based on the evidence presented in Chapter Nine. The researcher argues that the 16 simple reproducers described in this chapter may be able to accumulate from below in the near future, given sufficient investments of off-farm income sources into expanding the scale of farm production, especially by immediate kin, or sufficient state support in the form of agricultural subsidy.

8.2 Overview: Simple Reproduction Strategies of Black Farmers on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

Table 8.1: Livelihood strategies and simple reproduction of farm enterprise on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State (n=16)

Livelihood strategy of main farmer	Farm size (ha)	Beef cattle (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Sheep (#)	Beef cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Crops in 2015/2016 (ha)	Crops in 2014/2015 (ha)	Gross farm income (R's)	Farm rental in gross farm income (%)	Crop sales in gross farm income (%)	Milk sales in gross farm income (%)	LSU sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size	Social grants (#)	Off-farm jobs (#)	Jobless kin (#)	Herders (#)	Simple reproduction strategy of farm enterprise
Mixed livestock & rent	520	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	333080	29%	0%	68%	3%	3	0	1	1	4	Dairy-centred simple reproduction
Extensive livestock, rent & crops	306	24	0	0	3	0	8	0	82400	39%	47%	0%	15%	5	0	1	3	1	Crops- livestock-centred simple reproduction
Intensive livestock, rent & crops	350	0	36	0	0	0	7	7	393600	12%	0%	88%	0%	7	3	2	1	3	Dairy-centred simple reproduction
Mixed livestock, rent & crops	463	16	25	0	0	0	20	20	213200	28%	0%	62%	9%	2	0	1	0	3	Dairy-centred simple reproduction
Extensive livestock, crops & off-farm business	819	21	0	35	3	8	71	41	144500	0%	82%	0%	18%	5	1	2	0	1	Crops- livestock-centred simple reproduction
Intensive livestock & crops	107	10	22	0	0	0	26	0	666860	0%	45%	47%	8%	3	0	0	2	2	Dairy-centred simple reproduction
Extensive livestock, crops & social grant	274	21	0	0	0	0	27	25	126900	0%	100%	0%	0%	4	1	3	0	2	Crops- livestock centred simple reproduction
Mixed livestock & rent	420	42	20	21	5	0	0	35	409500	32%	0%	56%	12%	11	0	3	3	3	Dairy-centred simple reproduction

Mixed livestock, rent, crops & social grant	555	0	30	0	0	0	0	50	5	408000	40%	0%	50%	10%	5	1	3	1	2	Dairy-centred simple reproduction
Extensive livestock, rent, crops & social grant	232	49	0	0	8	0	20	117	202400	19%	59%	0%	22%	5	2	2	1	2	Crops- livestock centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock, rent & social grant	300	27	0	0	14	0	0	0	149000	40%	0%	0%	60%	6	1	5	0	1	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock, rent & social grant	154	40	0	0	5	0	5	4	44700	11%	0%	0%	89%	5	1	1	1	3	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock & social grant	139	66	0	12	13	0	0	0	57500	0%	0%	0%	100%	7	2	3	0	2	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock, rent & state pension	333	133	0	21	25	3	0	0	156100	42%	0%	0%	58%	4	0	1	0	2	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock, crops & off-farm business	566	48	0	0	16	0	0	37	56000	0%	0%	0%	100%	5	3	2	1	1	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	
Extensive livestock, rent & wage	242	33	0	0	5	0	0	30	31000	32%	0%	0%	68%	5	0	3	2	1	Beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction	



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8.3 Dairy-centred Simple Reproduction

There are six farms (constituting 37,5% of 16 simple reproducers) in which simple reproduction is centred on dairy farming. Central to dairy-centred simple reproduction in the area of study is access to public-private agricultural subsidies geared to support black dairy farmers. This is essentially a form of contract farming involving sales to a milk-processing company (Nestle), under the auspices of a milk-commodity association (Milk South Africa) which lobbies the state on behalf of black dairy farmers. Given this support and guaranteed monthly milk-sales income, the simple reproduction of dairy enterprises is cushioned against the risks of milk production which have winnowed out many dairy farmers in the area of study. Accordingly, dairy-centred simple reproducers have the highest, annual, gross farm-income amongst the simple reproducers in the sample (see Table 8.1 above).

Dairy-centred simple reproducers have the highest, annual, gross farm-income (mean = R404 040), in contrast to crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers (mean =R137 233,33) and beef-centred simple reproducers (R101 450). This is attributable to their guaranteed monthly milk-sales income plus the public-private agricultural subsidies in which these dairy-centred simple reproducers anchor their milk production. (However, it may be misleading to assume that beef-centred simple reproduction is the least remunerative, given the costs of dairy, and crop-livestock simple reproduction, which may have lower profit margins than beef-centred simple reproduction on the basis that the latter could be spending less in the simple reproduction of their beef-cattle herds, than the former who may be forced to spend more on inputs.)

Furthermore, these subsidies have spill-over effects on other smaller-scale farm enterprises on the same farm. For example, as shown in Table 8.1, a dairy-centred simple reproducer may own some beef cattle or sheep as well and these enterprises are often reproduced in part through investing some milk sales proceeds. The same dairy-centred simple reproducer may also be renting out some proportion of arable land to acquire some cash (liquid capital) in order to aid the simple reproduction of the farm enterprise as a whole. Furthermore, the same dairy-centred simple reproducer may have a proportion of arable land cropped with yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy-cow feeding during winter months (see Vignette 7 below).

Dairy-centred simple reproducers tend to employ more labour (a mean of 2,83 workers) than crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers (a mean of 1,67 workers), as well as beef-centred

simple reproducers (a mean of 1,75 workers). This is attributable to the nature of dairy farming which demands more hands in the milking process. In terms of unemployed kin, no clear pattern could be determined other than the tendency of lower unemployment amongst the simple reproducers than the impoverished landed property described in the previous chapter.

However, for all six dairy-centred simple reproducers, agricultural income derived from milk sales covers the costs of milk production by way of purchasing necessary veterinary and supplementary feed for the dairy-cow herd, as well as towards the monthly payments of workers, thanks to the monthly milk-sales income under contract with a milk-processing company. The latter provides various forms of public-private subsidy together with the Ministry of Agriculture and this has been the case for at least the past ten years in the area of study. These subsidies have allowed the electrification of farms, the construction of milking parlours, and sponsorship of dairy cows, as well as weekly farm-gate milk collection by the milk-processing company. The centrality of dairy production for the dairy-centred simple reproducer must be seen in light of this public-private subsidy which provides an enabling environment for the less important farm enterprises to at least function, for example, the combination of dairying with small herds of beef cattle or sheep, whilst the arable land is rented out to other fragments of agrarian capital.

Cumulatively, agricultural capital derived from milk sales, as well as farm-rental income from renting out some proportion of arable land and intermittent beef cattle or sheep sales combine towards the simple reproduction of dairy-centred simple reproducers. This depends, however, on the material conditions of immediate kin, either exerting pressure on the family farm for their own social reproduction in cases characterised by off-farm unemployment, or freeing it for reinvestment of agricultural capital in farm production in cases characterised by access to off-farm employment by immediate kin who can fend for themselves off-farm and thus more likely to make future investments in increasing the scale of farm production.

Dairy farming involves a complex and demanding farming system and it is no easy task to engage in it successfully; this is evidenced by the fact that many former dairy farmers have been winnowed out of dairy farming in the area of study and in many other parts of the country (see Bunce 2018). The dairy-centred simple reproducers on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State may be able to continue simply reproducing themselves, thanks to the cushioning support they receive through a public-private partnership. However, they face uncertainties with regard to their future as dairy farmers and this is manifested in their mixed-farming

strategies which also involves other livestock types such as cattle and sheep, whereas some combine this with crop production. We may thus see a gradual process of specialisation in dairy farming taking place for a few dairy-centred reproducers, especially those able to muster off-farm capital resources to aid farm capitalisation through increasing the quality and quantity of dairy cows. However, chances of the latter accumulation path are slim given the risks and uncertainty associated with milk production. So, what is perhaps more likely to happen is that the current dairy-centred simple reproducers may gradually become crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers, or beef-centred simple reproducers, given the low levels of risk in these endeavours.

8.3.1 Contract farming strategy for dairy-centred simple reproducers

The type of partnerships that dairy-centred simple reproducers have entered into with a milk-processing company can be described as contract farming. However, their crop production, for example, yellow-maize production for processing into silage for dairy-cow feeding, is not arranged on a contract farming basis for crop production they hire localised soil preparation and planting-services companies. It is only milk production that occurs under contract. As we have seen above, these milk production contracts rest upon state subsidies since they are public-private partnerships. Without state support, these milk-contract schemes would have probably disappeared by now, as have many other dairy farmers in the area of study. The wider implication of the contract-farming strategy for dairy-centred simple reproducers in the area of study is that where state subsidy is evident, farm production can be stabilised, and accumulation from below can unfold from within the ranks of simple reproducers, as will be seen in the next chapter, whereby some accumulators have milk production under this type of public-private partnership as their pillar of strength and main accumulation strategy. Contract farming with regard to crop production is dealt with in the next section.

8.4 Crop-/livestock-centred Simple Reproduction

Only four simple reproducers (or 25% of this category) were found to be engaged in crop production combined with livestock farming. Crop production in the area of study requires substantive capital investments, for example in the hiring of service companies for soil preparation, planting, harvesting and transportation of crops to marketing agribusiness companies. This includes additional costs for inputs such as seed, fertiliser and other chemicals, as well as fuel costs for the services rendered by the services companies in addition to hiring

costs. Some farmers own some of the crop-production machinery, such as tractors and ploughs, but these are often second-hand items. For example, Table 15 (entitled farm capitalisation and mechanisation differentiation) in Chapter Six, illuminates some of these dynamics of farm capitalisation and attendant class differentiation which shows ascending investment in farm machinery (tractors, trucks, ploughs) from the lowest to the upper stratum of the farmers in the sample. For example, some of those farmers on upward trajectories of accumulation described in the next chapter were found investing in newer farm machinery and also expanding the scale of arable land under crop production. The incapacity of most farmers in the area of study to produce crops given their lack of capital is the main reason that many rent out their arable land and focus on less capital-intensive farm enterprises, such as low-input livestock production.

As seen in Table 8.1 all simple reproducers in the sample farm with livestock and this includes crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers. In the area of study, mixed-farming systems are common, particularly combinations of maize and beef production. As described in Chapter Five, cattle often feed on post-harvest maize-stalk residue and this includes cattle owned by those renting out arable fields the latter also benefit from post-harvest cattle feeding on maize-stalk residue.

Table 8.1 shows that crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers derive greatest proportions of their gross farm income from crop production (mean = 69%), followed by farm-rental income (mean = 19%), and then livestock-sales income (mean = 12%). These are fluid combinations in a dynamic mixed-farming system with seasonal fluctuations. For example, the number of livestock sold in a given season may differ from the previous one and the proceeds from livestock sales may mediate the tension between the social reproduction needs of immediate kin in the household and the simple reproduction of the family farm. The abbreviated case studies presented below provide further details about crop types and the amount of income they bring in as well as their costs.

8.4.1 Contract farming strategy for crop-/livestock centred simple reproducers

Crop production necessarily involves the use of expensive machinery and equipment, and the availability of capital for their acquisition or renting-in is in scarce supply. Contract crop

farming arrangements are very scarce, given their damaged reputation in the area of study²³ (see Chapter Four), unlike dairy production, which is anchored in a public-private partnership type of contract farming. Nonetheless, in addition to the milk production contract-farming partnership between dairy farmers, the milk-processing company and the state, there are also contract-farming arrangements involving crop production. These are mainly public-private partnerships between land beneficiaries, agribusiness and the state, particularly supported through recapitalisation funding from the state. These, as in the case of milk-production contract schemes described in the previous section, rest upon state and private sector subsidies. Pure contract farming arrangements tend to be very rare in the area of study only one farmer was found engaged in such and, ironically, is involved in a legal dispute with an agribusiness company²⁴.

This invokes a local narrative (see footnote 20) about an agribusiness company called Afgri which once deserted the farmers in the area of study without paying due dividends or fulfilment of the requirements of the contract. Consequently, the majority of farmers in the studied sample prefer to lease out their arable fields, instead of producing crops under contract, given the damaged reputation of such contracts and the fear of contract farming that this has generated. Hopefully these findings help to answer some of the questions raised by Land Bank agents in one of the researcher's seminars at University of Western Cape in 2017, regarding the reasons



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23 In the area of study, contract farming has gained a negative reputation, given the experiences that local farmers have had with Afgri. According to research respondents, many farmers produced crops, particularly maize and beans, under contract with Afgri. However, in one season, Afgri apparently did not meet their payment obligations owed to farmers. Furthermore, in at least one case there was a legal dispute between a farmer and a grain processing company, Agrico, during the time of fieldwork in 2016. Nonetheless, the most sustainable form of contract farming in the area of study is that between the dairy-centred simple reproducers and a milk-processing company described in this chapter. Local farmers do sometimes experiment with this or that other type of contract farming but the local experience is that these are laden with conflictual relations between farmers and contract companies, with the exception of the dairy public-private partnership, probably for the state subsidies involved, which may mediate tensions between dairy farmers and the milk-processing company. For example, the milking parlours sponsored by the state have contributed significantly to milk quality, a critical component in the sustainability of the contract.

²⁴ The researcher referred this particular farmer to the Legal Resource Centre for legal support but did not follow this up.

behind the prevalence of land leasing and a generalised non-participation in contract farming arrangements in the area of study. Nonetheless, the Land Bank itself has recently become involved in at least one contract farming partnership with a land reform beneficiary and an agribusiness company in the area of study, in a partnership financed by recapitalisation funding (see Vignette 16 in Chapter Nine). However, a narrow focus on crop production, instead of also considering livestock production in an area of study characterised by mixed farming, is an area where the Land Bank should seek improvement, given that its support is much needed by differentiated farmers in the area of study.

8.5 Beef-centred Simple Reproduction

Altogether, a total of six beef-cattle-centred simple reproducers were found in the area of study, with cattle herd sizes showing a mean of 47 head, a minimum of 27 head, and a maximum of 133 head. Within these six beef-cattle-centred simple reproducers, a total of four farmers were found combining beef-cattle production with rental income from renting out their arable land. For the latter, access to farm-rental income is crucial for the simple reproduction of their beef-cattle herds, for it can go a long way to help with purchasing of veterinary products and supplementary feeds, or can further go towards footing the wage bill of the herder. The remaining two beef-cattle-centred simple reproducers do not rent out their arable land, seemingly owing to their access to a relatively wider base of off-farm income, as compared to their counterparts who are forced to rent out their arable land in order to get access to liquid capital. This wider access to off-farm income enables simple reproduction of the farm enterprise, for it caters for the social reproduction needs of the family as a whole, at least the immediate kin, who can fend for themselves from off-farm employment without exerting much pressure on the family farm to support family members.

Analysis of the beef-centred simple reproducers allows glimpses of the potential for accumulation to take place in some cases, particularly through livestock herd expansion, especially amongst those with beef-cattle herd sizes of 50 head and above. However, their renting out of arable land illuminates room for further livestock expansion, perhaps to the point of renting-in grazing land, as we shall see with regard to the beef-centred accumulators described in the next chapter. Nonetheless, there is no Chinese wall between successful simple reproduction and accumulation; the boundary is porous and can fluctuate from one season to another, depending on specific circumstances such as degrees of access to off-farm income and the tensions between successful simple reproduction and social reproduction of immediate kin.

A total of five out of six beef-centred simple reproducers documented in this chapter rent out their arable fields. Farm-rental income partially resolves the tension between social reproduction of the household and simple reproduction of the farm enterprise in these cases the simple reproduction of beef-cattle herds. This is more effective in households with access to off-farm income such as social grants or wages, especially on the part of the main farmer who can direct off-farm income towards the needs of social reproduction, whilst farm-rental income is reinvested in the family owned livestock herd through purchasing veterinary and animal feed products, borehole and fence maintenance, as well as payment of the herder(s). This could enable the expansion of the cattle herd size in the long run, as long as the social reproduction needs of the household do not exert much pressure on the capacity of the farm enterprise to reproduce itself. Should the latter be to the contrary, then livestock herds can shrink through emergency sales for social reproduction, as we saw in the previous chapter.

Some beef-centred simple reproducers have diversified from mixed crop and livestock farming systems, to solely livestock production, whereby arable fields are converted into grazing pastures. It seems the ultimate aim of beef-centred simple reproducers is the gradual expansion of their beef-cattle herds, and thus improve their prospects for accumulation from below. This is expressed through gradual and contingent expansion of their beef-cattle herds, sometimes without selling any animals in a given year. This is more pronounced in households with access to significant off-farm income to aid their social reproduction without much pressure to sell livestock through emergency sales for survival. It is the latter who are more likely to accumulate from below through cattle-herd expansion in the near future. This may be compounded by off-farm income investments by immediate kin with shares in family owned cattle herds. These off-farm income investments may soon evolve from casual-herder payments to substantive investments of loans or (early) retirement packages in expanded livestock reproduction (see Vignettes 11 and 12).

Beef-centred simple reproducers own more beef cattle (mean = 62) than the crop-livestock simple reproducers (mean = 31,33), and dairy-centred simple reproducers (11,83). They also tend to sell more animals and thus derive the greatest proportion of their gross farm income from beef-cattle sales. The most frequent buyers of their livestock are individuals linked to the weekend ceremonial market (e.g. for weddings, funerals and sports derbies) since this is the most convenient way to sell their cattle as they do not have to bear the transport costs, in contrast to selling livestock in auction sales of nearby towns.

There are also individual buyers, linked to feedlots, which go from farm to farm purchasing cattle for fattening purposes in order to sell at a later stage. Beef-cattle sales income is typically combined with farm-rental income for the beef-centred simple reproducer, with the exception of one case where arable land is not leased out. This is within a context of relative access to off-farm income on the part of all 16 of the simple reproducers described in this chapter, which mediates the tension between social reproduction of immediate kin and simple reproductive capacity of the family farm. This is in contrast to a relatively high degree of unemployment amongst immediate kin of an impoverished landed property described in the previous chapter. However, there is internal variation of the degree of access to off-farm sources of income within the simple reproducers and generalised access to off-farm sources of employment is only a common characteristic.

In an attempt to illuminate long-term livelihood trajectories, the next section provides an outline of the economic history of the simple reproducers described in this chapter.

8.6 The Economic Histories of Simple Reproducers

Table 8.2: Income source prior to farming and year of farm settlement (n=16)

Year of settlement	Income source of household head prior to farming							
	Farm worker/labour tenant	General dealer	Small-scale brick industrialist	Small-scale capitalist farmer	Taxi owner	Bureaucrat	Other businesses in Qwaqwa	Unskilled permanent work
1988	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1989	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
1990	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
1997	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
2001	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2006	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
2012	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	4	3	2	1	1	1	1

The pattern illuminated by Table 8.2 is that land redistribution in the area of study has not overwhelmingly favoured the elite, as is often portrayed in the national land reform debate. Instead, differentiated petty commodity producers and small-scale capitalists, as well as fragments of the working class, were key beneficiaries in addition to elites proper, such as state bureaucrats. In other words, the simple reproducers discussed in this chapter share a common history of being petty commodity producers, small-scale capitalist endeavours, or members of classes of labour (Bernstein 2004). In only a few cases is this not so, for example, where a former state bureaucrat purchased land privately in 2008, reflecting the apparent generalised interest of the black middle class in obtaining land in the area of study and beyond, often through private purchase and with the aid of the state (Mtero et al. 2019).

The next section takes the reader through the abbreviated case studies of the simple reproducers described in this chapter which are rooted in the economic history summarised above.

8.7 Abbreviated Case Studies of Dairy-centred Simple Reproducers

8.7.1 Vignette 7

Farmer M was renting land for livestock grazing from a distressed black farmer in the area of study in 2005 when she was approached by a white landowner who was looking for a potential buyer for his 107 ha farm on the other side of the fence. At the time Farmer M had a general dealership (a small shop) in a nearby township, Tshiame, in which her investment in farming on rented land was anchored. She closed shop when she was granted the 107 ha farm through an LRAD grant in 2006 and swiftly moved onto the farm to farm on a full-time basis. Her entrepreneurship had the support of her husband, a former bus driver who is now deceased. She continued farming and funded the education of her offspring through high school and tertiary education the 23 year-old daughter was in college in Pretoria in 2016 and her brother, aged 30, was at a technical skills college at the time, an indication of their mother's efforts in investing in their education.

As is the case with many other farms in the area of study, Farmer M's farm is a mixed-farming enterprise, involving both livestock (beef and dairy cattle) and crop production (maize and dry/sugar beans). The dairy herd of 20 cows is the main farm enterprise which had an annual gross income of R310 860 in 2016. As with other dairy-centred simple reproducers, income from milk sales is crucial in the simple reproduction of the farm enterprise as a whole. The latter is anchored in subsidies from the state and private sector, as is the case with other dairy

farmers on redistributed land in the area of study. Furthermore, milk production occurs throughout the year, albeit with some adjustments with changing seasons, unlike crop production which is largely seasonal.

In 2016, Farmer M had 14 ha cropped with sugar beans which she sold for R180 000 at a small grain-processing company in Ladysmith, some 100 kilometres away. She also sold yellow maize from 12 ha for R120 000 to the same company. Her total gross farm income for the same year was R610 860, which signifies her location in the upper stratum of simple reproducers (when internal differentiation is taken into account).

Her farming enterprise was stable at the time of research in 2016, thanks to the centrality of her dairy-production enterprise, a pillar of strength for dairy-centred simple reproducers. However, unfortunately, Farmer M succumbed to cancer and died in 2017. It is therefore unclear what her offspring are going to do with the farm; perhaps they will rent it out whilst they recoup and raise funds, possibly through securing off-farm skilled work and later return to investing in the family farm as is often the case with second-generation farmers in the area of study.

8.7.1.1 The wider significance of Vignette 7. The wider significance of this case is that Farmer M emerged from the ranks of petty commodity production, manifested in the general dealership she operated concurrently with renting grazing land for her cattle when she was found by a white landowner who was willing to sell his farm through the land reform programme. Her swift relocation onto the farm as soon as the state paperwork was complete further illustrates her entrepreneurial spirit, which was further demonstrated by making sure that she joined the group of dairy farmers producing milk under contract for Nestle. Her becoming a dairy-centred reproducer was a deliberate strategy to gain access to agricultural subsidies, allowing for the electrification of her farm, the building of a milking parlour and dairy-cow sponsorship. The central role of milk production enabled her to invest in other marginal farm enterprises, such as producing grain for processing into silage in order to feed dairy cows, as well as for sale. Her plans to increase the size and quality of her dairy-cow herd were interrupted by her death in 2017.

8.7.2 Vignette 8

Farmer B is a second-generation farmer supplying milk under contract to Nestle. His family farm is 520 ha in size, divided into 200 ha of arable land and 320 ha of grazing land. He rents

out 100% of the farm's arable land at R490 per hectare. The renters produce maize which is compatible with dairy farming since it allows winter feeding on maize residues after harvesting. His dairy herd of 15 cows produces approximately 4 000 litres per month. This amounts to a monthly income of around R18 840, depending on milk quality and quantity. The dairy enterprise has been crucial in the stable simple reproduction of the farm enterprise as a whole over time, thanks to subsidised milk production under contract in a public-private partnership involving Nestle, Milk South Africa, and the Department of Agriculture. Farmer B combines dairying with a very small number of beef cattle (n=3), and goats (n=3), using hired labour for all three livestock enterprises. These very small numbers of livestock demonstrate Farmer B's strong reliance on livestock sales for purposes of securing social reproduction since he has no other off-farm source of income.

He combines milk and marginal livestock production with the renting out of arable fields for rental income. These combinations are the ingredients of the simple reproduction of his dairy-centred family-farm enterprise as a whole and also go towards his family's social reproduction. Farm income underpins the social reproduction of his family and this is probably the main reason the farm enterprise does not show signs of accumulation beyond simple reproduction. Simple reproduction in this case has been anchored in subsidised milk production which has enabled Farmer B to access a sponsored milking parlour, dairy cows, and weekly farm-gate collections of milk. Without subsidised milk production, Farmer B's family farm would not have been able to reproduce as capital at the same scale of production since he has no other source of off-farm income in which to anchor farm production.

Farmer B inherited his family farm from his deceased father who had purchased the farm through a Land Bank loan in 1997, almost a decade later than his peers, the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms. Farmer B has a similar family history to that of the original New Qwaqwa Farms beneficiaries they also ran a small-scale enterprise during the 1980s, a small-scale brick construction business from which his father diversified into farming by way of purchasing the farm through a Land Bank loan. Farmer B's sister, a schoolteacher, would have probably raised funds towards farm investment from her teaching salary but she is excluded from the family farm which was inherited by her brother. This shows the barriers to entry imposed by the patriarchy and experienced by female farmers involving inheritance of property by only male offspring,

8.7.2.1 The wider significance of Vignette 8. The wider significance of this case is that it illuminates the centrality of subsidised dairy production combined with farm-rental income in the simple reproduction of these kinds of family farm enterprise. This unfolds within a context of limited off-farm capital resources on the part of Farmer B, which is further constrained by exclusionary, patriarchal practices which bar his sister from any possible investment of her off-farm income into the family farm. Prospects for accumulation from below are slim for Farmer B, given the pressure of social reproduction exerted by his immediate kin. This puts pressure on the capacity of Farmer B to invest his farm-rental income and the proceeds from milk sales into expanding the scale of production instead, farm-rental income and what is left of milk-sales income after paying the wages of workers and meeting the costs of milk production, is consumed by his household. Indeed, as Fine and Saad-Fihlo (2010) state, simple reproduction occurs when the capitalist consumes surplus value and reinvests capital at the same scale of production.

The next section takes the reader through two vignettes of crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers.

8.8 Abbreviated Case Studies of Crop-/livestock-centred Simple Reproducers

8.8.1 Vignette 9

Farmer X purchased a 232 ha farm from a distressed land beneficiary in 2007 with the help of a loan from the Land Bank. The farm was auctioned by the Land Bank as a result of the failure of the previous owner to settle his debt. Farmer X, who had until then been trading in coal, used the opportunity to successfully negotiate with the Land Bank. He was following in the footsteps of his peers, the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms, after many years of renting grazing land from one of these beneficiaries while trading in coal on the side. As with his peers, his family history can be summarised as *from labour tenancy to petty commodity production and diversification onto redistributed land* (Chapter Four). He arrived in the Qwaqwa labour reserve in 1984 from a labour-tenant farm in Mpumalanga, leaving the graves of his forebears behind. He sold his inherited small herd of cattle and converted the proceeds into a small-scale coal-trading enterprise, the process described by Bank (1992, p. 13) as “from livestock to deadstock”, in relation to labour tenants who were able to leave labour-tenant farms with their livestock, often silently. It was indeed the Qwaqwa coal traders who sourced coal from Mpumalanga that inspired Farmer X to leave the shackles of labour tenancy. He made his

way to Qwaqwa, sold all his livestock and became a coal trader himself. He missed the opportunity of becoming a land beneficiary of New Qwaqwa Farms but later started renting grazing land from one of the beneficiaries, which inspired him to approach the Land Bank for a loan for purchasing his own farm. He forms part of the new landowners in the area of study who have recently purchased farms privately, outside of the land reform project. He is also part of the broader community of farmers who started off as graziers on rent on land reform farms or municipal commonage land, with the hope of owning land through land reform in future (see Atkinson and Ingle 2020).

In 2016, Farmer X had 20 ha of his 132 ha grain field cropped with sugar beans, whilst renting out 64 ha of his arable fields. He recently resorted to renting out arable land in order to access the crop production machinery belonging to the renter, after the bitter end to his contract farming arrangement with an agribusiness company. He was forced to find an alternative source of machinery in order to maintain the simple reproduction of his farm enterprise. He combines cropping with livestock production, which comprises a beef cattle herd of 49 head and 18 pigs, for which he employs two herders.

Combinations of arable-land rental income with intermittent livestock-sales proceeds as well as crop-sales income, are the key ingredients of the simple reproduction of Farmer X's family farm enterprise. He had a gross farm income of R204 000 in 2016 from these different aspects of his farming system. He is likely to remain renting out arable land as long as he has access to crop production machinery in order to produce crops on a smaller proportion of land, as this reduces the costs of crop production. Furthermore, those farmers renting in land typically produce maize, which is crucial for post-harvest livestock feeding, particularly on the maize-stalk residues.

8.8.1.1 The wider significance of Vignette 9. The wider significance of Vignette 9 is that it shows clearly how simple reproduction of the farm enterprises are sustained through a combination of crop production combined with livestock production employing hired herders. These dynamics are the key ingredients which have sustained simple reproduction over time ever since Farmer X purchased the farm in 2007. Furthermore, Farmer X's economic history as a petty coal-trader, and small-scale capitalist farmer, meant that he had some capital resources to invest in farm production, particularly livestock production which aided the simple reproduction of his family-farm enterprise.

One of Farmer X's two sons is in off-farm skilled employment and has a keen interest in the family farm he owns three cattle within the family herd of 49 head. He plans to retire into farming through investment of his retirement funds into increasing the scale of farm production, possibly by purchasing more cattle or expanding the scale of crop production. Should that happen accumulation from below could perhaps be unleashed, similarly to some of the cases described in Chapter Nine, where second-generation farmers invest (early) retirement packages into expanding the scale of farm production.

8.8.2 Vignette 10

Farmer V, a 79-year-old man, has not worked elsewhere since settling on his 274 ha farm in 1989. He has been farming on a full-time basis ever since. He is one of the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms on the basis of the small-scale trade operation (a general dealer) he owned, which meant he qualified for land when the opportunity presented itself during the late 1980s. Managing the family-owned general dealer was the main occupation of his deceased wife between 1972 and 1994. Profits thus accumulated were to be crucial in the education of their offspring who are currently subsidising the family farm in different ways (see below). After 30 years of farming, his farm enterprise can be characterised as centred on crop-/livestock-centred simple reproduction, given its combination of crop and beef-cattle production.

In 2016 Farmer V planted 27 ha of soya and owned 21 head of beef cattle. His gross farm income for the same year was R128 088 solely from crop production, as he did not sell any livestock that year. He combines farming with income from an old-age social grant which he uses for his social reproduction when combined with intermittent remittances from his adult offspring who are living and working off-farm. Two of the latter are in skilled employment (thanks to the farm income that funded their education) and may soon take early retirement to invest in expanding the scale of production through accumulation from below. Farmer V is a crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducer who has spent much of his time since 1989 on producing crops (maize, dry beans, wheat), combined with marginal livestock production. Over the years, especially owing to the withdrawal of state subsidies for crop production and the lack of off-farm capital resources, he has failed to accumulate from below and has thus remained at the same scale of production. The annual payments to service companies for the soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and transportation of crops are expensive and constrain Farmer V's farm enterprises' ability to accumulate from below.

Farmer V is nostalgic about the ‘good old days’ where his crop production enterprise was cushioned by state subsidies offered through the parastatal company, AgriQwa, which was dismantled in the mid-1990s. However, the major setback Farmer V has faced was the auctioning of his cattle and tractors by the Land Bank, in settlement of the loan he had taken towards purchasing the farm. Nonetheless, he survived this setback, remained in farming and did not sell his farm, as some farmers had to as a result of Land Bank repossessions. Another setback Farmer V has faced was the theft of 43 cattle from his farm; the problem of livestock theft in the area of study is a major constraint on the accumulation of capital from farming with livestock.

On the other hand, the family farm has successfully contributed to the social mobility of Farmer V’s off-spring, who are all in skilled, off-farm employment today. In his own words: “I had businesses and took some of my profits to fund the education of my children” (Farmer V, 22/07/2016). Their successful off-farm employment in skilled work reduces pressure on the family farm to feed more mouths, as these offspring can fend for themselves, unlike those offspring in agricultural households who are entangled in crises of social reproduction (Chapter Seven). Farmer V’s offspring are more likely to invest significantly in farm production in the near future, or even take early retirement into farming, thereby following in the footsteps of their peers who are some of the accumulators described in Chapter Nine. For example, one of his offspring, a police officer, has paid the costs of building the family farmhouse, currently valued at R90 000.

8.8.2.1 The wider significance of Vignette 10. Farmer V’s only daughter is a police officer in Gauteng and has recently built a farmhouse for her father at a cost of R90 000. Only one of Farmer V’s offspring does piece jobs for a living but he can fend for himself and does not exert pressure on the capacity of the family farm to reproduce as capital at the same scale of production. If Farmer V’s daughter is not excluded by her male siblings from the family farm on the basis of her gender, as we have seen in some of the cases reported in this thesis, she may also consider investing in farm production, or even taking early retirement to farm on a full-time basis, as described for some of her peers in Chapter Nine.

The next section takes the reader through vignettes of beef-centred simple reproducers.

8.9 Abbreviated Case Studies of Beef-centred Simple Reproducers

8.9.1 Vignette 11

Farmer A's spouse said that:

The cattle herd has been my bank all these years. I have been keeping my [preschool teaching] job all these years in order to save our cattle herd from [emergency] sales. My job enables me to buy groceries for myself and my husband who looks after the cattle. We have a beef-cattle herd of 33 head which was established through a R15 000 retrenchment package from AgriQwa which was given to all their former farm workers. We also received about four head of cattle from the state in the late 1990s and our herd has been growing ever since. I have also ensured that I purchase all the veterinary products to ensure the herd's reproductive health from my preschool teaching salary. I am about to retire and I'll use the retirement package towards keeping us alive so that we do not deplete the cattle herd through sales for our survival. (Farmer A's spouse, 15/12/2018)

Farmer A and his spouse are former farm workers who were allocated a portion (of 242 ha) of a redistributed farm in the early 2000s. Most of their farm is used for livestock production, with only 10 ha being arable land. Farmer A's spouse started a farm preschool for farm workers' children on the same farm on which they had lived and worked. She later moved her preschool to a township in Qwaqwa where she currently works, together with one of her daughters, aged 34. Both reside in Qwaqwa and make weekend trips to the family farm. Off-farm income from the pre-school teaching salary is what funds the social reproduction of this household and therefore insulates the family livestock herd from recurring emergency sales, unlike other former farm-worker households without access to stable off-farm income (see Chapter Seven).

Farmer A resides on the farm permanently, herding the family beef-cattle herd, whilst his spouse and one of their daughters work in the off-farm preschool. However, more recently, owing to ill health, Farmer A was assisted by a relative in the herding of livestock for a monthly wage of R800, which includes payments in kind such as food or a heifer. Casual workers are hired in peak livestock-maintenance times to help with tasks such as vaccination and dipping, the wherewithal for which is derived from the off-farm income of Farmer A's spouse.

Farmer A's other two daughters are away from the family farm most of the time one of them is married and living in Limpopo province, whilst the other is a schoolteacher, working and living in Qwaqwa. Their two sons are still university students, thanks to state-funded public education. This particular family jointly owns a beef-cattle herd of 33 head, thanks in large part to the off-farm income of Farmer A's spouse and two daughters.

Since they specialise in livestock production, this family leases out 4 ha of arable land to a neighbouring black farmer for R10 000 per season and then uses the rental income for fence maintenance, a task that is often done by household labour during school holidays. Farmer A regrets his incapacity to produce crops, and thus the renting out of arable land. In his own words:

If only the dry beans on the arable land rented out belonged to me. I'm renting out arable land because I do not have a tractor [nor capital to hire grain production machinery]. If I had my own tractor, I would be producing maize, dry beans, and pumpkins to supplement the livestock enterprise. (Farmer A, 25 April 2016)

In 2016, the Farmer A household sold five head of beef cattle at a livestock auction sale in Harrismith and received R21 000 worth of proceeds but the main markets for his livestock are informal, weekend ceremonial markets.

8.9.1.1 The wider significance of Vignette 11. The wider significance of this case is that it is a good illustration of the role of off-farm capital in funding the simple reproduction of the beef-cattle herd. Without off-farm income, this family farm would probably be unable to simply reproduce itself as capital and would be probably in the same plight as the farmers described in Chapter Seven. Underpinning their existence is the off-farm income from Farmer A's spouse, earned from her teaching job which has formed a buffer against livestock sales, unlike in other former farm-worker households without access to off-farm income of similar magnitude who are forced to make use of emergency sales of livestock for social reproduction.

As the opening quote of this vignette illuminates, off-farm income has funded the social reproduction of this particular household and thus protected the livestock herd from emergency sales for survival (social reproduction), enabling their beef-cattle-centred family farm to reproduce itself over time.

The reference to livestock as “a bank” in the quotation at the beginning of this vignette reveals that off-farm income has been invested in livestock over time through the purchasing of veterinary products, supplementary feed and other ingredients that helps to achieve the simple reproduction of the family beef-cattle herd, including the costs of hired labour. This is supplemented by rental income from renting out arable land which is used for farm maintenance, such as funding the purchasing of fencing material and payment of casual labour hired to supplement family labour in fence maintenance.

8.9.2 Vignette 12

“I sell a beast in order to purchase veterinary products and other supplements such as salt licks for the remaining herd” (Farmer C, 15 December 2018).

Farmer C is a 78-year-old widowed man, a former farm worker and current beneficiary of a portion of the same farm on which he had lived and worked as a labour tenant. His family farm is 211 ha in size and is used as a livestock farm, carrying a herd of 50 cattle, herded by a resident immigrant worker from Lesotho who is paid R2 700 per month, including payments in kind and food.

Farmer C has 5 adult offspring living and working in off-farm skilled jobs which partly explains the presence of a herd of 50 head of beef cattle on the family farm, paid for in part from their investments which include remittances for their father’s groceries and the *bakkie*/pick-up truck that he drives. The latter was purchased by his only daughter, who works as a skilled worker for Spoornet in Johannesburg.

Only one of Farmer C’s offspring is unemployed and is more of a burden to his siblings than he is to his father and the family farm. For example, when Farmer C sold two beasts from the beef cattle herd in 2016, the proceeds went mostly towards meeting the costs of repairing his *bakkie* rather than anything else, since the payment of the herder is sustained largely by off-farm income (in the form of remittances from his offspring in off-farm skilled employment, sometimes combined with Farmer C’s old-age social grant).

8.9.2.1 The wider significance of Vignette 12. The wider significance of this case is that it illuminates the importance of skilled, off-farm employment within a relatively larger household, the income of which contributes towards a wider pool of resources (including the main farmer’s old-age social grant) used for farm investments, in this case, in a beef herd of 50 head of cattle. This is manifested in combinations of off-farm income used to help the pay the herder’s wage, as well as the purchase of livestock veterinary products. This pool secures the simple reproduction of the family farm enterprise. As in some cases described above, the offspring of Farmer C are more likely to become second generation farmers, coming into agriculture with off-farm capital from resignation or early retirement packages which is often evident in the cases of accumulators described in Chapter Nine. Should that happen, accumulation from below through livestock expansion could be unleashed beyond current simple reproduction of the beef-cattle enterprise at the same scale of production.

8.10 Simple Reproduction on Redistributed Land and Beyond: Prospects for Accumulation From Below

Some farm enterprises do not succeed in increasing the scale of their production and simply reproduce themselves on the same scale of production as before. These are typically former petty commodity producers and other small-scale capitalist endeavours which were initially on upward trajectories of accumulation but have downscaled over time, partly owing to the withdrawal of state agricultural subsidies in the mid-1990s and other determinations such as relative unemployment amongst immediate kin (especially in cases with younger offspring who had been in school in the 1990s) and lack of off-farm income to invest in farm production. Farm-rental income from arable land, although insignificant in relation to increasing the scale of farm production in a process of capital accumulation, thus became a key ingredient in the simple reproduction of livestock enterprises. On the other hand, there are former farm-worker households amongst the simple reproducers whose immediate kin have gradually climbed the ladder of social mobility since land allocation through obtaining skilled off-farm jobs from which off-farm income insulates the simple reproduction of farm enterprises and thus easing the tension between social reproduction of immediate kin and the simple reproduction capacity of the family farm. These households could begin to gradually accumulate capital from below, especially if supported by the state or if mustering significant off-farm capital resources for increasing the scale of farm production.

The 16 agricultural households categorised as simple reproducers are able to reproduce themselves as small-scale capitalist farms, given their access to differentiated degrees of various, intersecting income sources, such as public-private subsidies (for the few dairy-centred simple reproducers), off-farm income sources (immediate kin's social grants and off-farm jobs), and farm-rental income. These differentiated income sources are invested in small-scale agricultural enterprises which have at their core the main agricultural enterprise (i.e. commodity specialisation) hence this study's sub-categories of dairy, crop/grain/livestock, and beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction.

Furthermore, unlike their counterparts in the category of impoverished landed property described in Chapter Seven, simple reproducers generally have lower rates of unemployment amongst their immediate kin, which translates to less pressure on the family farm to feed more mouths, thus freeing up agricultural income for reinvestments to maintain the same scale of production. However, these differentiated degrees of access to capital resources on the part of

simple reproducers are insufficient to enable expanded reproduction unless supplemented by massive capital injections such as investments of (early) retirement packages, similar to that achieved by some accumulators described in Chapter Nine. As some vignettes suggest, this may be the case in the near future as immediate kin retire from skilled employment to invest retirement funds into expanding the scale of farm production. This is more likely to take place given the successful examples discussed in Chapter Nine, as some family members have started taking early retirements, following in the footsteps of peers who have tested the water before them, often with success (Chapter Nine).

8.11 Theoretical Insights from Analysing Simple Reproduction on Redistributed Land

At the centre of simple reproduction strategies described in this chapter is a common characteristic of access to non-agricultural capital resources which are combined in different ways. These non-agricultural capital resources include farm-rental income, differentiated sources of off-farm income, and public-private subsidies. Without combinations of these non-agricultural capital resources, the agricultural households categorised as simple reproducers would most probably be categorised as an impoverished landed property, as described in Chapter Seven.

Access to farm-rental income has kept many of the simple reproducers going for at least the past 10 years or so. This rests upon farm size which underpins the magnitude of farm-rental income obtainable. Many of the simple reproducers have been renting out arable land for more than a decade, especially as a key strategy to settle debt (especially their Land Bank loans) whilst they focus on farming. By now, the reader may be asking why then those earning farm-rental income are not all categorised as belonging to a form of impoverished landed property. As described in the previous chapter, the category of impoverished landed property is a class category at the lower ranks of class differentiation. Indeed, the plight of the impoverished landed property is inseparable from a shared common history of farm work and the small farm size allocated to former farm worker households (Chapter Four). Against this backdrop, the magnitude of farm-rental income is determined by land size, whether farm rental is derived from renting out arable land or grazing land. To be sure, simple reproducers tend to have larger farm sizes (mean = 361,25 ha; median = 319,5 ha) than the impoverished landed property (mean = 320,17 ha; median = 237,5 ha), although there are many internal variations and some anomalies.

Furthermore, the researcher has shown that simple reproducers have a tendency to rely more heavily on off-farm income from immediate kin, in contrast to those categorised as impoverished landed property. This access to off-farm income on the part of immediate kin helps insulate agricultural income and, in some cases, farm-rental income, from the tensions of social reproduction on the part of immediate kin. Essentially, the agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction have kin who are in the middle class with stable off-farm jobs. Fragments of the middle class are indeed expected to accumulate from below in the absence of state agricultural subsidy in redistributive land reforms (Bernstein 2003, O’Laughlin 1996) and, where this is not achievable in the short term, they are better able to keep their agricultural enterprises at the same scale of production, as shown in this chapter.

The dairy-centred simple reproducers provide a lesson about the significance of access to agricultural subsidies in enabling the simple reproduction of the farm enterprise as a whole. This is of course, a mixed-farming environment, where all farmers in the area of study improvise to get by. However, without access to these public-private subsidies, the dairy-centred simple reproducers would have most likely been winnowed out of dairy farming by now, as occurred in the case of many of their neighbours in the area of study.

8.12 Class Politics of Simple Reproducers

The simple reproducers in the area of study are not organised into a political constituency and have no overt strategy to organise and overthrow the local elite fraternity which is in control of state agricultural subsidies. Instead, some of the simple reproducers are apolitical, and refrain from confronting the problem of elite capture of public goods, though they see it as one of the constraints on their accumulation efforts. This could be tactical on their part, so as to remain in good standing with the local political fraternity, for example, through yearly renewal of membership in the local farmers association, with the hope that someday a form of state subsidy may come their way. Their calculation is probably that as long as they demonstrate loyal to the local ruling fraternity through offerings of various sorts, they may receive some benefits. For example, encouraging the leadership to host Farmers’ Day meetings on particular farms is always beneficial to the host in a variety of ways. Sustained attendance of farmers’ day meetings by many of the simple reproducers can also be partly explained by their ability to transport themselves, an ability which comes at a cost which is not affordable on the part of many of the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction, as discussed in the previous chapter.

8.13 Conclusion

This chapter analysed agricultural households categorised as simple reproducers on the basis of their successful reproduction as small-scale capitalist enterprises on land reform farms. Simple reproducers are economically better off than those described in Chapter Seven as an impoverished form of landed property, given their access to a wider base of off-farm capital resources combined with agricultural income, including farm-rental income. Furthermore, they share a further advantage of immediate kin enjoying relatively high levels of off-farm employment which takes the pressure off family farm enterprises to feed more mouths, thus freeing agricultural income for reinvestment in simple reproduction. However, simple reproducers are not able to engage in expanded reproduction or the accumulation of capital because of the constraints they experience. However, the researcher has hypothesised that since many of the simple reproducers have at least one person who is immediate kin in off-farm skilled employment, she/he may consider mustering the capital resources to invest in farming or may take early retirement to invest in expanded reproduction. In other words, there is a chance that some simple reproducers may become able to begin to accumulate from below through access to off-farm capital resources or perhaps with state support.

In describing how simple reproduction is manifested on the land reform farms in the area of study, the researcher has distinguished between different simple reproduction strategies on the basis of the main commodities produced. For example, the researcher differentiates between dairy, crop-/livestock- and beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction. In the near future we may see a shift out of dairy and crop production, given the latter's capital intensiveness, towards beef-cattle-centred simple reproduction or expansion and accumulation, given the relatively low capital intensity of extensive cattle production in contrast to dairy and crop production. Furthermore, beef-cattle enterprises are more likely to thrive in the grassland biome of the area of study which is conducive to livestock production (Chapter Six).

In a nutshell, simple reproducers on land reform farms may transform into accumulators from below, if they can secure the investment of sufficient off-farm capital resources by immediate kin or some form of state support in the near or more distant future. On the other hand, we may also see some farmers opting for greater specialisation in dairy production, anchored in state subsidies and reinvestment of agricultural capital in the quantity and quality of dairy-cow herds.

CHAPTER 9

TRAJECTORIES OF ACCUMULATION ON REDISTRIBUTED LAND IN THE EASTERN FREE STATE

9.1 Introduction

Accumulation of capital takes place through the expanded reproduction of a capitalist enterprise with investment of a portion of profit back into the enterprise serving to increase its capacity to appropriate the surplus value created by labour, and thus its profits (Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010). Expanded reproduction tends to increase the scale and/or scope of production, at the expense of rival enterprises within the competitive markets of a capitalist economy. Accumulation from below denotes increasing success in these markets via investment of ‘blood and sweat’ capital (Zhang 2015) and is a possible path for small- and medium-scale capitalist enterprises or petty commodity production enterprises, with the latter sometimes operated by ‘working people’ (Shivji 2017) or ‘fragmented classes of labour’ (Bernstein 2004).

Accumulation from below can involve processes of competition within an economy governed by a variety of democratic states which (enthusiastically) enables, or does not constrain, capitalism from below by ordinary citizens of its social formation (Mamdani 1987, Byres 1986, Lenin 1977). In contrast, accumulation from above denotes deployment of extra-economic forces, including coercion and sometimes violence, in the accumulation of capital and sometimes of landed resources (Mamdani 1987). Accumulation from above can occur via the state or other local institutions such as chieftaincies, the party, the church, District Land Reform Committees or even democratically elected bodies such as local municipalities (*ibid.*). It is often the most vocal middle-class men who are able to accumulate from above in African contexts, particularly former freedom fighters as they transform into a (comprador) bourgeois elite (*ibid.*), especially in countries with recent (land) reforms, enabling the rise of the indigenous (petty) bourgeois elite following the latter’s seizure of the local state (*ibid.*, O’Laughlin 1996, Raftopoulos and Savage 2004).

There is no Chinese wall separating accumulation from below and from above (Mamdani 1987). It is often desirable for the one who accumulates from below to also seek to accumulate from above. There are neither morals involved nor working class sympathy, nothing but a

desire to accumulate capital on the part of capitalists, big or small, forced as they are by the ‘dull compulsion of economic forces’ to compete, innovate and expand or face elimination by more competent and efficient capitalists (Fine and Saad-Fihlo 2010, Choonara 2009).

This chapter analyses trajectories of accumulation which have been unfolding for the past three decades on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State. This is essentially a story of agricultural households categorised as accumulators, in contrast to those who simply use their improved access to land for expanding their social reproduction base (Chapter Seven) or the simple reproduction of their small-scale capitalist agricultural enterprises (Chapter Eight).

The chapter does not ignore apparent elite capture or processes of accumulation from above, tendencies that characterise the current conjuncture of the South African land reform process (Mtero et al. 2019). There are cases where extra-economic accumulation of wealth and mismanagement of public agricultural resources are observed on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State (Myburgh 2019). However, the researcher’s argument is that to reduce the trajectories of accumulation from below documented in this chapter simply to elite capture or accumulation from above would be misleading and disguise objective processes of class formation rooted in the economic histories of both non-agricultural and agricultural petty commodity producers as well as small-scale capitalist endeavours and their subsequent move into successful cases of land reform in South Africa.

It would be equally misleading to lose sight of the fact that within capitalism it is both desirable and often feasible for any producer of commodities, or for an aspirant bourgeoisie, to strengthen its prospects for the accumulation of capital through extra-economic relations with institutional power, which is through accumulation from above (Mamdani 1987). Processes of accumulation from below and above can be interrelated and are sometimes inseparable in historical trajectories of class formation which can be objectively discerned by the life-history method, especially when this is anchored in historical materialism (Chapters Three and Four). This perspective potentially sheds light on the class agenda of land reform which forms a key aspect of the current land reform debate in South Africa (Mtero et al. 2019). For example, through tracing the life histories of the main farmers researched in the study and collecting data on their households understood as fluid, though contradictory, social units, this chapter documents different trajectories of accumulation from below. These emerged out of a history of petty commodity production and other small- to medium-scale enterprises from the 1960s, prior to their subsequent diversification into farming on redistributed land when the opportunity

presented itself (Slater 2001, 2002). This economic history component is what separates the findings presented in this chapter from recent studies of beneficiaries of land redistribution in South Africa, e.g. those documented by Mtero et al. (2019).

The researcher argues here that although the targeting of land beneficiaries in the Eastern Free State had some elite capture connotations (i.e. a trajectory of accumulation from above), evident in the allocation of land to elites such as parliamentarians, supermarket and taxi owners (Murray 1996), many petty commodity producers and small-scale enterprise endeavours and other fragments of classes of labour (Bernstein 2004) were allocated land in the area of study from the late 1980s onwards. Their life histories reflect processes of successful accumulation from below and above (Chapter Four). These trajectories of class formation potentially strengthen the argument that land reform policy should target petty commodity agricultural producers and small-scale capitalist farmers on communal land in South(ern) Africa to realise their potential for accumulation from below (Cousins 2015, Neocosmos 1993).

The researcher argues that given their economic histories, the accumulators documented in this chapter were always more likely to become successful capitalist farmers and this is the main reason they were selected as land beneficiaries in the first place. The beneficiary selection process of the mid- to late-1980s targeted those with a solid economic footing (see Chapter Four). Of course, within the competitive markets of capitalism, some have not been as successful as others but, as shown in the preceding empirical chapters, this should not be seen as failure. Improved access to land, for classes of labour in particular, has widened the base of their social reproduction. The researcher argues that with the necessary agricultural state support or with the aid of off-farm income investments in expanded reproduction, the latter too could begin to accumulate from below (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

This chapter has seven components. The first section introduces five key trajectories of accumulation observed on land reform farms in the area of study. The second section outlines the intersections between mixed-farming systems, livelihoods and accumulation trajectories. The third section invokes the economic histories of the accumulators in an attempt to illuminate trajectories of accumulation from below and their intersections with processes of accumulation from above. The fourth section takes the reader through a set of abbreviated case studies to illuminate processes of accumulation from below and above. The fifth section synthesises the economic histories of the accumulators with the analysis of the contemporary dynamics of accumulation from below and above on redistributed land in South Africa. The sixth section

compares these findings to those of Mtero et al (2019), an important recent study. The seventh section concludes this chapter by discussing the class agenda of land reform in South Africa, a key issue focused on by Mtero et al. (2019).

9.2 Strategies of Accumulation by Beneficiaries on Land reform Farms in the Eastern Free State

It's either we expand production through renting in or purchasing more land. I have approached the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to get a farm and I'm also saving money in order to buy another farm. I want to at least raise a quarter of the purchase price in order to purchase land through Land Bank. Our growth depends on us getting more land. (Farmer BB 30/05/2016).

The above quote illuminates the desire of some land reform beneficiaries in the Eastern Free State to acquire more land in order to expand the scale of their farm production. The same farmer rents in arable land for crop production from neighbouring farmers. The major accumulation strategy deployed in the past by this farmer was the investment of his, as well as that of his spouse's, retirement package from off-farm skilled work into increasing the scale of crop and livestock production. This transformed their agricultural household from one in which simple reproduction was all that could be achieved, to one engaged in expanded reproduction which led to renting in more land and embarking on different strategies in order to acquire additional land.

The investment of retirement funds into farm production is part of five intersecting accumulation strategies found on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State. These are the investment of off-farm business capital in farm production, the reinvestment of agricultural capital, rent-centred accumulation, and state-funded accumulation. Central to these four accumulation strategies is the main strategy of expanding the scale of farm production and renting in land for expanded reproduction. This takes place in differentiated ways, for example through beef-cattle herd expansion and renting in of grazing land for the *beef-cattle-centred accumulator* and intensive mixed cropping which may include renting in of arable and grazing land for the *dairy-centred accumulator*, as well as intensive crop production and renting in of arable land for the *crop-livestock-centred accumulator*. However, some *crop-livestock-centred accumulators* do not rent in land since they have relatively larger farms (> 500ha). This question of farm size is at the centre of a localised politics of land allocation. In Chapter Four, the researcher has described the tendency for larger farms to be allocated to the local elite and their acquaintances this can be described as accumulation (of land) from above. However, this is not the end of the story, as the researcher has come across intersections of both accumulation from below and above, as well as accumulation from below proper.

Table 9.1: Accumulators on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State (n=15)

Farm size (ha)	Beef cattle (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Sheep (#)	Beef cattle sales (#)	Sheep sales (#)	Dairy cows (#)	Grain in 2014/2015 (ha)	Grain in 2015/2016 (ha)	Gross farm income in 2016 (R's)	Farm rental in gross farm income (%)	Crop sales in gross farm income (%)	Milk sales in gross farm income (R's)	Livestock sales in gross farm income (%)	HH size (#)	Social grants (#)	Off-farm jobs (#)	Jobless kin	Herders (#)	Accumulation strategy
1063	150	20	0	20	0	0	130	170	3396600	0%	88%	5%	6%	2	1	1	0	4	Crop-centred
900	20	0	40	10	0	0	432	430	3023850	1%	98%	0%	1%	5	2	2	0	1	Crop-centred
360	154	0	0	20	0	0	190	104	549000	0%	82%	0%	18%	7	3	2	0	2	Crop-centred
412	90	0	74	40	0	0	70	100	979000	0%	86%	0%	14%	5	1	3	2	2	Crop-centred
239	117	0	0	24	0	0	120	83	906000	0%	91%	0%	9%	8	0	4	3	1	Crop-centred
257	41	0	0	5	0	0	90	140	511000	0%	93%	0%	7%	4	0	2	0	2	Crop-centred
250	50	0	0	1	0	0	140	210	3293500	0%	100%	0%	0%	7	2	4	2	1	Crop-centred
251	277	20	20	40	0	5	54	82	902200	0%	45%	19%	36%	4	0	2	1	3	Crop-centred
272	4	0	0	8	0	0	80	160	1582500	0%	96%	0%	4%	3	1	1	1	1	Crop-centred
221	99	0	56	6	6	0	50	35	432000	0%	91%	0%	9%	7	0	3	0	3	Crop-centred
658	45	0	0	20	0	0	60	78	414800	0%	82%	0%	18%	6	0	3	2	1	Crop-centred
162	0	160	40	0	12	10	80	70	1347400	0%	0%	94%	6%	7	2	1	0	10	Dairy-centred
386	33	91	40	0	20	22	79	167	878340	0%	0%	90%	10%	4	2	0	0	4	Dairy-centred
750	550	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	176000	0%	0%	0%	100%	3	0	3	0	1	Beef-centred
271	190	0	41	15	15	0	0	0	108750	45%	0%	0%	55%	5	0	2	3	2	Beef-centred

The essence of Table 9.1 is that the accumulators derive most of their farm income from farm production rather than farm-rental income, in contrast to the agricultural households engaged in social reproduction and simple reproduction described in Chapters Seven and Eight. This illuminates the key feature of accumulators' sustained reinvestments of agricultural capital in farm production on a progressive scale.

Table 9.1 also shows that a total of 11 accumulators specialise in crop production combined with livestock production. We can categorise the latter as *crop-livestock-centred accumulators*. Some of the latter rent in arable land as part of their accumulation strategy, particularly those with smaller farms (< 500 ha). Farmer BB, the accumulator quoted above, forms part of the latter category.

A total of two accumulators can be referred to as *dairy-centred accumulators*, given their specialisation in dairy production within a mixed-farming system, in combination with crop, beef cattle, and sheep. In these cases, dairy farming, which rests upon subsidies attendant to contract farming, underpins all the other farm enterprises. For example, it is common for a dairy farmer to produce yellow maize for silage in order to feed dairy cows, or the farmer may use proceeds from milk sales to purchase veterinary products for sheep or beef cattle.

Dairy-centred accumulators also tend to rent in arable and sometimes grazing land for yellow maize production and dairy-cow grazing. These are seasonal dynamics, which fluctuate with circumstances one may pull out of renting in land since this involves contradictions such as high rent payments and uneven power relations, forcing this type of accumulator into a more intensive farming system which may include the conversion of a proportion of grazing land into arable land as a contingency measure, instead of renting in arable land on which to grow yellow maize for processing into silage in order to feed dairy cows.

The researcher did not find *sheep-centred accumulators*, which is unsurprising given the high rate of sheep theft in the area of study. Some farmers had thriving sheep enterprises in the past and many lost most of their sheep to theft or opted to sell the entire herd, whilst others still own sheep but not as the main farm enterprise.

A total of two accumulators can be referred to as *beef-cattle-centred accumulators* given their specialisation in beef-cattle production as their core accumulation strategy. These are large beef-cattle herd owners who often diversify out of grain/crop production and use the entire farm for grazing or may rent out some proportion of arable land and may also rent in grazing

land. Indeed, at least one beef-cattle-centred accumulator was found renting out arable land and simultaneously renting in grazing land for his large cattle herd.

These two beef-centred accumulators appear to be anomalies, for example, there is a single case of a 750 ha farm owned by a 70-year-old former supermarket owner who has benefited from accumulation from above in relation to the initial land allocation to the business elite (Chapter Four). The latter has accumulated 550 head of beef cattle on his farm, well above the recommended stocking rate; his argument for overstocking was that beef-cattle prices had fallen with the major drought of 2015 and he was therefore waiting for good market prices to return. Another reason for overstocking was an extra-economic one, because of his desire to build a church on the farm after selling all his beef-cattle herd as soon as prices improve. The building of the church resonates with this particular beef-centred accumulator's history of accumulation from above through the local Methodist Church, supported by the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association which has clearly shaped his accumulation path. For example, through the church this particular beef-centred accumulator was able to travel to the United States of America to study Brahman cattle breeding, a skill that is evident in his large beef-cattle herd. His farmhouse is decorated with photographs of his travels as well as his past business endeavours, such as supermarkets, liquor outlets and a feedlot in Qwaqwa, taken during the 1980s.

The second anomaly is the case of a 251 ha farm owned by an accumulator who rents in grazing land for his 277 head of beef cattle, some of which were obtained through extra-economic relations with institutional and political power (see Vignette 24). The local rumour is that some of the cattle within this 277 head beef-cattle herd belong to a controversial high-profile politician involved in one of the biggest sagas in the Free State province (Myburgh 2019).

The researcher argues that in the near future we may see many more *beef-cattle-centred accumulators* in the area of study since the *crop-livestock-centred accumulators* are more likely to abandon crop production and convert their farms into livestock ranches. This is because of the high costs involved in crop production which demands highly capitalised crop-production machinery which are not affordable to many; as well as the affordability of livestock production due to the latter's relative low-input character, as well as the compatibility of livestock with the local grassland biome (Chapter Six).

Furthermore, even the *crop-centred accumulators* know the importance of livestock in the area of study, as evidenced by the numbers of beef cattle owned and sold shown in Table 9.1 by the same *crop-centred accumulators*. For example, 100% of crop-centred accumulators sold varying numbers of beef cattle amounting to a total of 192 head in 2016. (My argument about the importance of livestock production in the area of study is perhaps best supported by research findings presented in Chapter Seven and 8, where crop production is the business of the least of farmers the majority specialise in beef cattle for social and simple reproduction).

The next section describes the intersections of mixed-farming systems, livelihoods, and accumulation strategies of the 15 agricultural households found on upward trajectories of accumulation in the area of study.

9.3 Intersections of Mixed Farming Systems, Livelihoods and Accumulation Strategies

Table 9.2: Livelihood and accumulation strategies on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State

Livelihood strategy	Accumulation strategy
Extensive livestock, rent & state pension*	Investment of retirement funds in livestock expansion & renting in grazing land
Mixed livestock, grain & off-farm business	Investment of retirement funds & agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & off-farm business	Investment of retirement funds & agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & social grant	Investment of retirement funds & agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & state pension	Investment of retirement funds & agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & state pension	Investment of retirement funds & agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & off-farm business	Investment of off-farm business capital in expanded reproduction
Mixed livestock, grain & off-farm business	Investment of off-farm business capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, rent, grain & social grant	Sharecropping, renting in grazing land & reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Mixed livestock, rent & grain	Sharecropping & reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, rent & grain	Sharecropping & reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction

Mixed livestock & grain	Reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Mixed livestock, grain & social grant	Reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, grain & social grant	Reinvestment of agri-capital in expanded reproduction
Extensive livestock, off-farm rental & private pension	Reinvestment of agri-capital in livestock expansion

*The state pension is mainly received by former civil servants. It typically involves a lump pension package and subsequent monthly stipends. It is much more lucrative than the social grant in that it can cater for the living expenses of the farm owner and can also pay the wages of the farm worker, thus freeing agricultural capital for reinvestment (see Section 9.3.1).

Chapter Five introduced the farming systems found in the area of study and emphasised the centrality of livestock production, which is often overlooked in the shadow of much-touted crop production in the South African land reform narrative. Subsequent chapters (Chapters Six to Eight) showed that massive grain/crop production is not a reality for the majority of agricultural households engaged in social and simple reproduction, given the unaffordability of the capital costs involved.

Grain and other crop production enterprises are the business of relatively few farmers in the area of study, namely the 11 crop-centred accumulators described in this chapter. These have the means, resources and capital to invest in grain and crop production. Most are in a position to hire service companies for soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and transportation of grain/crops to agribusiness silos in nearby small towns. Furthermore, some crop-centred accumulators have their own tractors and ploughs and at least one has his own old-fashioned dry bean/maize harvester which they use to save the costs of hiring farm equipment and to avoid the pain involved in waiting in long queues in order to hire a service company which may delay the planting and/or harvesting which constrains surplus value creation.

For example, the costs of grain/crop production for those farmers who possess a tractor and planting equipment include harvesting costs for hiring a combine harvester at least R600 per hectare (depending on the type of crop, for example, the harvesting of sunflower crops can be as high as R800 per hectare). The transportation of grain/crops to the nearest silos can cost around R190 per tonne but this is also influenced by the distance between the farm and nearest grain/crop silo; some transport companies charge higher costs per kilometre. Other hidden costs include inputs, for example diesel, seed, chemicals etc. The point is that only the crop-

centred accumulators can bear these costs but they also assist in sustaining their trajectories of accumulation.

On the other hand, there are a few farmers within this category of crop-centred accumulators who are well connected in political terms, with key actors in the local municipality and farmers' association who use these connections to access communally-owned high capacity grain/crop-production machinery. These machines are communally owned in the sense that when the state distributes them, it does so in the name of all black farmers on land reform farms in the area of study, with the idea that they are shared by the collective. It is the capture of this machinery by a few local elite farmers within the municipality and farmers' association which prevents other crop-centred accumulators, as well as all farmers in the lower ranks of class differentiation, from accessing the means to engage in crop production. This can be described as accumulation from above by a few elite farmers who capture public goods for their own expanded agricultural production, as evident in their relatively thriving grain and crop enterprises.

The following quotes from farmers in different class categories in the area of study encapsulate the extent and nature of accumulation from above dynamics, which are illustrated best by the maldistribution of 'communal' grain/crop-production machinery:

When Ace Magashule was the MEC for Agriculture [in Free State province] he arranged two tractors for us, a group of 25 farmers. We had to pay R130 in order to hire a tractor from that arrangement. But those farmers with bigger farms captured those tractors. We were paying but we still could not access the tractors; and I chose to drop out of that scheme and purchased my own tractor, even though it is a very old tractor. (Respondent 39, 14/06/2017)

The owner of Qwaqwa Stars [football team] gets everything for his farm near Van Reenen. It is the politically connected that get state support for farming. State support should come to us directly, not via farmer representatives. (Respondent 36, 26/04/2017)

AFASA leaders take everything for themselves. Every year they get [farming] inputs but do not redistribute to struggling farmers. (Respondent 30, 23/04/2017)

These quotes suggest that the two thirds of the sample of 62 farmers who are renting out their arable land to differentiated fragments of agrarian capital as the result of their lack of capital resources to engage in the production of grain/crops themselves, as well as those crop-centred accumulators who are excluded from the inner circle of politically-connected crop-centred

accumulators, could be in a much better economic position if they had access to these state agricultural subsidies. This possibility will be explored in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

From Table 9.2, five overlapping accumulation strategies can be discerned in an analysis of the varied and complex intersections between diversified farmer livelihoods and strategies to engage in expanded (agricultural capital) reproduction. However, as mentioned above, at the centre of these accumulation strategies is a key strategy of expanding the scale of farm production and renting in land this can take the form of increasing the area cropped with grain/crops through reinvestment of agricultural capital and subsequent renting in of arable land and/or reinvestment of agricultural capital in livestock expansion and subsequent renting in of grazing land. The next sections illuminate these accumulation strategies in the following order:

- i. Investment of retirement funds into farm production.
- ii. Off-farm business capital investment in farm production.
- iii. Arable land rental as an accumulation strategy.
- iv. Investment of agricultural capital in expanded reproduction.
- v. State funded accumulation: intersections of accumulation from below and above.

9.3.1 Investment of retirement funds into farm production

A total of six (or 40%) of accumulators (n=15) in the area of study have recently retired or taken early retirement packages, which enabled them to embark on upward trajectories of accumulation through investments of retirement packages into farm production, and subsequent reinvestments of agricultural capital in expanded agricultural production. Some of these accumulators are the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms (see Chapter Four) or their descendants, who have strategically diversified their livelihoods by retaining their family farms, often through marginal farming or simple reproduction, whilst they step out (Doward et al. 2015) to engage in off-farm, typically skilled employment, in order to return later in their adult lives by way of investments of (early) retirement funds into increasing the scale of farm production. However, within this accumulation strategy the researcher found at least one accumulator who had been renting agricultural land throughout his clerical white-collar job, who then successfully applied for a Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) state grant to purchase a farm and then took early retirement from his profession and farmed on a full-time basis. The latter is currently renting in more land for expanded grain/crop

production as part of his accumulation strategy. These dynamics also invoke what Murray (1980) termed the ‘developmental cycles’ of migrant workers, who relentlessly attempt to expand their livestock herds throughout their migrant work lives, returning home to Lesotho with retirement or retrenchment packages, which they invested in expanding their livestock herds.

Furthermore, what we can clearly observe from these dynamics of investments of retirement funds into farm production is the success of the black middle class in becoming accumulators within the broader South African programme of land reform. These dynamics are comparable to those identified in the research findings of a recent report produced by the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) of the University of the Western Cape, documenting off-farm capital investments into farm production by differentiated fragments of the black middle class (Mtero et al. 2019) these are success stories of the black middle class, which leaves us with lingering questions, as Mtero and colleagues correctly suggest, about the class agenda of land reform in South Africa.²⁵

The next section takes the reader through the second accumulation trajectory found in the area of study, the investment of off-farm business capital into farm production. The latter is significantly different from investments of retirement packages into farm production, in that the one who invests a retirement package into farm production has to wait for relative maturity of retirement funds before taking the risk of (early) retirement. However, at their core, these investment strategies both essentially involve off-farm capital being invested in farm production aimed at capital accumulation, whatever the source of these types of investments, whether off-farm business or retirement fund derived capital.

9.3.2 Off-farm business capital investment in farm production

A total of three (or 20%) of accumulators (n=15) have off-farm businesses from which significant capital is derived and directed towards farm production on an expanded scale. These accumulators appear to be diversifying their business portfolios which include other off-farm

²⁵ These broader dynamics of middle-class success within the ongoing land reform process in South Africa are elaborated upon in Chapter Ten.

enterprises. They are inseparable from those of the current black middle class who are investing off-farm capital into expanded farm production within broader South African land reform (Mtero et al. 2019). However, they are significantly different from those who have to wait for the maturity of their retirement funds in order to invest in expanded farm reproduction. Their upward trajectories of accumulation are thus not delayed by age.

For example, a middle-aged man and second-generation farmer with a medium-scale off-farm business, a *'tenderpreneur'* in South African political jargon, was found to be investing significantly in livestock production as an accumulation strategy. The latter illuminates trajectories of accumulation from below and above, partly through his own efforts, on the shoulders of forebears who had owned an off-farm business, together with a latter day political connection with the state as a service provider. Another example is illuminated in Vignette 14, also characterised by an economic history of accumulation from below and above on the part of forebears, which involved off-farm business capital combined with political prestige which has enabled the farmer to own one of the largest farms in the area of study (1 090 ha). Surplus value from the off-farm business was invested in the farm enterprise, firstly through the purchasing of a tractor in the early period of land allocation when very few farmers owned tractors, which further boosted his efforts at expanded reproduction.

9.3.3 Renting out arable land as an accumulation strategy

A total of three (or 20%) of accumulators (n=15) engage in land rental arrangements with other accumulators, who are typically white commercial farmers. At the centre of these land rental arrangements is a strategy to gain access to grain-/crop-production machinery (see Vignettes 23 and 24). This access to the grain production machinery of the farmer who rents in some of the land reform farm enables the *land rent-reliant accumulator* to have a significant proportion of their arable land under grain production, whilst the rest of their arable land is rented out to the owner of the grain-/crop-production machinery. Income from grain/crop production then becomes part of the gross farm income reinvested in grain/crop production (purchasing of inputs, diesel, etc.) as well as in livestock production (purchasing of veterinary products, supplementary livestock feed etc.), in mixed-farming systems. Indeed, the type of land rental engaged in by the land-rent-centred accumulator is significantly different from that entered into by those who can be seen as an impoverished form of landed property. The latter has relatively low negotiating power, for example in opting for the type of land-rental agreement entered into by the land-rent-centred accumulator which does not rest upon a market land-rental rate but the

simple renting out of a proportion of arable land for access to the renter's grain-/crop-production machinery to produce grain/crops on the remaining proportion of arable land.

This type of rental agreement has higher returns for the landowner than in cases where the land is merely rented out on the basis of some standard rental rate agreement. For many renters of arable land in the area of study, the type of land rental described here is not as desirable as renting in arable land at the lowest rate from an impoverished landed property or rich landlord with other off-farm business interests. For the renter of arable land, it makes more economic sense to rent arable land at market value, than to engage in a type of rent agreement described in this section. It seems those land beneficiaries on the upper stratum of class differentiation in the area of study are better able to negotiate better rental terms, instead of the mere renting out of arable land at market rate, as is the case with impoverished landed property.

9.3.4 Investment of agricultural capital in expanded reproduction

The majority of accumulators in the area of study invest some proportion of agricultural capital in expanded farm production but, as shown above, this is often anchored in some initial off-farm capital derived investments into farm production. However, a total of three (or 20%) of accumulators (n=15) were found reinvesting agricultural capital in expanded reproduction without combining this with off-farm capital sources. The latter's accumulation strategy has been, hitherto, reinvestment of agricultural capital in expanded reproduction over the past three decades, with varying levels of success but on a sustained upward trajectory of accumulation. For example, Vignette 15 documents a case where the initial off-farm investment in farm production has been sustained in the successful, though fluctuating reinvestment of agricultural capital in expanded farm production over the past 30 years.

9.3.5 State-funded accumulation

In as much as most accumulators benefit from state resources of various sorts in one way or another, there is at least one clear case where state funding has been received in greatest proportion in relation to other farmers, perhaps in quantities enough to raise suspicions about its legality. The farmer in point, as shown in Table 9.1, has 277 cattle, most of which are grazing on rented land on neighbouring farms. The local rumour is that there is suspicion that a high-profile ruling party politician owns cattle clandestinely grazing on rent on some of the farms in the area of study, however, this remains under researched. Of course, this would not be surprising if found to be true, given the extra-economic means deployed as a capital

accumulation strategy in ongoing South African land reform (Mtero et al. 2019), and the recent locally embedded political manipulation of the ministry of land and agriculture by this high profile figure of the ruling party (Myburgh 2019). This is not the only example of accumulation from above, however. As Vignette 31 shows, the local farmers' association has been used to siphon state funds and other state agricultural subsidies, to a few politically-connected farmers.

9.4 The Economic History of Accumulators

A life history approach (Oya 2007, Murray 2002) in analysing the farmers who were found on upward trajectories of accumulation reveals that most of their accumulation pathways can be described as accumulation from below. At a later stage, however, especially in cases with well-articulated upward trajectories of accumulation, such class formation trajectories tend to intersect with tendencies of accumulation from above. Successful accumulation from below tends to enable accumulation from above, in that the one who has accumulated from below is more likely to have the economic muscle required to knock on the doors of state coffers and obtain agricultural subsidies. It is also common for state agents to seek the most successful farmers to be the recipients of state support.

The researcher has traced the economic trajectories of the studied farmers from the 1960s onwards (see Chapter Four) and has shown that many of them were originally differentiated petty commodity producers and other elites who diversified into farming on redistributed land when the opportunity presented itself from the mid to late 1980s onwards. This economic history is invoked here to shed light on core features of the accumulation from below pathway on redistributed land.

Table 9.3: The economic histories of accumulators

Income source of household head prior to settlement								
Year of settlement	Farm worker/labour tenant	General dealer	Small-scale capitalist farmer	Taxi owner	Bureaucrat	Other business in Qwaqwa	Unskilled permanent work	Total
1988	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1,00
1989	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	6,00
1990	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2,00
1991	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1,00
1996	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,00
2003	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,00
2008	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,00
2009	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,00
2013	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1,00
Total	3	4	2	1	1	1	3	15,00

Table 9.3 summarises aspects of the economic histories of those of this study's sample categorised as engaged in accumulation. The targeting of petty commodity producers, and other economic elites between 1988 and 1991 is clear, as shown by a total of seven out ten farmers who were allocated land during this period. The remaining three, in the same period, involved one farm worker who was a foreman on a labour-tenant farm and was lucky enough to have a white landowner negotiating with the state on his behalf in order to be allocated land. The remaining two farmers in the same period consist of one migrant worker who could also muster local political connections in order to be allocated land, and just one being a state bureaucrat.

However, this does not mean that state bureaucrats and politicians did not receive land in the area of study some did but they not in a majority. The economic history of the accumulators in this study's sample thus illuminates that those who were allocated land between 1988 and 1991 were mainly petty commodity producers, and other types of small to medium scale capitalist endeavours. During the year 1996, only one of the current accumulators was allocated land, and this was an unskilled migrant worker this corresponds to the period when pro-poor state policies were pursued, in the Mandela years (1994-1999). The remaining four accumulators documented in this chapter received land between 2003 and 2013. This is after 1999, which saw major shifts from the pro-poor Mandela years to new land reform policies that attempted to privilege black commercial farmers. At least one farmer purchased land privately during this period, in 2013, and this is in line broader state policies that prefer elites even in the allocation of Land Bank loans, which require substantive prior capital in order to be eligible for a loan.

At the beginning of this study the researcher almost made the mistake of jettisoning this category, on the basis that these were elite farmers whose rights to land were unjustified and rested only upon past privilege (Murray 1996). During fieldwork this sentiment was invoked by many farmers across class categories, especially with regards to current rhetorical exclusion of many land beneficiaries from accessing state agricultural subsidies on the basis that they are 'beneficiaries of the apartheid government's land reform'. Of course, the timing of the first land allocation was indeed during the apartheid period, as shown in Table 9.3, however, this was in the years immediately prior to its downfall. This may have been one contingency measure adopted by the

apartheid government in attempting to form a buffer zone of black-owned farms between the Qwaqwa Bantustan and land owned by white farmers but concealed in land redistribution rhetoric.

However, it is misleading to label the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms as elite beneficiaries of the apartheid government experiments with land reform. This obscures their historical trajectories of accumulation from below, as manifested in differentiated petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist enterprises of various sorts, as well as other differentiated manifestations of ‘classes of labour’ (Table 9.3). These historical signposts have been documented in the preceding chapters, especially Chapter Four, and Chapters Seven to Eight.

Table 9.3 illuminates this diversity, though focused on the accumulators discussed in this chapter. A further dynamic observable in Table 9.3 is the private purchase of land in 2013 by a businessman who had missed the initial redistribution of land in the late 1980s. The latter purchased land from a distressed original land beneficiary. This is not the only black entrepreneur who has recently purchased land privately in the area of study, and the Free State province has many such entrepreneurs. Indeed, in the period since the late 1980s many distressed farmers in the area of study have sold their farms, often to white farmers, but also to black entrepreneurs. Researching land reform ‘dropouts’ who have sold their farms to white and black landowners is beyond the scope of this thesis but potentially revealing.

The next section takes the reader through abbreviated case study descriptions of some of the accumulators, in order to explore in more depth the core features of these accumulation trajectories.

9.5 Abbreviated Case Studies of Differentiated Accumulation Strategies in the Eastern Free State

This section analyses the differentiated accumulation strategies of the accumulators in the area of study through the lens of agrarian political economy and on the basis of circumspective qualitative and quantitative evidence. Essentially these vignettes describe the intersection of processes of accumulation from below and above.

9.5.1 Vignette 13: Retirement fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer BB retired from his teaching job in 2013 and invested his retirement package in the family farm. He was joined by his spouse, who retired from the same profession, in 2016. The investment of retirement funds in the family farm led to increasing scales of farm production, manifest in increasing the area cropped with grain and the renting in of arable land from neighbouring farmers. Farmer BB is one of those accumulators in the area of study who recently submitted a written application to acquire more land from the Ministry of Land and Agriculture; he had been on the waiting list since 2012 at the time of writing.

Farmer BB is a second-generation farmer. His deceased father was one of the 114 beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms in 1989 on the basis of their business experience, in a small business operated from the back of a truck he had purchased from livestock sales proceeds in 1973, after relocation from a white-owned farm where he had worked as a labour tenant. In Qwaqwa, Farmer BB's father transported construction equipment and other items under a subcontract. The possession of any form of business enterprise almost guaranteed selection by the state's screening committee, which determined the eligibility of any person to be allocated a farm (Chapter Four). With support from the state-owned agricultural company, Agriqwa, which provided agricultural inputs at cost-price, Farmer BB's father was able to maintain the simple reproduction of the family farm on the redistributed land, which met the social reproduction needs of his family and funded the tertiary education of farmer BB and his siblings.

The apparent investment of retirement packages into Farmer BB's family farm has transformed it from being a small-scale capitalist enterprise engaged in simple reproduction to one engaged in expanded reproduction. Furthermore, Farmer BB's formal request for more land from the state illuminates that his vision is one of expanded reproduction as a capitalist farmer.

Farmer BB's farm is 257 ha in extent, divided into 140 ha of arable land and 118 ha of grazing land. In good years, Farmer BB plants grain on all his arable land and seasonally rents in additional land for grain production from neighbouring farmers. For grain production, Farmer BB hires grain production machinery for soil preparation, and

planting, and a combine harvester for harvesting. This includes payments for the hired truck for transporting grain to the nearest grain company (a former grain co-operative).

According to Farmer BB, his lack of high-capacity grain production machinery constrains expanded reproduction on his family farm. He is one of those farmers disgruntled by mismanagement of state-sponsored grain production machinery by the local political elite fraternity. This illuminates the internal struggles within the accumulators' category not all are accumulating from above with state agricultural subsidies being controlled by a small but powerful minority.

Farmer BB's expanded reproduction is also constrained by the land size of his farm, and arable land in particular, forcing him to rent in arable land in good years, as a strategy for expanded production of grain production. Much the same can be said about the grazing land on his farm his beef-cattle herd of 41 head will soon exceed recommended carrying capacity should numbers increase further. Farmer BB has emphasised that he has reservations about planting yellow maize, which implies that he may diversify into livestock production, as might neighbouring farmers in the near future, given the capital intensity problems of grain production.

Farmer BB's gross farm income for 2016 was R511 000, from both grain (R476 000) and livestock (R35 000). He delivered yellow maize to a nearby company, a former grain co-operative, and beef cattle to an auction sale market in the nearby town, Bethlehem. For the cattle herd, Farmer BB employs two herders who are resident on-farm. One of the latter is an immigrant from Lesotho. The monthly wage of the two herders is R1000 each, including payments in food and kind. Farmer BB also employs casual workers at peak times in his grain production enterprise, for example during hand harvesting of maize left over in the fields after the hired combine harvester has completed its operations. He pays the hand pickers R60 per day and can have a work team of up to 12 women hired from Qwaqwa, or other nearby black townships.

Farmer BB and his spouse have two sons, aged 31, and 26. The 31-year-old holds a diploma in Information Technology (IT) and works for an IT company in Johannesburg. The 26-year-old is studying towards being a chartered accountant. Both reside off-farm and rarely come to the farm for visits, however, they do sometimes undertake limited farm work, such as driving the family truck during maize harvesting.

Their education has been partially funded by farm income as well as significant investments from their parents' off-farm income (from their teaching salaries, prior to retirement). As with other accumulators in the sample, Farmer BB and his spouse had the wherewithal to invest in the education of their offspring and do not face similar pressures on the reproductive capacity of the family farm enterprise to those experienced by members of the class of impoverished landed property (Chapter Seven) and agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction (Chapter Eight). Their offspring, who are in skilled off-farm employment today, may be in a position to muster the capital resources to invest in the family farm enterprise in future, or they may pool their capital resources towards purchasing more land, given the constraints wrought by land size.

9.5.1.1 The wider significance of Vignette 13. The wider significance of Vignette 13 is it sheds light on the economic history of accumulation from below. This was somewhat latent from the late 1980s until Farmer BB's injection of retirement funds from his teaching job enabled a shift into expanded farm production. In other words, what we see in this case is a trajectory of accumulation from below resulting from the injection of off-farm capital into farm production. This is a typical case where second-generation farmers start with stepping out of agriculture to gain access to off-farm income and later step back into agriculture with off-farm capital resources. It resembles medium-scale farmers stepping into agriculture with off-farm capital resources and making a success of it, as discussed for the wider African continent (Mtero et al. 2019, Scoones et al. 2018a, Hall et al. 2017, Sitko and Jayne 2014). Vignette 13 also illuminates that successful black farmers on land reform farms in South Africa today are not all accumulating from above and instead are engaged in tough competition to remain in commercial agriculture, as well as to obtain scarce agricultural subsidies under the control of a small but powerful local fraternity.

9.5.2 Vignette 14: Early retirement-fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer CC is a 44-year old man who recently resigned from the army to take over the farm, and other family businesses, belonging to his aging father. Their family farm has the largest land size (1 090 ha) in the sample of 62 farms. This is one of those larger size farms, greater than 500 ha, allocated to the upper stratum of elite and petty

bourgeois beneficiaries in the initial land redistribution project in the late 1980s; that is, there was an element of accumulation from above.

Farmer CC's father, the original land beneficiary, described how competitive he was in relation to other farmers since he was in possession of his own tractor, whilst others relied on the services of Agriqwa. This enabled him to plant grain as quickly as possible, which sometimes involved operating a tractor at night (i.e. for overnight soil preparation, and planting of grain) which can be seen as involving an element of self-exploitation in a context of large land size.

The results of Farmer CC's injection of his resignation package into farm production have been an upward trajectory of expanded reproduction. Currently he owns a mixed-farm enterprise with a beef-cattle herd of 150 head, 20 dairy cows, and 21 sheep. In 2016 Farmer CC had a gross income of R3 385 800 from crops (dry beans and maize) and livestock (beef cattle and sheep) as well as milk sales, placing it at the highest level of the accumulator category.

As is the case for other crop producers in the sample, crops are often sold to nearby grain companies, the former grain co-operatives. However, sometimes Farmer CC can secure sale agreements with grain companies in as far as Pietermaritzburg should they offer better prices than nearby companies. The livestock auction market in the nearest town is the usual venue for selling livestock for Farmer CC. However, sometimes livestock are sold informally at the farm gate through networks rooted in the informal, weekend ceremonial market.

In the past Farmer CC supplied milk to a multi-national milk processing company, Nestle, as do other dairy farmers in the sample, but he dropped out of the scheme due to its stringent milk quality requirements and opted instead to supply pre-schools under contract in Qwaqwa. He is better able to do so, unlike some dairy endeavours in the sample which simply cannot afford to pull out of contract farming for their access to state and private sector subsidies which bind them to supply milk to the milk processing company.

For the beef-cattle herd of 150 head, Farmer CC employs four herders at R1500 per month each, including payments in food and kind. For crop harvesting (mainly dry beans) a casual work team of up to 20 women from Qwaqwa is hired for a daily wage

of R100 per person. They harvest leftover beans after the mechanical harvesting by a combine harvester, which is hired for R600 per hectare.

Access to off-farm income in the form of a retirement package and from an off-farm small business, are the main ingredients in the upward trajectory of accumulation illuminated by this case. Land size was not seen as a constraint the 1 090 ha farm is large enough for Farmer CC. In this case land size and farm capitalisation expressed in land cropped with grain anchored in off-farm capital from other business such as a liquor outlet and a taxi business (small commuter business), as well as Farmer CC's resignation package from the army, have been combined with the farm enterprise (including funds to purchase a new, high-capacity tractor for R900 000 in 2010) and the results are an annual gross income of more than R3 Million.

9.5.2.1 The wider significance of Vignette 14. The wider significance of this case is that it illustrates the strategy of 'stepping into' agriculture (Hall et al. 2017, Sitko and Jayne 2014) with sufficient off-farm capital resources to invest in livestock and grain production, here on the part of a second-generation farmer who took over the family farm enterprise and other off-farm small-scale family businesses. Furthermore, the economic history of Farmer CC's family farm illuminate accumulation from both below and above, in that by the time Farmer CC's father was allocated land in the late 1980s, he was already an established small-scale trader amongst those lucky few who were allocated larger farms (> 500 ha). Accumulation from below prior to the late 1980s was embodied in their small-scale family enterprise, a general dealership in Qwaqwa, and further accumulation from below efforts such as self-exploitation, with tractor ownership competitive advantage in relation to other land beneficiaries who had to rely on a state agricultural company in order to hire tractors. More recently these efforts have been complemented by Farmer CC who has taken early retirement from the army to invest his retirement package in expanding the scale of farm production with some success. This case also demonstrates the utility of the life-history methodology (Oya 2007) in unravelling processes of accumulation in studies of class formation.

9.5.3 Vignette 15: Early retirement-fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer DD, a 39-year-old man, resigned from a management job at a bakery company to take over the family farm of 658 ha after the death of his father who was the main

farmer. In 2011, soon after early retirement, Farmer DD purchased a second-hand tractor for R60 000 from his early retirement package and has been gradually increasing the scale of crop production on the farm ever since, sometimes through production loans in a contract with an agribusiness company. At the time of interview (August 2016), Farmer DD had applied for a Land Bank production loan of R500 000 for purposes of crop production. He had 42% of 126 ha of arable land, under yellow maize (28 ha); white maize (10 ha); and sugar beans (15 ha). He delivered crops to two grain companies in Harrismith and Ladysmith and accrued R338 000 worth of proceeds. He also farms with beef cattle (a herd of 45 head in 2016), from which he sold 20 weaners at a livestock auction company in the nearest town, Bethlehem, for R76 000 and accrued a gross farm income of R414 000. He employs an immigrant worker from Lesotho for the herding of his beef cattle. The latter resides on the farm, together with his spouse and two small children and earns a wage of R2 500 per month, including payments in kind and food.

Farmer DD has three siblings aged 34, 29, and 21. Two of the latter are employed in skilled off-farm work, whilst the youngest is still studying at a university of technology in Bloemfontein. Farm income is crucial for the latter's tuition fees and monthly groceries for nutrition at the university, as much as it had been for Farmer DD's other siblings. Their 52-year-old mother is unemployed and lives on farm income. They all reside off-farm, including Farmer DD, the main farmer, who makes weekly trips to oversee work on the farm.

9.5.3.1 The wider significance of Vignette 15. As in the three abbreviated case studies described above, Farmer DD is a second-generation farmer who came into farming with off-farm capital, here in the form of an early retirement package, which was crucial in the upward trajectory of accumulation on his family farm. This is one of the cases which clarifies that accumulation from below has occurred through investment of off-farm capital for expanding the scale of farm production. Furthermore, on the basis of his middle-class status and education, Farmer DD is able to negotiate contract-farming arrangements and obtain production loans which assist in expanding the scale of farm production. This is in contrast to those farmers in the category of impoverished landed property who are unable to negotiate favourable terms and conditions in such contracts.

9.5.4 Vignette 16: Early retirement-fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer EE is a 51-year-old, second-generation farmer who recently resigned from skilled employment to take over the family farm of 306 ha from his uncle who had been the caretaker of the farm since the death of his father. Farmer EE's father was one of those farmers who were selected as beneficiaries of redistributed land in the late 1980s on the basis of their business standing in Qwaqwa at the time. By then he was a well-established taxi owner (taxi boss), after having established important taxi routes between Johannesburg, and Qwaqwa, transporting migrant workers back and forth between the labour reserve and manufacturing industries in Johannesburg. Their family history prior to the 1970s is shared with many other beneficiaries who relocated to Qwaqwa from labour-tenant farms of the then Eastern Orange Free State, which can be summarised as *from labour tenancy to entrepreneurship, and diversification onto redistributed land* (see Chapter Four).

Farmer EE's father sold his taxi business in 1989 before settling on the farm in 1990 and invested the proceeds into the farm enterprise. He is remembered as one of the richest grain producers of his time, with his own grain production machinery (four tractors, ploughs, and planters), whilst the majority of the farmers in the area of study were dependent on a state-owned agricultural company to hire tractors and other machinery. The family-farm enterprise, unsurprisingly, became unstable after his death. His son, Farmer EE, was forced to leave his self-employment as a motor mechanic in Qwaqwa and sought employment in the city, eventually having found a job at Metro Rail in Pretoria from which he took early retirement in 2016, returning to the family farm on a full-time basis, leaving behind his wife who still works as an administrative clerk for Metro Rail.

On his return, Farmer EE successfully negotiated a R2 million grain-production loan from the Land Bank and terminated the arable-land rental agreement he had with a white farmer. According to Farmer EE, the renting out of arable land was a strategy to keep the land productive whilst earning some rental income from it as he prepared for early retirement to take over the family farm. However, Farmer EE is the only farmer in the sample who had received a production loan from the Land Bank at the time of writing.

The production loan from the Land Bank, as well as recapitalisation funding received through elements of accumulation from above, particularly political connections with the head of a local farmer organisation, revolutionised grain production on Farmer EE's family farm 45 ha of dry beans were planted in December 2016 and 30 ha of white maize planted in the 3rd week of November 2016 on the arable land rented in from a neighbouring farmer and comrade of Farmer EE. The latter was in courtesy of recapitalisation funding from the Department of Rural Development and in so doing, Farmer EE has achieved his dream of returning to the family farm to follow in his father's footsteps. He was probably inspired by other second-generation farmers in the same area of study, who have resigned from skilled jobs to focus on farming on a full-time basis on their family farms, often taking over from their aging or deceased parents, mainly fathers. To be sure, one of Farmer EE's comrades did the same and is now one of the richest farmers in the Eastern Free State and also one of the most politically connected. Farmer EE was thus provided with an advantageous moment to take the risk of resigning from his full-time, relatively stable employment in order to farm full-time. The friendship with Farmer EE's comrade was probably a key political vehicle for Farmer EE to be granted recapitalisation funding worth R400 000 in 2016, since this comrade is a key figure in the local ruling fraternity responsible for distributing state resources to supposedly poorer farmers.

Given the resources at his disposal (his resignation package, the Land Bank production loan disbursed through a contract-farming arrangement with an agribusiness company, and strong political connections with the local ruling elite fraternity), Farmer EE appears to be on a stable upward trajectory of accumulation. Within a year of his resignation from off-farm employment at the time of his return, the family farm was under the 'caretakership' of his uncle and was primarily an extensive livestock farm with beef cattle, whilst the arable land was rented out to a white commercial farmer (who also rents in other farms from distressed land reform beneficiaries). According to Farmer EE's uncle who was interviewed first, the farm has over 100 beef cattle owned by Farmer EE and his two rich cousins who have other off-farm businesses. The collective ownership of cattle on redistributed land under study by relatives, next of kin, or landless owners who simply rent grazing land from land beneficiaries, reflect widespread strategies to use cattle as security for social reproduction as well as accumulation purposes. The proximity of well-developed livestock auction markets in

the area of study enables weekly livestock sales. In Farmer EE's case, his richer cousins who have stable off-farm income sources have invested in beef cattle, often sold in livestock auction markets, as well as informal weekend ceremonial markets in the neighbouring black townships of Kestell, Bethlehem, Qwaqwa, Tshiame, and Harrismith. Within the shared beef-cattle herd, Farmer EE had 24 head of his own after purchasing ten animals; later in 2016, he sold three head in the informal weekend market.

9.5.4.1 The wider significance of Vignette 16. This case can be understood as a vivid illustration of the rise of medium scale farmers stepping into agriculture with off-farm capital resources in Southern Africa more broadly (Scoones et al. 2018a, Hall et al. 2017, Sitko and Jayne 2014). Furthermore, the case illuminates that where state agricultural support has been received, regardless of corruption or not, farm production tends to be enhanced (but only if state funds are not consumed in conspicuous luxurious spending). Furthermore, viewed through the lens of class formation, this is a classic case of accumulation from above through political connections. Other farmers, such as those within the category of impoverished landed property, could have benefited from the recapitalisation funding which has been captured by the local elite, as was the case for Farmer EE.

9.5.5 Vignette 17: Early retirement-fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer FF, a 63-year-old man, resigned from a clerical job in a petroleum company for which he had worked for 22 years. His resignation took effect in 2002 as soon as his application to be allocated land was approved by the Department of Land Affairs. One of his motivations in applying for a grant for purchasing a farm was that he had been renting arable land from distressed black neighbouring farmers on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State for producing crops. This secured the approval of his application and also reduced his own contribution towards the purchase price from R200 000 to R60 000, as he already had farm equipment in the form of crop-production machinery, even though he continues to complain about the quality of his crop-production machinery: "My farming equipment is not up to standard but I'm progressing" (Farmer FF, 26 April 2017).

Farmer FF's total farm size is 250 ha, with 170 ha of arable land, and 80 ha of grazing land. In 2016, Farmer FF produced yellow maize (120 ha), dry beans (50 ha), and soya beans (40 ha) on arable land he rents in from his neighbour. He sold crops at a nearby grain company (a former co-operative) and his gross income in that year was R1 872 000. In the same season, Farmer FF had used all of his arable land (170 ha), and 'rented-in' a further 250 ha at R300 per hectare from a neighbouring black farmer who is more of an absentee farmer not engaged in crop production and focused on livestock only. The latter is not a distressed farmer, however, but a new landowner with another off-farm, small-scale construction business contracted in by the Free State government. He recently purchased the farm from a distressed black farmer and seems to be only interested in livestock, hence the renting out of arable land to his neighbour, Farmer FF. For Farmer FF, his neighbour's choices provided him with the opportunity to expand his crop production enterprise on his upward trajectory of accumulation, expressed in his investments in capital-intensive grain fields, giving him an annual gross income of more than R3 Million.

Farmer FF is one of those farmers who are in possession of crop-production machinery, enabling him to produce crops on a larger scale than most producers in the sample, even though his machinery was purchased as second-hand material. He also owns a high-capacity Mercedes Benz lorry to transport workers during peak times of crop planting and harvesting, as well as transporting grain to grain silos. Farmer FF's farming success is attributable to the off-farm capital he invested in farming using his early-retirement package as well as the investments in farming activities he had made prior to his resignation in purchasing crop-production machinery. These included tractors, bakkies, trucks, and other crop production implements for use on the land he rented in prior to farming on a full-time basis. These investments were also funded by his off-farm income from the salary he earned for his clerical work.

After resignation from clerical work, Farmer FF's application for a Land Bank farm-production loan of R60 000 was approved, and this helped to boost his levels of crop production. The result about 15 years later is an estimated annual gross farm income of about R3 Million. He now owns his own crop-production machinery (six tractors, ploughs, planters and sprayers), crucial for capital intensive crop production on a fairly large scale which he operates himself with the aid of hired drivers/operators. He also

hires casual labour in the form of a team of up to 30 women from Qwaqwa, at a daily wage of R80 per person for harvesting, especially hand-harvesting of crops from the fields after the hired combine harvester has completed its mechanical harvesting operations. The hiring of women hand pickers is a common efficiency strategy deployed by other crop producers in the sample, since mechanised harvesting by a hired combine harvester always leaves behind some grain (on bean stalks or as maize cobs that are not gathered by the combine harvester).

Farmer FF has five children and, unlike most accumulators in the sample, only one of his offspring is in skilled employment. The other four offspring work in mainly unskilled and semi-skilled work such as truck driving, petrol/gas station attendance, airport-administrative work, while the last-born is still at school. One key observation about the occupations of Farmer FF's offspring is that they are able to survive on their own account without exerting pressure on the family enterprise, unlike the offspring of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction characterised by higher degrees of unemployment, which exert pressure on the economic performance of the family-farm enterprise for outward remittances (see Chapter Seven).

For Farmer FF's wife, as with other women in the sample, the tendency is for them to assume the position of housewife, whilst the husband, the household-head, is the main farmer. However, in situations where the household-head dies, then his widowed spouse often assumes the position of main farmer. In some cases, however, a son or daughter does so, especially in cases where they have some form of (off-farm) capital (including an inheritance), or at least some skilled employment to fall back on or derive income from, to invest in the family farm.

9.5.5.1 The wider significance of Vignette 17. As observed in the other case studies in this chapter, the golden thread in Farmer FF's life history is the 'stepping into' agriculture from off-farm work. This contributed significantly to accumulation from below to recap, Farmer FF was already renting in agricultural land prior to the allocation of his own farm through land reform. One of the lessons from this case is that paying attention to life history lays bare the economic histories of research subjects and the life histories of their economic enterprises which helps us unravel processes of class formation. By paying attention to Farmer FF's life history and the economic histories of his farm enterprises, we can discern processes of accumulation from below,

which would have been otherwise invisible if we had opted to analyse only the surface appearance of his farm enterprise as a successful land reform case. The latter would have been an unfruitful exercise, based on a ‘chaotic’ conception of class formation on recently-redistributed land in South Africa (Marx 1973).

9.5.6 Vignette 18: Early retirement-fund investment in expanded farm production

Farmer GG is a 62-year-old, retired agricultural extension worker owning a 239 ha farm received through land redistribution in the late 1980s. His wife was a schoolteacher who recently took early retirement to join her husband in managing the family farm. Both have ensured that their children enrol at university to ensure that they have their careers off-farm in well-paid, middle-class professions. Three of their offspring hold agriculture-related bachelors’ degrees in animal science and forestry respectively. Two of them are still undergraduate students at university. Farm income, combined with their parents’ income from off-farm skilled work, funded their education.

Farmer GG is one of those farmers with a history of small-scale enterprise who obtained the farm in the late 1980s on the basis of his business standing a general dealership in a Qwaqwa township (see Chapter Four). He later invested in his own education, particularly in agriculture (from 1994 onwards, as a key strategy after the withdrawal of state subsidies in agriculture), which led to his employment as an agricultural extension worker in KwaZulu-Natal for 10 years (while he concurrently ran a general dealership in Qwaqwa) before resigning to focus on farming on a full-time basis. His experience and economic standing have earned him a good reputation within both the black and white farming communities in the Eastern Free State. He is regarded as a mentor by some black farmers in this region and has recently been employed by Grain SA as mentor for black smallholder farmers on communal land in the neighbouring Bergville district of Kwazulu-Natal.

Farmer GG produces livestock (beef cattle) and crops (dry beans, yellow maize, and wheat). He has his own crop-production machinery all in good working order and high-

capacity tractors (two bought through a NERPO²⁶ loan scheme), ploughs, planters, and a functional second-hand low capacity combine harvester.

Farmer GG's gross farm income in 2016 was R906 000 from yellow maize, dry beans, and beef-cattle sales. He employs a herder for the beef-cattle herd, who is paid R1000 per month, and also casual workers who arrange bean crops in furrows to enable Farmer GG's low-capacity combine harvester to collect and winnow the beans mechanically. Casual workers also pack the freshly-winnowed, good-quality beans into 50-kilogram sacks to be stacked in a warehouse ready for transportation to the nearest grain company (a former grain co-operative). According to Farmer GG, each casual worker is paid R120 per day and up to 20 women from Qwaqwa can be employed per harvesting season, depending on the type of crop, the area of arable land size planted, and the success of the harvest (variable in part because of climatic factors a bad storm or hail can destroy the entire crop a week before scheduled harvest; see Chapter Six). Indeed, an average of six hailstorms per year was estimated by Claassen et al. (2014) for the area of study, which makes crop production a risky business.

The downside of Farmer GG's success story is the constraint on expanded reproduction wrought by limited farm size. Farmer GG strongly expressed the view that his farm size of 239 ha constrains the expanded reproduction of his farming enterprise. He has thus made attempts to rent in arable land from his poorer neighbours, without success, and he also has his name on the waiting list for land redistribution under the current state land redistribution model, the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS). In 2016 he was called by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) for an interview and was later informed that he had been granted a farm but nothing had materialised at the time of writing. He needs more land to support his trajectory of expanded reproduction, since his farm is utilised to its maximum capacity. His other strategy to acquire more land whilst waiting for the unpredictable DRDLR to act on

²⁶ The National Emergent Red Meat Producers' Organisation (NERPO) is a South African commodity association established to cater for the needs of black farmers, particularly access to finance and technical support. Black commercial farmers are required to join NERPO in order to access its support mechanisms (<http://nerpo.org.za>).

their decisions, is saving money to purchase a bigger farm. He plans to do this through the Land Bank, having failed to purchase land directly from distressed neighbouring black farmers, who, he says, prefer to sell farms to property agents rather than to individuals. Emerging research from PLAAS suggests that the unpredictable character of DRDLR decision making revolves around the lack of transparency in the selection of PLAS beneficiaries, with tendencies towards the political capture of the land redistribution project by the black business and political elite (see Mtero et al. 2019, Hall and Kepe 2017).

9.5.6.1 The wider significance of Vignette 18. The wider significance of Vignette 18 beyond the common pattern of stepping into agriculture using off-farm employment and making a success of it, is that it shows clearly the desire to acquire additional land for expanded reproduction on the part of some accumulators. It also makes clear that successful land beneficiaries in South African land reform are producing surpluses for sale in markets and are thus contributing to national food security. This is an important counter-narrative to the rhetoric of failing land reform in this country. Furthermore, Farmer GG's life history illuminates his relentless efforts towards accumulation from below over a period of 30 years. The underlying dynamics of his success illustrate the variety of concrete determinations evident in his economic history, outlined in this vignette.

9.5.7 Vignette 19: State-funded accumulation

“I have downscaled grain production over the years. I used to rent in arable land, and produce grain on up to 500 ha” (Farmer HH, 20 April 2017).

Farmer HH, a 68-year-old man, is one of the original beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms who were allocated land on the basis of business standing in 1991. He sold his taxi business soon after diversifying into farming and invested the proceeds from selling his taxi business

Farmer HH's life history reflects a wider history in which hundreds of thousands of labour-tenant families were relocated from labour-tenant farms from the 1950s onwards. His family arrived in Qwaqwa in 1971 after electing to vacate the labour-tenant farm, for many reasons, including restrictions on the number of livestock they could own as tenants. From Qwaqwa, he made his way to Johannesburg through TEBA,

(Pty) Ltd²⁷ and worked in a factory till the 1980s. By then he had enough savings to purchase his first taxi and became one of the pioneers of the emerging taxi industry in South Africa, transporting migrant workers between the Qwaqwa labour reserve and Johannesburg. This was the business standing that qualified him to become one of the beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms in the late 1980s.

After three decades of farming on his 272 ha farm, Farmer HH can be categorised as a crop-/livestock-centred accumulator, given his mixed farming comprising both livestock (sheep, cattle) and crops. However, his main specialisation is crop production, thanks to the many years of contract farming in partnerships with agribusiness companies. He is one of those farmers who are not renting out arable land but produces crops himself, thanks to his own efforts since the early 1990s, as well as receiving recapitalisation funding from DRDLR. The latter granted him R2.7 million towards mechanisation and crop production input costs which allowed him to increase the size of arable land under crop production in 2016. This is thus an example of intersections of processes of accumulation from below and above.

Accumulators in the area of study are more likely to be approached by state agents or politicians, often clandestinely in order to become recipients of state support and/or agricultural subsidy, than are farmers in other categories. Accordingly, his gross income in 2016 rose to R1 582 500. The sugar bean yield of 105 tonnes (from 160 ha of arable land) was the most remunerative (R14 000 per tonne) and contributed significantly to gross farm income. He sold his sugar beans at a small grain-processing company in Ladysmith, Kwazulu-Natal. Farmer HH has a small herd of four cattle on the 25 ha of grazing land, after selling eight at a livestock auction market in the nearest town.

²⁷ This employment bureau is a working-class recruiting agency established in the early 20th century to recruit industrial workers from the rural hinterlands and villages of Southern Africa into South African mines, and manufacturing industries (Van Onselen 2019).

Famer HH has one son and one daughter, aged 42 and 37 respectively. The son works as a general worker for a construction company, whilst the daughter works part-time on the farm as administrative manager.

9.5.7.1 The wider significance of Vignette 19. The wider significance of this case is that it shows that accumulation from below in some cases commenced in the early 1990s but also that relentless efforts to engage the state to provide access to agricultural subsidies in real terms inseparable from tendencies of accumulation from above, were also crucial. Access to an agricultural subsidy was only achieved when Farmer HH was already a well-established successful accumulator, not during trying times at earlier stages when such state support was needed most. Furthermore, this case also illuminates that where state support has been received, regardless of whether corruption occurred or not, farm production tends to increase, if funds are managed efficiently and used to engage in expanded reproduction.

9.5.8 Vignette 20: Dairy-centred accumulation

I have many dairy cows [160 head]. But my farm is too small [162 ha]. I need a bigger farm. I have been forced to convert grazing land into arable fields in order to produce enough yellow maize for processing into silage so that I can be able to feed my dairy cows. (Farmer TT 06/06/2016).

Farmer TT, a 52-year-old, second-generation farmer, produces milk, crops, and sheep on an expanded scale, some on arable land rented in from neighbouring farmers. Unlike some of the farmers on upward trajectories of accumulation in the area of study, Farmer TT has no sources of off-farm capital, even in the historical sense, other than having previously been a public taxi driver and undertaken other piece jobs (unskilled casual work) on occasion, including farm work. His deceased father was a farm worker who became a land beneficiary with the assistance of his employer, a white farmer, who motivated for his farm foreman to qualify as a beneficiary by approaching the state authorities directly in the late 1980s.

By then Farmer TT's father had a small cattle herd accumulated during his labour tenancy, which he brought onto his newly-acquired piece of land. He sold most of the cattle and purchased a tractor with the proceeds in 1990. He also subsequently benefited from subsidies from the state-owned agricultural enterprise, Agriqwa, which enabled several land beneficiaries to begin to engage in accumulation, while others were

enabled to maintain a stable pattern of simple reproduction. Farmer TT's father was not as powerful and connected politically as some, probably as a result of his economic history as a former farm worker. He died in 1999 and his son, Farmer TT, had to leave his public-transport driving job to take over the family farm in the year 2000.

On the family farm of 162 ha, Farmer TT specialises in intensive dairy, sheep and crop production and often rents in arable land from neighbouring farmers, especially for the production of yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy cow feeding. In 2016 he had a gross income of R1 261 200. His dairy herd of 160 cows produces 23 000 litres of milk per month to supply milk to a multinational company, Nestle, that collects milk from farmers under contract. Accordingly, Farmer TT has gained the reputation of being a major success story as a black farmer in the Eastern Free State, and recently impressed the portfolio committee of the ministry of land and agriculture as an example of black excellence in land reform (Tshililo Manenzhe, pers. comm). During the interview with him, Farmer TT proudly drew out his medals, certificates, and photographs showing his success and boasted that he is successfully competing with white farmers.

As with other *dairy-centred accumulators* in the sample, a milk-commodity association sponsored the installation of electricity on Farmer TT's farm. He employs ten employees working in his dairy and with his sheep enterprises, for a monthly wage of R2000. One of the workers is a Basotho immigrant.

Farmer TT's sheep enterprise comprises 40 head, with animals sold in livestock auction markets in one of the closest towns, Bethlehem. In 2016 Farmer TT sold 12 sheep for R1 600 each in this livestock auction market. As with other accumulators in the sample, Farmer TT is constrained by limited farm size (162 ha) in his efforts to expand the scale of farm production and has to rent in arable land from his distressed neighbours. His farm enterprise appears to be on a stable upward trajectory of accumulation due to his relentless efforts to engage in expanded reproduction from below.

9.5.8.1 The wider significance of Vignette 20. The wider significance of this case is that it shows an historical trajectory of accumulation from below by a second-generation farmer without access to a wider base of off-farm income, unlike many other cases. Furthermore, beyond the controversies surrounding land reform efforts aimed at farm foremen, this case illuminates that the fruits of land reform can be enjoyed by members of classes of labour who can then embark on accumulation from below. It is for these reasons that this case can be categorised as an exceptional example of accumulation from below in South African land reform. The desire to acquire more land for expanded reproduction on the part of Farmer TT bears testimony to his relentless efforts to succeed in accumulation from below.

9.5.9 Vignette 21: Dairy-centred accumulation

“My problem is farm size. The land is too small. It is a constraint to my farm-production capacity. I stand no chance in becoming a commercial farmer on such a small piece of land” (Farmer KK, 2 May 2016).

Farmer KK was born in 1952 on a farm outside Ficksburg, a border town between South Africa and Lesotho. His family relocated to a township in Ficksburg in the early 1960s. In his late teenage years in the late 1960s, he worked as a petrol-station attendant in the same town and later became a driver for a trucking company which bought and sold vehicles. The proceeds from wage employment were invested in a tractor in 1971, which he used to establish a small business, ploughing the fields of smallholder farmers in Lesotho. He accumulated the profits from his services and later purchased three more tractors. He became more recognised and, by 1976, had earned his contract with the Lesotho government, formally providing a service to Basotho smallholders under contract to the state. He kept his job as a truck driver, with the aid of hired labour employed as tractor drivers for his small seasonal agricultural business on the side. He worked in this way for about two decades until he heard an announcement on Radio Sotho about applications for the so-called New Qwaqwa Farms in the mid-1980s. He tried his luck and was later invited for an interview, was successful in the screening process (Claassen et al. 2014) and was granted his 386 ha farm in 1989.

In the year 2016 he was renting in arable and grazing land from neighbouring black farmers, some of whom began farming on the New Qwaqwa Farms around the same time as he did, during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Farmer KK's 386 ha farm size has become too small for him over time and this constrains his efforts at expanded reproduction, hence his renting in of land from neighbours. He rents in 150 ha of grazing land for his dairy cows and 18 ha of arable land for the production of yellow maize and dry beans from his immediate neighbour. He also rents in 26 ha and 38 ha of arable land respectively from two other neighbours for crop production, especially yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy-cow feeding, as well as to meet his contractual obligations with milk and grain processing companies that provide him with essential inputs, the costs of which are deductible on harvest.

Farmer KK's mixed-farming enterprises on his own farm, as well as on rented land, includes rotational grazing for his dairy-cow herd of 166 head and 220 ha of arable land rotationally cropped with dry beans, wheat, soya, as well as yellow maize for processing into silage. Farmer KK also has a smaller beef-cattle herd of 33 head and 40 sheep. In 2016 he sold 20 sheep for approximately R1500 each at a livestock auction market.

He employs labour for his mixed-farming enterprises and also has family labour from his two sons, aged 28 and 32 respectively, including his own labour in the operation of tractors, a skill he obtained some 30 years ago as a contracted tractor service provider for the Lesotho government. Unlike the offspring of other accumulators in the sample, Farmer KK's offspring did not achieve a matric qualification after 12 of years of schooling and it seems they have dedicated themselves to the family farm. Their mother, born in 1952, is also resident on the family farm and is a housewife within the patriarchal family system.

Farmer KK, as with other accumulators in the sample, is in possession of his own crop-production machinery, in his case of good quality and capacity. He boasts that he purchases his agricultural machinery as new material. As a successful dairy-centred accumulator, he was in a position to purchase a new Toyota Hilux 4x4 in the year 2016, for about R500 000. As with other successful dairy farmers in the sample, he has also benefited from the sponsorship of a milking parlour worth more than R500 000 by the

Department of Agriculture, in partnership with Milk SA. This is courtesy of the dairy scheme supplying milk under contract to a localised multinational milk processing company, Nestle, located in the closest town, Harrismith.

9.5.9.1 The wider significance of Vignette 21. The wider significance of this case is that it illuminates a trajectory of accumulation from below evolving from a petty trade, service enterprise to diversification of income sources after moving onto redistributed land and expanded farm production over a period of about 30 years. In the late 1980s, Farmer KK's small business bolstered his application in order to become a land beneficiary. This unleashed accumulation from below on his part he already had tractors and the skill to operate them, with the aid of hired labour. This gave him a competitive advantage over his neighbours, who had to queue for state-sponsored tractors. The results, some 30 years later, are an upward trajectory of accumulation. Today he is one of the accumulators in the area of study engaged in expanded reproduction, despite significant land size constraints expressed in the renting in of grazing and arable land from neighbouring farmers.

9.5.10 Vignette 22: Beef-centred accumulation

Farmer X had a small-scale sheep enterprise on communal land in Thaba Nchu when he heard about the opportunity to diversify onto redistributed land on the New Qwaqwa Farms. His sheep enterprise qualified him and he was successful in his application for a farm of 271 ha in 1989. On the side, he worked as a manager for a state-owned bus company in Thaba Nchu, a job he held from 1977 to 1994, investing his retirement package in livestock production whilst renting out the arable land on his newly-acquired farm. Since then he has been expanding his livestock herd and gradually specialised in beef cattle, away from theft-prone sheep. His strategy has been investment of farm-rental income into the expansion of his beef-cattle enterprise, whilst his monthly state pension helps resolve the social reproduction tensions exerted by his family, thus averting pressure on the family farm.

In 2016 Farmer X owned a beef-cattle herd of 190 head and a flock of 41 sheep, for which he rents in approximately 255 ha of grazing land from a neighbouring farm. His expanded reproduction strategy can thus be seen as based on growth of his livestock herds which requires renting in additional grazing land. He can be categorised as a beef-

centred accumulator. In 2016, Farmer X sold 15 head of beef cattle and 15 head of sheep for a gross farm income of R108 750. This is combined with off-farm income from access to a state pension.

Farmer X had five sons with his deceased wife. Two of his sons have off-farm skilled jobs. Two are unemployed and the youngest is still a university student. Farm income has contributed to their education, especially tertiary education. It remains to be seen how his sons will contribute to the family farm as they progress in their careers.

9.5.10.1 The wider significance of Vignette 22. Farmer X is one of those successful land reform beneficiaries with a track record of accumulation from below. Expanded reproduction is evident in livestock expansion and renting in of grazing land. In this case, we also observe the general interest of the middle-class in farming, manifest in the concurrent holding of farming (often through rent agreements that secure access to commonage or private land) and white-collar jobs and grabbing any opportunity to obtain land, whether through land reform or private purchase, solely for the accumulation of wealth. We have seen several success stories of farmers on these trajectories in this chapter, and Farmer X is one of the latter. In the area of study, there are many landless farmers who rent in agricultural land from overstocked commonages, and land reform beneficiaries who wish to obtain more land through land reform. They are more likely to become successful farmers, as Farmer X demonstrates, if given this opportunity through land allocation (Atkinson and Ingle 2020).

9.5.11 Vignette 23: Renting out arable land as an accumulation strategy

Farmer V is the main farmer on a 364 ha PLAS farm leased by his mother, a former domestic worker. The farm is divided into 274 ha of arable land and 90 ha of grazing land. On the arable land, Farmer V has a rental agreement with a white farmer who rents in 170 ha on condition that his crop-production machinery is used in producing crops on the remaining 104 ha of arable land. This entails the use of the renter's tractor, plough, and planter in the soil preparation and planting of crops. Farmer V bears the costs of purchasing seed, fertiliser and other chemicals, as well as the harvesting of crops and transportation to grain silos. This agreement has enabled Farmer V to gain access to crop-production machinery which forms part of his accumulation strategy in

a mixed-farming context involving livestock (150 head of beef cattle, 120 goats, and 10 horses) as well as crops.

During the 2015/16 season Farmer V sold 20 head of beef cattle, 60 goats and two horses for around R99 000. During the same season, he planted dry beans (34 ha) and yellow maize (70 ha) on the 104 ha of arable land. His gross farm income for the same season was R549 000. He also had plans to purchase his own tractor in order to avoid relying on the renter's crop-production machinery, thus allowing him to end the rent agreement in future. Success in his expanded reproduction strategy is likely to materialise should he be able to purchase his own tractor.

Farmer V can be described as a crop-centred accumulator whose accumulation strategy is anchored in an arable-land rental agreement from which he obtains access to farm machinery for crop production purposes. Crop production is combined with a livestock enterprise which feed on post-harvest crop residue in the winter months.

9.5.11.1 The wider significance of Vignette 23. The type of rent arrangement that Farmer V is engaged in is quite unlike that engaged in by those landowners classified as impoverished landed property (see Chapter Seven). This is an accumulation strategy on his part. If his plans go well, he will be able to further expand his crop production enterprise using his own production machinery which he is planning to purchase. He is a crop-centred accumulator in the area of study engaged in accumulation from below through reinvestments of agricultural capital in a mixed-farming system involving both crops and livestock.

9.5.12 Vignette 24: Renting out arable land as an accumulation strategy

Farmer W is a caretaker on a PLAS farm of 251 ha. He has a background in farm work and is also a member of a Communal Property Association from which he rents in grazing land for some of his cattle. His farm is divided into 194 ha of arable land and 57 ha of grazing land. He rents out 68 ha of arable land to a white farmer, whose payment includes Farmer W using his grain-production machinery for soil preparation and planting of crops on 72 ha of arable land. During the 2015/16 season, this included 60 ha of sugar beans and 12 ha of sunflower crops. He can thus be described as a crop-livestock-centred accumulator whose upward trajectory is anchored in an arable-land rental agreement from which he obtains farm production machinery for use in crop

production. As with Farmer V, this is crucial for the success of his mixed-farming system, especially for supplementary winter feeding of livestock on maize residues after harvesting. Furthermore, Farmer W has plans to purchase his own tractor in order to terminate the rent agreement and embark on crop production himself.

Farmer W's cattle enterprise comprising 277 head is one of the most successful in the sample. To support it he rents in grazing land amounting to 830 ha, from three local land reform farms. Accordingly, Farmer W's gross farm income for the 2015/16 season was R902 200 from crop and livestock sales proceeds.

Farmer W is also an important figure in the local farmers' association, especially its livestock wing, which partially explains the number of cattle he owns, some of which he may have received through NERPO cattle loans.

9.5.12.1 The wider significance of Vignette 24. Farmer W's arable-land rental agreement has served as a springboard for his expanded reproduction which may expand even further if his concrete plans to purchase his own crop-production machinery materialise. His accumulation strategy involves both crop production and livestock, the latter most probably supported by his membership of the livestock wing of local farmers' association, of which Farmer W is a high-profile member. This case serves to illustrate how accumulation efforts from below can intersect with those from above, manifest in Farmer W's political influence in the local farmers' association.

9.6 Accumulation From Below and Above on Redistributed Land: The Significance of These Findings for South Africa and Africa at Large

Mtero et al. (2019) have systematically documented how accumulation from below and above has occurred in recent years on redistributed land in South Africa. Their findings are comparable to the research findings reported in this thesis, both using similar analytical approaches (centred on livelihood strategies and class categories) and reporting quantitative findings (on the incidence of livelihood strategies and their class equivalents). However, the fundamental difference between Mtero and colleagues' work and the findings of this thesis is that the former focused on a particular land reform policy in South Africa, the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy, which is characterised by the preponderance of the middleclass as beneficiaries, a clear focus in recent South African land redistribution policy which can be traced from the 2000s

onwards (see Chapter One). This is in contrast to the research findings presented in this thesis which draw from empirical observations across a longer timeframe of land redistribution in South Africa. This means that the findings transcend different land reform policies and reflect class heterogeneity on the part of respondents/land beneficiaries, whatever the nature of policy. Furthermore, the research findings are more historically grounded and have a longitudinal character that illuminates socio-spatial trajectories of class formation from the mid-1980s to 2016 over nearly four decades.

However, there are clear similarities in the kinds of land reform beneficiaries involved, given the middle-class positions of many beneficiaries in both samples which renders them susceptible to the temptation to engage in strategies involving extra-economic forces or accumulation from above. Given this contextual comparison, let us briefly consider a summary of the Mtero and colleagues' research findings.

Table 9.4: Trajectories of accumulation amongst the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy beneficiaries (n =62)

Dropping out	6	10%
'Hanging in' and non-accumulation	10	16%
'Stepping up' through investment	12	19%
'Stepping in' and 'stepping up' (diversifying into farming)	27	44%
'Stepping up' through recapitalisation	7	11%
Total	62	100%

Source Mtero et al. 2019, p. 35

In a sample of 62 cases located in five different provinces of South Africa, Mtero et al. found a total of 74% of farmers whose livelihood trajectories illuminate trajectories of upward accumulation in differentiated ways, involving stepping up through investment, stepping in and stepping up (diversifying into farming) and stepping up through recapitalisation funding from the state (Table 9.4). Those stepping up (19%) through investment are accumulating from below via reinvestment of agricultural capital in expanded farm production and some of them have humble backgrounds, such as a few former farm workers who can be analytically located within the classes of labour thesis (Bernstein 2003). Essentially Mtero et al.'s category of stepping up through

reinvestment and accumulating from below is analogous to some of the vignettes described above (for example Vignette 20) where a land beneficiary whose economic background is essentially working-class is engaged in accumulation from below.

The stepping-in and stepping-up category in Mtero et al. constitutes those accumulators who came into farming with substantive off-farm capital for investments in farm production. This category comprises 44% of their sample which suggests it is a core type of accumulation strategy. These elite farmers, according to Mtero et al., have the capacity and will to mobilise forms of both state and private sector support to their advantage. They are comparable to some of the accumulators described above who came into farming with off-farm capital resources, sometimes after diversifying out of or stepping out of farming, but return later by way of investment of (early) retirement funds into expanded farm production (see Vignettes 14-18).

Those beneficiaries in the stepping-up through recapitalisation category (11%) in Mtero and colleagues' sample are also accumulating, however, only as a result of securing state agricultural subsidies, which illuminates the importance of the latter in promoting expanded levels of farm production. In contrast, in this study's own sample, very few (n=2) farmers were found on upward trajectories as a result of recapitalisation funding from the state, although the accumulators' category in this study's own sample tend to attract state agricultural subsidy of various sorts, beyond recapitalisation funding.

The main point to be grasped from apparent upwards trajectories of accumulation by the black middle class on recently redistributed land in South Africa, as shown in Mtero and colleagues work, is that this class of farmers represents successful cases of land reform in terms of expanded farm production, making contributions to national food. This is not to say that the connotations of elite capture should not be confronted, as do Mtero et al. (2019). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that state support in the form of different forms of agricultural subsidy has been vital in the cases of successful accumulation shown in many of these farm enterprises documented in Mtero et al. This suggests that where state support and agricultural subsidies are received, expanded reproduction is unleashed. Much the same can be said about those elite farmers in the researcher's own sample who are engaged in accumulation from above.

The rest of Mtero and colleagues' sample comprises those beneficiaries who are hanging in and not accumulating (16%) and those who have dropped out of farm production (10%). The hanging-in category is similar to the hanging-in category in this study's own sample. The latter is further stratified into small-scale capitalist enterprises engaged in social and simple reproduction as a result of prolonged, in-depth fieldwork, in contrast to Mtero et al.'s national overview. This essentially denotes small-scale capitalist enterprises on land reform farms that are not accumulating capital but are engaged in differentiated forms of constrained and simple reproduction. The dropping-out category in Mtero and colleagues' sample (10%) constitutes those who have abandoned farming for various reasons. In the Eastern Free State, the area of study reported in this thesis, there are cases where land beneficiaries have sold their farms and abandoned farming altogether. The latter is contextualised in Chapter Six (footnote 18), and Chapter Five.

9.6.1 Accumulation from below and above on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State

The relative success of the black middle class in South African land reform is not surprising given the economic strength and political prowess of this class in African social formations in the post-independence period indeed, some have become members of the comprador bourgeoisie elite through capture of the local state and attendant resources, including land (Mamdani 1987). However, this should be seen in the context of the wider history of class formation on the continent which sometimes resembles accumulation from below but is overshadowed by the overwhelming reality of elite capture of the state and attendant resources. As Neocosmos (1993) argues, some accumulation from below through a shift from petty commodity production to fully capitalist enterprises actually did take place, albeit constrained, before independence, and was not totally subsumed by the left-leaning politics of national liberation movements. It is thus imperative to unravel and reconstruct these forms of petty commodity production through historical materialism where they existed, for they shed light in current moments of struggle for the working-class populations this is important for rekindling the progressive class agenda of current agrarian reform in South Africa (Mtero et al. 2019).

Therefore, the researcher argues that it is potentially misleading to sweepingly label all current accumulators within ongoing land reform in South(ern) Africa as an elite engaged in extra-economic relations with institutional power. This argument does not try to ignore evidence of elite capture of public goods by a small minority, a phenomenon that is almost pervasive in the Southern African region (Scoones et al. 2012).

However, an over-emphasis on elite capture could obscure our understanding of processes of accumulation from below occurring within the ongoing land reform process. In-depth case studies that can shed light on this must include those in which the first land allocations occurred in the period of the transition to democracy in South Africa (e.g. Coka 2018), as well as older ones, for example the Zimbabwean Native Purchase Areas circa 1930 (Scoones et al. 2018a). These analyse patterns of change over long periods of time, often over several decades, and can shed light on patterns of differentiated trajectories of social and simple reproduction as well as accumulation from below and above. In other words, these cases reveal heterogeneous land reform outcomes.

Research findings presented in this thesis also illuminate such heterogeneous land reform outcomes. For example, Chapter Seven documents the expanded base of social reproduction following improved access to land on the part of classes of labour on the basis of constrained and simple reproduction of small-scale capitalist livestock production, which suggests potential possibilities of accumulation from below if provided with attendant state support. Chapter Seven also shows how the local elite minority that control localised agricultural subsidies constrains classes of labour who have gained improved access to land, from accumulating from below by barring the latter from accessing agricultural subsidies which are available but not transparently redistributed. Chapter Eight documents how some agricultural households engage in successful, simple reproduction of small-scale farm enterprises, sometimes with future retirement plans towards accumulation from below, especially amongst those with stable off-farm employments.

The current chapter used life histories of accumulators and their households in an attempt to illuminate trajectories of accumulation on redistributed land in the area of study. The researcher argues that the shadow of the accumulator may obscure

trajectories of accumulation from below. The ‘shadow’ can include extra-economic political relations with institutional power which an accumulator may have gained after years of accumulation from below. Associated concrete historical determinations should be unravelled, for they shed light on accumulation processes. For example, the aid of a state agricultural company, Agriqwa, in the early days of farming on the studied land reform farms, was crucial in enabling at least the simple reproduction of many farms. This simple reproduction enabled the studied farmers to subsist from their improved access to land, as well as to use funds from farm income for the education of their offspring. Some of the latter are now investing in their family farms in various ways, such as taking early retirement from skilled employment and investing their retirement packages into increasing the scale of farm production. Others remain in skilled employment whilst also engaging in marginal farming, often through investments of some proportion of their off-farm wages into family-owned beef-cattle herds while waiting for their retirement funds to mature, with the ultimate aim of investing the latter into the family farm.

However, owing to the contradictions of capitalism, the same farmer who has accumulated from below with some form of state support in the recent past, is fallible to elite capture of state agricultural subsidies. He or she may not have much empathy with farmers who hold land as a form of impoverished landed property and are in dire need of state support. How then to best deal with such contradictions is probably the work of forming class alliances, for example through thorough and skilful engagements with the localised powerful elite, as well as marginalised land beneficiaries.

An over-emphasis on the evils of elite capture of agricultural public goods can obscure our understanding of historical trajectories of accumulation. Instead, the researcher posits that a *successful capitalist farmer or accumulator* is a category replete with internal relations and contradictions which can be traced historically through analysing the economic histories of individuals, families and capitalist enterprises. The researcher has also cautioned that the appearance of accumulators as ‘thieves’ of public goods reflects their objective nature as capitalists eager to accumulate by any means necessary. However, the humble beginnings and subsequent careers of accumulators can illuminate processes of accumulation from below. Of course, the disdain that progressive researchers feel towards those guilty of capturing state public goods is

warranted but this may lead us into ignoring important trajectories of accumulation that these elites may have embarked upon. An invocation of the accumulation trajectories of current elites in land reform potentially encourages empathic support for many land reform beneficiaries who are currently marginalised in the allocation of scarce agricultural subsidies.

The researcher suggests that this history of accumulation from below should be invoked in advocating a class agenda in land reform oriented towards supporting accumulation from below on a grand scale. In other words, within efforts to advocate for systemic change and efforts by academics and civil society organisations, the current elite in land reform should be reminded of their own struggles to get ‘to the top’ from below and sensitised to the progressive nature of accumulation from below in terms of class politics. This can include a gentle reminder about how the apartheid state constrained accumulation from below for the current elite in land reform today and how accumulation prospects were created by the removal of the apartheid state. This could lead to the realisation that the current elite fraternity controlling the distribution of state-owned agricultural resources, including land in South Africa, are in real terms *obstacles* to processes of accumulation from below. This form of advocacy could also focus on and perhaps help resolve many other problems, such as unemployment, and widen the social reproduction base for classes of labour.

9.7 Conclusion

Beyond the stereotype of accumulation from above and elite capture, this chapter has documented the relative success of the black middle class within South African land redistribution. It contains detailed qualitative evidence, reported in the abbreviated case studies, which supplements quantitative survey data. Together, these show that some accumulators are engaged in a sustained process of expanded reproduction, often manifested in their renting in of farmland. This does not only illuminate their success as commercial farmers but also the constraints they experience, often related to farm size.

This raises the following question: would it be more appropriate to allocate large-scale farms to potentially successful commercial farmers, and what would this mean for heterogeneous land reform at differentiated farm scales, and a desired ethos of

production? What trade-offs could be made? The trade-offs could perhaps include the allocation of agro-ecologically appropriate land sizes at the smaller end of the scale and then let those who can rent in land from others do so, while those who can purchase more land should also have the liberty to do so. However, land size allocation should be egalitarian in the initial stages, especially in a post-independence social formation such as South Africa, wanting to flag the virtues of equality as sought in many relatively young democracies. However, this should be embarked upon with a clear and strong-minded understanding of what is to come as classes of farmers emerge through land reform, as capitalism in rural areas reaches unprecedented heights which have been latent for many decades and more owing to a lack of broad-based agrarian reform. Class differentiation of land beneficiaries will undoubtedly emerge. Those on upward trajectories will seek more land for expanded reproduction, whilst those on the lower ends of social differentiation may engage in simple reproduction on a smaller scale, as this thesis suggests has occurred in the Eastern Free State.



CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This final chapter will discuss the main findings of the study, as well as their contribution to wider debates in the international literature focused on the class dynamics of agrarian reform in the Global South (Sender and Johnston 2004, Bernstein 2004, Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz, 2004, Byres 2004). These contributions are based on empirically-grounded research findings, and centred on two core themes: (a) heterogeneous land reform outcomes on the one hand and (b) agrarian reform for classes of labour that succeed in promoting accumulation from below on the other. This final chapter summarises the main research findings in relation to both themes and discusses their wider significance, particularly the central role of agricultural subsidies or lack of in class formation trajectories.

The first theme highlights the need to pay close attention to heterogeneous outcomes of land reform in relation to processes of class differentiation, making use of key agrarian political economy concepts such as social reproduction, as well as simple and expanded reproduction of capital. Evidence from the area of study in the Eastern Free State suggests that 76% (48 out of 62 cases) of land reform beneficiaries use agricultural land to ensure their social reproduction, or to ensure the simple reproduction of their small-scale, livestock-centred but mixed-farming systems and enterprises on the basis of both hired and their own labour.

The second theme focuses on processes of accumulation from below which are also evident, albeit by a minority of beneficiaries, involving expanded reproduction of their similar livestock-centred or crop-/livestock-centred enterprises by differentiated classes of labour and a small number of elite farmers. Upward trajectories of accumulation are evident in 24% (14 out of 62 cases) of the sample through intersections of processes of accumulation from below and above. Central to the latter are the functional roles played by differentiated off-farm income and other resources in facilitating investments in expanded farm reproduction. A key feature is the renting in of farmland from

neighbouring farmers, including agricultural households engaged in constrained and also successful reproduction, who are unable to invest in expanded reproduction themselves.

On farm workers employed in the area of study, it is noteworthy that these often immigrant workers from a neighbouring country, Lesotho, are part and parcel of fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2003). They are often 'footloose' in nature (Breman 1996) and as poor and immigrant farm workers, prone to exploitation (Johnston 2015, 2007). However, consideration of the farm workforce in post-land reform contexts can be enhanced by nuanced analysis which goes beyond 'victim' narratives to take cognisance of the wider, contextual dynamics of social reproduction. For example, beyond the issue of their low wages, these long-term herders do earn a monthly wage which is often not available to many of the rural poor in this age characterised by deep crises of social reproduction. Furthermore, the continued employment of casual farm workers on (rented out) crop fields in the area of study illuminates labour-hiring practices in post-land reform contexts. This evidence offers slightly different perspectives to conventional views on job losses on land reform farms, as reflected in the work of Mtero et al. (2019) as well as Sender and Johnston (2004). However, these forms of employment should not be viewed romantically; they do involve exploitation, and low wages, though somewhat mitigating crises of social reproduction engulfing classes of labour in Southern Africa against the backdrop of generalised deindustrialisation.

Central to these research findings is a particular conceptual understanding of land reform aimed at classes of labour which has the potential to support accumulation from below. This can take place on the basis of petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist agriculture but requires either attendant state support or access to sufficient off-farm capital from the beneficiaries' own resources. These research findings also suggest a deepening of capitalist relations in post-land reform contexts, manifested in the reproduction or expansion of small-scale capitalist and petty commodity production enterprises as inherent tendencies flowing from the centrality of commodity relations, including the capital-wage relation. In other words, emerging evidence of small-scale capitalist farming endeavours in post-land reform contexts challenges the conventional wisdom of that capitalist development is essentially linear in character, as evident in

the work of theorists such as Sender and Johnston (2004) and embraced by orthodox agricultural economists in South Africa (e.g. Vink and Kirsten 2019). Figure 10.1 below depicts key elements of the conceptual framework of this thesis, aimed at illuminating class formation trajectories in post-land reform contexts.

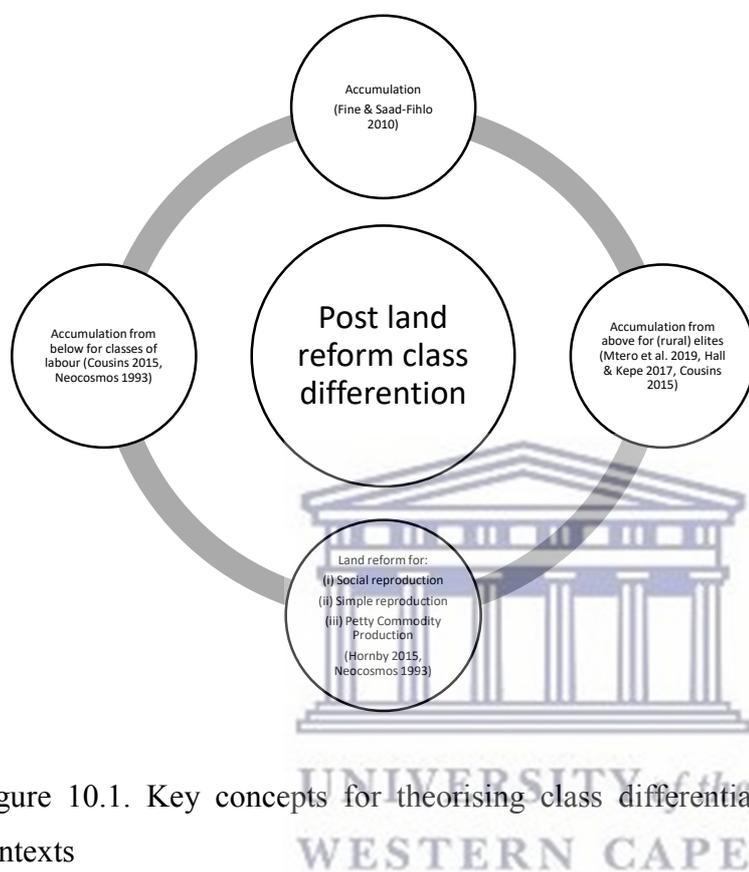


Figure 10.1. Key concepts for theorising class differentiation in post-land reform contexts

Source: the researcher’s own diagrammatic presentation from Chapter Two.

Figure 10.1 is an identical diagrammatic representation used to ground and illuminate the theoretical framework of this thesis, located as it is in agrarian political economy (Chapter Two). The same diagram is deployed here for its utility in abstract representation of differentiated land reform outcomes, or heterogeneous post-land reform class differentiation outcomes at the core of this thesis.

These research findings resonate strongly with evidence of the rise of medium-scale farmers on the African continent in recent decades (Jayne et al. 2016). However, this is more so specifically with regard to the category of agricultural households engaged in accumulation. In South Africa, the rise of medium-scale farmers should be appreciated in modest and dispassionate terms, such as its potential to support shifts to greater

degrees of heterogeneity in the dualistic South African agricultural sector inherited from apartheid (Hall 2009, Ntsebeza and Hall 2007). However, instead of placing too much emphasis on these medium-scale capitalist farmers, the researcher argues that the resilience of simple reproduction on the basis of petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist agriculture on recently redistributed land also demands attention, as much as the success of the rural petty bourgeoisie within South Africa's land reform. Giving too much attention to the latter may render invisible the core phenomenon of successful simple reproduction on South African land reform farms and may unintentionally promote agricultural developmental policies devoted exclusively to supporting petty bourgeois land beneficiaries, thus excluding those beneficiaries categorised as belonging to classes of labour (Bernstein 2010). A massive redistribution of agricultural land to classes of labour, combined with extensive agricultural subsidies from the state, would essentially resonate with the ascendancy of medium-scale farmers elsewhere on the African continent, such as in Zimbabwe (Scoones et al. 2018a) and Zambia (Jayne et al. 2016).

Theoretically, the heterogeneous class differentiation outcomes of any land reform process are inextricable from localised political dynamics in both the contemporary and historical sense (Scoones et al 2018a). Politics can thus shape material outcomes of class formation in post-land reform contexts, depending on the class positioning of land beneficiaries within processes of class struggle. In a democratic social formation such as post-apartheid South Africa, those who have gained access to capital, by whatever means, are better able to engage the state for preferential access to scarce state subsidy and other forms of state support. On the other hand, those on the lowest ranks of class differentiation are much less able to engage the state, which requires access to material resources which enable beneficiaries to merely gain access to the information required in order to apply for state agricultural subsidies.

However, any land reform beneficiary can fall into the latter categories by default in terms of their economic history, or as a result of their changing circumstances, such as being winnowed out of farm production and going under, for whatever reason. They may, however, progress towards being able to engage in simple and expanded reproduction in the long run, depending on their degree of access to off-farm income or successful attempts to apply for state agricultural subsidy. These class differentiation

pathways unfold within the wider context of a capitalist mode of production and cannot be conceived as operating outside it. For example, simple commodity reproduction or petty commodity production on land reform farms cannot take place without off-farm income sources or some support from the state such as social-grant income (as in the South African case) or real state agricultural subsidies. As in other African contexts, off-farm income is often a crucial source of funds for agricultural investment (Jayne et al. 2016; Scoones et al. 2018a).

10.2 Summary of Research Findings: Class Formation on Redistributed Land in the Eastern Free State

This section is a summary of the empirical findings documented in this thesis. It is arranged into two subsections. The first concerns the economic history and class formation trajectories of the land beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms, a summary of an arch of differentiated livelihood trajectories of the studied farmers, from the time the first amongst them were allocated land in the mid-1980s. This spans a 30-year period. The second subsection deals with circumspective class formation dynamics and class differentiation processes of the studied farmers, constructed from their life histories, recollections of recent life experiences as land beneficiaries, and current dynamics of farm production, as they were during the time of research from 2015 - 2018. The latter tails off with an exposition of the formation of three distinct class categories of farmers in the area of study.

10.2.1 Economic history and class formation of New Qwaqwa Farmers: mid 1980s – 2016

The economic history and class formation trajectories of the New Qwaqwa Farmers sketched in Chapter Four shows that by the time of the 1980s land allocation, processes of class differentiation were already pronounced, and manifest in differentiated non-agricultural petty commodity production enterprises that had mushroomed in Qwaqwa a decade earlier, owing to the hundreds of thousands influx of labour tenants, farm dwellers, and farm workers from white owned neighbouring farmland, and afar, forced off the land, and expelled by the dull compulsion of economic forces that fuelled massive farm evictions. Chapter Four also revealed that the non-agricultural petty commodity production dynamic was inherited from labour tenancy, and share cropping

which was based on a form of production that combined labour and capital in one soul or family unit. Such business footing worked in the favour of these family businesses, as it later formed a key element in their qualification and selection as beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms. Chapter Four also unsettled the misleading narrative that the New Qwaqwa Farmers were only the black elites, parliamentarians, supermarket owners, and taxi bosses, but without disputing their presence, and accumulation from above tendencies.

What happened from the mid-1990s on New Qwaqwa Farms is a story of the survival of the fittest, as well as of those who went under, thanks to (the threat of) Land Bank repossessions. Others were saved by surrendering their land to the rental market in order to earn much-needed farm rent income for mortgage repayments, social reproduction, and marginal farming with livestock, particularly cattle and sheep. Some were rescued by new public-private partnerships with a milk-processing company, Nestle, which ensured their access to various forms of agricultural subsidies, and hence sustained simple reproduction of farm enterprises. Others kept going by falling prey to predatory contract farming schemes which have gained an infamous reputation in the area of study. These simple reproduction strategies were often combined with small scale cattle and sheep production, thanks to differentiated off-farm income sources that provided the wherewithal to support the reproduction of small livestock herds.

However, beyond the odds, some were able to embark on sustained accumulation expressed in reinvestment of agricultural capital in expanded production, particularly those who had significant capital resources in the first place, at the moment of land allocation, back in the 1980s. Chapter Nine documents some examples of farmers who managed to sustain their upward trajectories of accumulation to date, conceptualised as intersections of accumulation from below and above, expressed most vividly in their most recent expanded reproduction strategy, the renting-in of arable, and grazing land from their neighbours, coupled with knocking on the doors of the ministry of land, to demand more farmland for the constraints wrought on their upward trajectories of accumulation by land size (Chapter Nine).

Nonetheless, for those who have tenaciously faced the storm of market neoliberalism without state agricultural subsidies, and with limited off-farm capital resources, nor agricultural capital to stay afloat, better days seem to be on the horizon. The dark days

of Land Bank repossession have not gone by without a silver lining for many – there has been light at the end of the tunnel. Some of the offspring of those land-beneficiary households who were threatened by the Land Bank to surrender their land to the rental market have grown and, educated themselves, often through farm income, over the past 30 years, landed good jobs, and are beginning to invest some of their off-farm capital resources back into the family farm enterprise – most are focusing on cattle production for livestock herd expansion/accumulation, whilst others are going out of their way to manoeuvre their access to state coffers for loans, and agricultural subsidies as evident in Chapter Nine.

Central to these class formation trajectories is the simple and expanded reproduction of small- to medium-scale, mixed farm enterprises – the seasonal integration of crops and livestock, particularly maize, dry beans, cattle, sheep and dairy constitute principal commodities, followed by pigs, horses, goats, sunflower, and wheat. What gives impetus to these mixed farm enterprises is a combination of various capital resources, such as agricultural capital from farm production, farm rent income, off-farm income sources, and various forms of agricultural subsidies, and support, from the state and private sector.

However, lest we forget, the capital-labour relation is the underpinning force that sets in motion constituent parts of farm production in its totality. Of course, family labour and self-exploitation is still the order of the day for some, though few, farmers in the area of study, and this is expressed in livestock herding, and tractor operation by some family members. Livestock herding undertaken by family labour is particularly expressed within the impoverished landed property class (Chapter Seven), whilst own tractor operation is the business of those on upward trajectories of accumulation, especially those who are full-time farmers amongst the latter (Chapter Nine). However, the central tendency across the three class categories in the area of study is the hiring of non-family labour, in the casual form, during peak crop-harvesting moments, as well as the hiring of long-term livestock herders who are typically immigrant workers from a neighbouring country, Lesotho.

Given these historical economic trajectories of the studied farmers, what can be said about concrete processes of struggles and successes towards accumulation from below, and intersections of the latter with real attempts towards accumulation from above, is

discussed next in the form of a summary of the formation of concrete class categories emerging from empirical findings. This summary is retrospective, circumspective and prospective on the basis of the critical realist methodological approach centred on historical materialism discussed in Chapter Four.

10.2.2 Circumspective class differentiation processes on New Qwaqwa Farms

In order to understand processes of class differentiation and class formation expressed in the three class categories of 'New Qwaqwa Farmers' documented in this thesis, it was necessary to invoke their life histories within a critical-realist theoretical framework centred on historical materialism, however tentatively, from the 1950s to 2016. The essence of this thesis, is therefore, class formation, as duly documented from the days the studied farmers' most recent ancestors were labour tenants on white-owned farmland of the Highveld region of South Africa, and their subsequent expulsions from farmland into a labour reserve (1950s-70s), from where the unexpected transpired, most vividly expressed in their differentiated resuscitations into various non-agricultural petty commodity producers – a work ethic inherited from about a century of their pre-history as labour tenants (during the South African version of primitive accumulation), working for themselves, as well as for landlords on labour tenant farms (Chapter Four). Their selection as beneficiaries of New Qwaqwa Farms on the basis of their business footing about two to three decades after their expulsion from farmland was part of a burgeoning land reform from the mid-1980s. Their post-land-reform class formation trajectories have been traced in this thesis, and their distinction into three class categories was not only inevitable, but a reflection of their objective reality, which only illuminates their material circumstances, endeavours, failures, and successes as capitalist farmers. The exercise of tracing class formation trajectories on New Qwaqwa Farms would have been incomplete without laying bare their circumspective class differentiation categories embedded in their economic histories. In Chapter Four, the researcher explains how to methodologically trace historical relations of reproduction that are often prospective determinants of subsequent economic trajectories of different classes within particular, contextualised social formations.

For example, the impoverished landed-property class category, described in Chapter Seven, emerged out of an iterative analysis of class formation over time and space. What constitutes the elements of this class, the impoverished landed property, are

shared, historically-determined attributes of impoverishment and inability to successfully reproduce as a class of small capitalists. Historical materialism reveals that this incapacitation primarily stems from the impoverished landed property's economic position at the lowest end of social differentiation, unable to muster off-farm capital resources towards sustained simple reproduction of their farms. The latter has been explained on the basis of their historical roots as typically a proletarian class and a part of classes of labour, currently with limited chances of off-farm skilled work for social mobility in contrast to the lower middle class (Chapter Eight), as well as the middle class proper, who can simply reproduce and accumulate agricultural capital in the area of study (Chapter Nine).

The impoverished landed property occupies the lowest end of social differentiation in South African land reform – its survival and reproduction primarily rest upon farmland rental income, marginal small-scale capitalist livestock (and limited crop) production, combined with precarious forms of off-farm employment. At the other extreme end of social differentiation at the top, exists agricultural households which are engaged in successful accumulation of agricultural capital. Unlike their impoverished landed property counterparts, these agricultural households have been able to accumulate capital on the basis of reinvestments of agricultural capital into expanded farm reproduction. This is inextricably linked to the latter's middle-class histories, and current economic positions of immediate kin, who are either investing significantly in farm production, or exerting no pressure on the farm enterprise for their social reproduction, unlike the immediate kin of the impoverished landed property class, forced as they are by the dull compulsion of economic forces, linked to the wider jobless economy, to consume agricultural capital which would be otherwise reinvested into expanded farm reproduction.

Inbetween the two extreme class categories described in this thesis, lies a fluid class of simple reproducers successfully reproducing their farm enterprises on the same scale of production, year after year. Various determinants underpin their existence, namely, stable off-farm income sources placing them in the category of the (lower) middle class proper. These off-farm income sources include skilled and relatively stable jobs, and sometimes small off-farm business. It is such access to off-farm income sources that distinguishes this fluid class of agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction

of small, land-reform farms from the impoverished landed property proper. However, the agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction of capital are analytically distinct from those engaged in successful accumulation. This is not obvious, but reflected in objective magnitudes of farm production investments and outputs, and the incapacity of the former to expand agricultural production, the same way as the latter.

Accumulation from below, then, although observable on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State (see Chapter Nine), is not the dominant trajectory of agrarian change in the area of study – only 24% of the sample were found to be on upward trajectories of accumulation. Other trajectories of class formation have been observed, particularly the constrained, and successful simple reproduction of small-scale land-reform farms – these cannot be simply labelled as failed land-reform projects because of their failure to accumulate capital from below, far from it – the reproduction of small-scale capitalist enterprises on land reform farms unsettles the land reform failure rhetoric. Instead, the dominant trajectory, engaged in by 76% of the sample, is that of constrained and successful simple reproduction of small-scale, livestock-centred, mixed-farming systems, combined with the renting out of some proportion of farmland for farm-rental income in social reproduction strategies, and relative modest farm investments. This multifaceted but core strategy of achieving simple, though constrained, reproduction of small-scale farming in post land reform realities of South Africa contributes significantly to the social reproduction of the agricultural households documented in Chapters Seven and Eight of this thesis.

Beyond this, some accumulation from below and from above is clearly unfolding in the area of study, although this is engaged in by a minority of beneficiaries and is not the main tendency. Accordingly, the core empirical chapters of this study (Chapters Seven to Nine) report how the researcher disaggregated the sample (n=62) into three class-analytic categories, namely: agricultural households engaged in (i) social reproduction, (ii) simple reproduction, and (iii) accumulation. These research findings illuminate the heterogeneous outcomes of improved access to land through land reform for socially differentiated sets of land reform beneficiaries. The next three sections summarise the key features of these class categories.

10.3 Agricultural Households Engaged in Social Reproduction

Agricultural households engaged in social reproduction constitute 50% of the sample (31 households from a sample of 62). In this category the function of farmland is to support the diversification of the base of social reproduction particularly for classes of labour, in conjunction with precarious access to off-farm income. These households are essentially constrained, simple reproducers of small-capitalist farm enterprises and in the area of study they own small livestock herds of 20 heads and below. The surface appearance of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction suggests that these are failed land reform projects which do not meet the expected outcomes of maximum farm output production, improved income and consequent poverty reduction. The researcher argues that such an assessment fails to illuminate the social reproduction function of improved access to land, particularly for classes of labour, as well as fragments of the middle class without the wherewithal to invest in increasing the scale of farm production.

The researcher argues that agricultural households engaged in social reproduction can also be viewed as a form of impoverished landed property, given their relatively strong reliance on farm-rental income in combination with marginal farming for social reproduction. Indeed, a total of 93,5% of agricultural households engaged in social reproduction can be categorised as an impoverished form of landed property. It is also argued that those who form an impoverished form of landed property are better off than others, such as the landless farm workers of South Africa (Wegerif et al. 2005) who lack access to land from which they could derive some benefits. Land is a significant asset when seen against the backdrop of deepened crises of social reproduction in the wider South African economy. For households who can be seen as impoverished landed property, beyond the constraints they experience on their prospects for accumulation from below, access to farm-rental income combined with marginal farming goes a long way to secure the social reproduction of immediate kin (see Chapter Seven). The researcher has described these farm-income flows as 'outward remittances', where farm income (in the form of farm-rental income and occasional livestock-sales income) supports the social reproduction of unemployed immediate kin living off-farm. It is also argued that if they could secure improved access to state subsidies or widened access

to off-farm income, agricultural households engaged in social reproduction have the potential to begin to accumulate from below.

The research findings of this study suggest that poverty-stricken classes of labour should be given land by the state through the land reform programme, even if they end up renting it out for much-needed rental income to underpin their social reproduction. Access to farm-rental income as well as marginal farming, makes them better-off than their landless counterparts, the classes of labour located on the fringes of towns and cities in South Africa (Wegerif et al. 2005). Some of the latter, especially on the fringes of small towns in the Eastern Free State do obtain casual work in peak crop harvesting periods on some of the studied farms, as well as on white-owned farms (Johnston 2015, 2007). However, without access to land, the latter's social reproduction is constrained, especially in contexts characterised by a recent history of farm evictions of former labour tenants, farm dwellers, and farm workers (Steinberg 2019, Wegerif et al. 2005).

The political construct of so-called 'pathetic black land beneficiaries who rent out land back to white farmers' is a misleading racial stereotype which obscures realities such as the renting in of agricultural land by successful land beneficiaries (the accumulators described in Chapter Nine) and the capture of agricultural state subsidies by a small number of the latter. The researcher argues that existing agricultural state subsidies targeting land reform beneficiaries should be reallocated on the basis of class analysis to those who need them most, such as members of the impoverished form of landed property, in order to help unleash accumulation from below. This is possible given the resources at hand, evident in the provision of state-sponsored grain-production machinery, as well as the National Emergent Red Meat Producers' Organisation (NERPO) cattle loans distributed to the few politically connected and well-off farmers in the area of study. The researcher also emphasises that cattle loans or sponsorships are more ideal for the agro-ecology of the area of study, a grassland biome where ruminants thrive. However, state support towards crop production is also important, as shown by cases of loans from the Land Bank in some of the abbreviated case studies in Chapter Nine.

10.4 Agricultural Households Engaged in Simple Reproduction

Agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction constitute 26% of the sample in the study, that is, a total of 16 out of 62 cases in the area of study (Chapter Eight). They are internally differentiated by commodity specialisation within mixed-farming systems: (a) a total of six dairy-centred simple reproducers (37,5% of 16 simple reproducers) specialise in milk production combined with other livestock types, crop production, and the renting out of some proportion of arable land; (b) a total of four crop-/livestock-centred simple reproducers (or 25% of 16 simple reproducers) specialise in the production of crops combined with livestock, as well as farm-rental income for renting out some proportion of their arable land, and (c) a total of six (37,5% of 16 simple reproducers) beef-centred simple reproducers specialise in beef-cattle production, often combined with leasing out their arable land, sometimes after diversifying away from crop production.

These successful simple reproducers are characterised by relatively good access to off-farm income on the part of the immediate kin of those living on the farms, which frees up agricultural capital to be used to ensure the simple reproduction of farm enterprises (Chapter Eight). This is in contrast to those households categorised as impoverished landed property, who lack access to sustained off-farm income to insulate their farms' simple reproductive capacity from the demands of social reproduction wrought by immediate kin (Murray 1994).

The researcher has hypothesised that some of the immediate kin within households engaged in simple reproduction are more likely to invest (early) retirement funds into farm production, following in the footsteps of their peers, i.e. some of the accumulators described in Chapter Nine. This is more likely to unleash accumulation from below, given the absence of state agricultural subsidy. This proposition highlights the potential success of the middle class with improved access to land, as suggested by Bernstein (2003, p. 218):

In the absence of adequate public provision of the means of farming beyond access to land, it may be only richer peasant or 'worker peasant' households (or indeed elements of the middle class) that command the resources (capital) to establish production on new and/or additional and/or better land acquired through redistribution.

The households engaged in simple reproduction in the sample of this study may only be temporarily located in this category, given their middle-class attributes. Subsequent research may reveal that accumulation from below has taken place, with investments of (early) retirement packages used to expand the scale or scope of farm production by immediate kin who are currently engaged in skilled and stable off-farm employments. For example, in Chapter Eight, there are documented case studies where there are concrete retirement plans for investment in livestock expansion in order to pursue accumulation from below. Furthermore, within the simple reproduction category, there are cases with fairly large, family-owned livestock herds (e.g. of 85 head of cattle), thanks to skilled, well-remunerated jobs held by immediate kin. These family enterprises are showing signs of accumulation expressed in livestock herd expansion which may be more visible in the near future, with possible accelerated livestock herd expansion owing to investments of retirement funds or even loans in the interim.

The simple reproduction category illuminates the fact that some of the middle class with improved access to land are not forced to consume agricultural capital, given their access to skilled off-farm jobs that fund their social reproduction. This is in contrast to those households classified as a form of impoverished landed property who are forced to consume agricultural capital or whatever farm income they receive from farm-rental income and marginal farming. However, for agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction, accumulation from below is temporarily constrained by their current lack of substantive capital to invest in expanding the scale of production. As with those categorised as impoverished landed property, agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction could benefit from state agricultural subsidy captured by the hands of a few well-off farmers in the area of study. Nonetheless, on their own, agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction are in an advantageous economic position to begin to accumulate from below in the near future, in contrast to an impoverished landed property without access to off-farm income. Access to off-farm income on the part of agricultural households engaged in simple reproduction constitutes some of the elements towards future accumulation from below on their own, without state support.

10.5 Agricultural Households Engaged in Accumulation From Below and From Above

Agricultural households engaged in accumulation number 15, constituting 24% of the sample (n=62) and are described in Chapter Nine. They are internally differentiated according to commodity specialisations, for example, there are those who are crop-livestock-centred (a total of 11 out of 15 accumulators), dairy-centred (two out of 15 accumulators), and beef-centred (two out of 15 accumulators). The crop-centred accumulators appear most capitalised in terms of the capital invested in the expanded reproduction of their crops and grain, as well as livestock enterprises which typically involve combinations of sheep and beef cattle in mixed-farming systems. Some of the crop-livestock-centred accumulators are constrained by land size in their expanded reproduction and have not only rented in additional land but are also pursuing other strategies in order to obtain more land such as through state support, as well as privately.

The dairy-centred accumulators specialise in milk production under contract with a milk-processing company, within a public-private partnership with the state which forms an important support base. They operate mixed-farming operations and have other, often somewhat marginal farm enterprises other than dairy, such as sheep, as well as the production of yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy-cow winter feeding.

The beef-centred accumulators specialise in the accumulation and expansion of the beef-cattle herd and typically rent in grazing land from neighbouring farmers, sometimes in combination with the renting out of some or all of their arable land. Beef-centred accumulators often diversify out of crop production given its capital-intensive nature, to focus exclusively on livestock. Their beef-herd expansion is also somewhat constrained by land size, as manifested by their renting in of grazing land from neighbouring farmers.

Contemporary studies of processes of class formation, and the accumulation of agrarian capital in post and ongoing land reform contexts have to deal with and problematise the issue of black elitism, and attendant tendencies of accumulation from above, where the latter have taken hold of the local state. In contemporary South African critical agrarian studies, successful black capitalist farmers have gained the reputation of accumulating

from above, that is, their generation and accumulation of wealth is based in part on their access to political and institutional power (Mtero et al. 2019). Research findings shown in this thesis partly illuminate this dynamic, however, the researcher argues that this view can be too simplistic, and it potentially obscures our understanding of processes of accumulation from below that ultimately intersect with accumulation from above. The researcher argues that a retrospective, economic history approach to analysing accumulators within the South African land reform project helps us in tracing trajectories of accumulation from below. However, this does not mean ignoring processes of accumulation from above. Where these occur, it is because the contradictions of capitalism compel capitalists to accumulate capital in whatever manner they can, including through corruption.

Trajectories of accumulation from below are dominant for the class of farmers which have been categorised as accumulators. These can be seen as successful cases of land reform in South Africa. In Chapter Nine, the researcher has shown that access to off-farm income from retirement funds earned in off-farm skilled work and off-farm business, as well as the reinvestment of agricultural capital into the farm, form part of the ingredients for upward trajectories of accumulation. Another strategy is the renting in of land by agricultural households engaged in accumulation from their neighbours. The renting in of farmland on the part of the accumulators is part of their expanded reproduction strategy, as capitalist farmers compelled by the dull compulsion of economic forces to accumulate capital in various ways, or go under, or perhaps stagnate as merely simple reproducers.

Beyond the contradictions of elite capture, the most successful cases of land reform in South Africa at the current conjuncture illuminate the success of the black middle class in gaining access to land and making productive use of it. This thread of the success of the black middle class in South Africa land reform has hitherto coalesced in Mtero and colleagues' (2019) research study and is also an important finding of this thesis. However, this is not the end of the story, since there is a concurrent process of agrarian reform aimed at classes of labour, whose class and economic position is substantively different from the South African black middle class. This is the subject addressed in the next section.

10.6 Agrarian Reform for Classes of Labour, Impoverished Landed Property and Prospects for Accumulation From Below

The thesis that agrarian reform should aim to benefit classes of labour (Bernstein 2003) is based fundamentally on a conceptual framework centred on class analysis of both the historical and current determinants of the political project of land reform policy. For example, through class analysis, differentiated class categories of existing land beneficiaries can be discerned and prospective policy engagement can be embarked upon that seeks to make agrarian reform work for the poorest segments of society. The agrarian reform for classes of labour thesis is also fundamentally a critique of undifferentiated categorisations such as ‘small farmers’, ‘peasants’, and so on, posited by so-called neo-classical neo-populist and agrarian populist theorists.

The agrarian reform for classes of labour thesis posited in this study is founded in part upon cases where farm workers and members of other classes of labour are allocated land through land reform. It applies to cases in Zimbabwe where farm workers were allocated land through land reform (Scoones et al. 2018b), as well as to Brazilian resettlement farms occupied by differentiated classes of labour, including landless rural workers (Robles 2018, Sauer and Meszaros 2016). This study is therefore in conversation with the widespread narrative of farm worker ‘victimhood’ in South African land reform (Sender and Johnston 2004), although cautiously so, because former farm workers, now land beneficiaries, tend to take time to shake off the yoke of their material status as classes of labour. They are often undermined or side-lined in the implementation of state policies such as the provision of agricultural subsidies. However, the larger potential of their often-relentless efforts to farm on a small scale on redistributed land should not be underestimated.

In Chapter Seven, it has been shown how the former farm-worker households who have gained access to land through land reform are able to expand their social reproduction base, through combinations of social-grant income with meagre livestock sales income, farm-rental income, and sometimes wage income from casual off-farm work. The researcher has applauded the South African state for allocating land to this class of farmers, i.e. former farm workers, who also received few head of cattle from the state at the time of their settlement on redistributed land in the early 2000s. Further applause went to the state for allocating individualised title deeds to these former farm-worker

families who have become landowners. Private title deeds give them the authority to rent out some proportion of their farmland for rental income whilst they are engaged in marginal farming on the farmland that is not rented out. This is against the backdrop of their generalised unemployment in the wider economy and attendant crises of social reproduction and lack of off-farm capital resources which they could use to invest significantly in farm production, perhaps allowing accumulation from below to commence.

However, the argument that the allocation of individualised title deeds to classes of labour is progressive is peculiar to South Africa and should not be seen as deriving from neo-developmental rhetoric on the benefits of private titling, far from it. Private title to farmland by classes of labour should be understood as land ownership from below that empowers constrained land beneficiaries to rent out some proportion of farmland for much-needed farm-rental income whilst engaged in marginal farming on the rest of the farm.

However, lauding the South African state for allocating land to classes of labour may obscure current 'state neglect' (Hall and Kepe 2017) of these former farm workers who have gained improved access to land. Central to state neglect are forms of class politics, perhaps best described as elite capture of state agricultural subsidies by a small, though powerful local fraternity of elite farmers, with petty bourgeois elements controlling the distribution of state resources through the municipality and local farmer organisations. This local elite overshadows marginalised land beneficiaries and renders them invisible to the ministries of land and agriculture which rely on local political gatekeepers in their attempts to distribute resources such as state agricultural subsidies of various sorts, as well as land (Mtero et al. 2019).

Tendencies to elite capture constrain accumulation from below by classes of labour with improved access to land through land reform. These tendencies shut the door in the face of landless classes of labour who may wish to obtain land through land reform (Mtero et al. 2019). An alternative posited here is state-driven land reform from below which targets classes of labour, not only in official rhetoric but in terms of decentralised and flexible land administration where the least educated, least empowered, and less vocal, including women, can approach the state to request land or state support in cases where land has been obtained through land reform. This could then potentially open

space for accumulation from below for classes of labour by first expanding their social reproduction base and then launching accumulation from below with the help of some form of sustained support from the state. This is key, because they cannot accumulate from below on their own given their lack of access to off-farm capital resources, the result of their class position as fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2003), with limited options for off-farm income. This includes factors such as limited education flowing from their farm work history, or similar class position, as well as generalised unemployment in the wider economy, regardless of their endowments with this or that skill.

In Chapter Seven it was also discussed how classes of labour who become beneficiaries of land reform can transform into a class of impoverished landed property. In South Africa, land redistribution has created various land tenure options, such as holding land through Communal Property Associations, private title, or leases of state-owned land. Against this backdrop, the researcher posits that the concept of an impoverished form of landed property which has been created and reproduced by land reform in South Africa. The researcher argues that this class consists of all those land beneficiaries who rent out their land for rent income or dividends which are, in real terms, insufficient for their social reproduction, let alone accumulation from below. It is also argued that these can be marginalised land beneficiaries, who are essentially classes of labour, within Communal Property Associations who nominally own land which is rented out to agrarian capital by core local elites within these CPAs and trusts (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014, Ngubane and Brooks 2013, Ngubane 2012) as well as those farm-worker land beneficiaries in the so-called equity-schemes in South African land reform who are nominal owners of their land and continue to be marginalised farm workers on the same land, whilst the benefits of farm production remain elusive (Tom 2006, Kruger 2008).

For marginalised land beneficiaries in these cases, the dividends from renting out arable land are insufficient and inconsistent, which is aggravated by their exclusion from their own land, or at least the land that they nominally own on a communal basis for small-scale agricultural purposes. This is most often articulated in cases involving high-value land with conducive arable land for horticultural produce, citrus, deciduous fruit, and other high-value crops (Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014). It is also

observed in so-called ‘community game farms’ or ‘community nature conservation areas’, where land beneficiaries become mere shareholders through CPAs and gain inadequate benefits, if they gain anything at all, in the form of dividends, yet are also barred from accessing their own land for agricultural purposes by core local elites in land-holding entities (Ngubane and Brooks 2013). However, in rare circumstances, marginalised beneficiaries invade their own land for small-scale agricultural purposes and to gain access to natural resources, such as firewood, grassland, and wild fruit, in cases where they are barred from accessing these by communal landholding entities (Ngubane 2018).

The researcher argues that in this study that the concept of an impoverished landed property is useful for analysing cases where recently redistributed land is communally owned and rented out to agrarian capital. These arrangements based on the expectation of the distribution of dividends or shares to the wider community of land beneficiaries, generally do not materialise, or so insignificant that amounts to nothing at all. However, in this study it has also become apparent that an impoverished landed property also exists within individualised private ownership to land redistributed within South Africa’s ongoing land reform. This is quite rare, for it requires subdivision of agricultural land and its redistribution and allocation to individual households with each having a private title deed over its allocated portion.

The researcher argues that in these rare occasions, land beneficiaries can also be conceptualised as an impoverished landed property, but only if their class positions resemble fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein 2017, 2010, 2004) and only if their land rent income is negligible due to systematic marginalisation. A retired judge with a state private pension who received a piece of land as a result of his membership of the ruling party but is renting out land for rental income whilst engaged in small livestock production, cannot be seen as impoverished landed property. Instead, he should be seen as a simple reproducer of his small livestock herd through the use of pension funds and some farm-rental income.

It is suggested that beneficiaries in the category of impoverished landed property with access to private title deeds are relatively better-off than those in communal landholding entities such as CPAs, given their freedom to make decisions such as renting out some proportion of their land and using the rest for small-scale agriculture (typically

livestock), thus being able to combine farm-rental income with meagre livestock sales. This is in contrast to their counterparts, members of the category of impoverished landed property but located in communal landowning entities (i.e. the marginalised land beneficiaries in CPAs, community trusts, and equity schemes) (Sommerville 2019, Manenzhe 2015, Davis 2014, Tom 2006).

Beyond South Africa, farm-rental dynamics in ongoing and post-land reform contexts are unfolding elsewhere, such as in Zimbabwe (Mudimu 2020), Brazil²⁸, Bolivia (McKay and Colque 2016), and Canada (Sommerville 2019) where redistributed land is rented out to elements of agrarian capital. It will suffice to note here that these reverse land rentals or the rolling back of land reform, are ‘counter-revolutions’ arising from the deepening of capitalist social relations in post-land reform contexts, which may have been constrained prior to land reform (Mudimu 2020, McKay and Colque 2016, Ye 2015, Zhang 2015, Hairong and Yiuyang 2015, Bush 2002).

10.7 Accumulation From Below: The Wider Policy Implications

A robust, retrospective analysis of the economic history of current accumulators on the studied land reform farms reveals patterns of accumulation from below, as well as accumulation from above by a few. For the latter, access to state agricultural subsidies such as for the acquisition of crop production machinery, to NERPO cattle loans and other resources such as intermittent drought relief packages, have enabled them to expand farm production even further. This illuminates the utility of state agricultural subsidies in aiding successful accumulation. However, the problem is disproportionate access to current agricultural state subsidies in South Africa, where they are controlled by a select few petty bourgeois or capitalist farmers. The researcher’s view is that the immediate task at hand in terms of policy shifts, is to redirect agricultural state subsidies

²⁸ The researcher had many conversations about these issues with colleagues in Brazil during a writing retreat from November 2018 to February 2019, where it became apparent that the renting out of land by beneficiaries of land redistribution in that country is under-researched. Discussions are underway with other scholars such as Melanie Sommerville (2019) to further develop the concept of an impoverished landed property through empirical research, particularly in post-land redistribution contexts.

from the petty bourgeoisie to agricultural households engaged in social reproduction (Chapter Seven), as well as those engaged in simple reproduction (Chapter Eight).

These state subsidies could aid processes of accumulation from below and much more successful cases of land reform could emerge, as is evident in the few cases where these subsidies have been received. In Chapter Nine, it has been suggested that the small fraternity of accumulators who control state agricultural subsidies should be reminded about their accumulation paths and how the recently dismantled apartheid state constrained their accumulation and thus that the urgent political task is to rekindle the embers of accumulation from below by currently marginalised farmers on recently redistributed land. This implies strategic alliances between the majority of the land beneficiaries who do not receive state support to demand such from the local petty bourgeoisie.

The next section highlights the often-neglected livestock production in South African land reform in the shadow of the powerful massive plant-crop national land reform discourse.

10.8 Successful Livestock Production in the Shadow of Massive Grain (Plant Crop) Production

The researcher has criticised land reform narratives which assume that promoting massive plant levels of crop production should be at the centre of policy for an alternative centred on extensive livestock production (Scoones 2020), particularly in areas characterised by grassland biomes. In Chapter Six, the researcher berated the authors of these narratives for their failure to recognise the importance of livestock in the livelihoods of land beneficiaries. The core empirical chapters of this thesis have highlighted the centrality of livestock production in the simple reproduction and accumulation strategies of the studied farmers. However, the research findings presented in this thesis show also that grain/crop and livestock production can be combined in mixed-farming systems, often successfully.

For example, in the area of study, regardless of its localised agro-ecological context (a grassland biome) and regardless of the centrality of livestock on most of the farms, as well as surrounding municipal commonage land and afar (Atkinson and Ingle 2020) state agricultural subsidy is centred almost entirely on crop production. Much the same

can be said about Land Bank loans. The researcher has argued that this needs to change and perhaps without much effort required other than the wider distribution of NERPO cattle loans to marginal land beneficiaries in grassland biomes. An over-emphasis on crop production can lead to further wasteful expenditure in purchasing tractors, and attendant inputs by the state, as we have witnessed in the Eastern Free State.

10.9 Centring South African Land reform Outcomes Within Global Land-redistribution Debates

How do these findings relate to debates in the wider literature on land reform policies, both globally and in South Africa? This section briefly explores this question. The neo-classical, neo-populist advocacy of land redistribution for small-scale agriculture of scholars such as Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2004), beyond weaknesses such as its failure to see unequal social relations within the peasantry, is potentially powerful in the terrain of political struggle because it takes the side of the poor or classes of labour (Bernstein 2004). Much the same can be said about agrarian populism (Moyo et al. 2019, McMichael 2006). However, only if these progressive elements are not infiltrated and captured by mainstream 'developmentalist' ideology (Byres 2004), such as the recent embrace by the World Bank of the large-scale capitalist agricultural model (Oya 2009). The latter is seemingly monolithic, without capacity nor tolerance for alternative capitalist agricultural pathways out of poverty, such as petty commodity production and small-scale capitalist agriculture on redistributed agricultural land documented in this thesis.

It follows, then, that in as much as petty commodity production in non-agricultural enterprises is recognised as part of the fabric of capitalism (Neocosmos 1993, Bernstein 1988), perhaps the same logic could be extended to the analysis of land reform, which is that, under capitalism, petty commodity production in agricultural enterprises may continue to exist. It is not necessary to assume that they will evolve in a linear progression towards large-scale commercial agriculture. In other words, petty commodity production, expressed in small-scale capitalist agriculture, can exist and reproduce over time, without developing into fully-fledged, large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprises. They should not be seen as failed land reform projects if they fail to meet the expectations of the large-scale commercial agriculture 'developmentalist' narrative so pervasive in latter-day land reform. Evidence from land

reform farms in Zimbabwe and South Africa cited in this thesis allude to the dynamics of small-scale farming centred on petty commodity production in post-land reform contexts (Scoones et al. 2018a). Furthermore, the researcher's own research findings on redistributed land in the Eastern Free State province of South Africa illuminate differentiated patterns of small-scale capitalist agriculture and petty commodity production by land beneficiaries, with differentiated economic outcomes contingent on particular historically embedded socio-economic dynamics within a wider context of (generalised precarious) off-farm employment and crises of social reproduction on the part of immediate kin of land beneficiaries (Chapters Seven to Nine).

The findings of this thesis on the heterogeneity of land reform outcomes are in contrast to narrow views regarding the confiscation of large-scale farms for redistribution as smaller family farms, as evident in the work of Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2004), as well as the short-sightedness of advocating the retention of large-scale farms on the grounds of their 'efficiency' (Vink and Kirsten 2019, Sender and Johnston 2004). Both accounts can benefit from considerations of a heterogeneous land reform centred on differentiated small-scale capitalist production, alongside expanded reproduction which takes into consideration the aspirations of land beneficiaries themselves. This is a form of agrarian political economy that takes into account the hidden social relations within fluid production forms and locates them within wider structural determinants, such as the current crisis of social reproduction faced by classes of labour (Bernstein 2004). This approach also understands the aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie to engage in accumulation from below, who may aspire towards large-scale capitalist farming in due course. It views them through the lens of objective analysis of their economic history, as well as the current contradictions manifested in intersections of accumulation from below and above.

Heterogeneous land reform outcomes also include the evolution of differentiated farming systems, in contrast to the monoculture of large-scale capitalist farming. Land reform promotes the emergence of a spectrum of small-scale capital intensive and extensive farming systems for different purposes. There are other aspects of this complexity as well, including a range of livelihood strategies, farming scales, degrees of farm capitalisation, and the heterogeneity of benefits of farming in terms of land

beneficiaries' welfare and limited, but real upward trajectories of accumulation for a minority of farmers.

The issue of accumulation from above, beyond its illumination of the contradictions of capitalism, and its objective intersection with processes of accumulation from below, ironically highlights that where state support in the form of agricultural subsidy is received by farmers, farm production tends to increase (that is, if the recipient does not spend it all on luxurious consumption). For example, some of the abbreviated case studies documented in Chapter Nine show expanded levels of farm production following injections of state agricultural subsidies, or from the private sector. This alludes to the possible role of agricultural subsidies in insulating domestic agricultural sectors from the shocks of the global market, as in some cases of European agriculture where state agricultural subsidies have been maintained even within the current neoliberal order (Akram-Lodhi, and Kay 2009).

On farm workers and their marginalisation in post-land reform contexts, greater nuance and caution is needed in the analysis of their situation (Bernstein 2004). For example, the centrality of the pattern of one herder per farm in the area of study is crucial in the reproduction of small livestock herds on the basis of hired and sometimes family labour. This is arguably quantitatively insignificant in terms of farm employment creation in post land reform contexts but also is arguably better than nothing in the context of wider crises of social reproduction in Southern Africa (Slater 2001, 2002). Perhaps with improved levels of state agricultural subsidies, there might be improvements in the absorption of farm labour on redistributed farmland, as is the case on particular land reform farms on upward trajectories of accumulation documented in Chapter Nine. This is best illuminated by dairy-centred accumulators, who employ more workers in milk production thanks to the public-private subsidies in which dairy farming is anchored in the area of study. In the context of mixed-farming systems, dairy-centred accumulators combine milk production with varying combinations of beef cattle, sheep, and/or crop production (particularly yellow maize for processing into silage for dairy-cow winter feeding), which translates into additional labour absorption, temporarily or in the long term, in real terms.

10.10 Conclusion: Socio-spatial Trajectories of Class Formation on Redistributed Land

In Chapter Four the researcher examined the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of labour-tenant families from white-owned farms in the Free State into Qwaqwa Bantustan/labour reserve, a process traced from the 1840s to the 1950s and then reaching its peak in the 1960s and 1970s. In Marxist agrarian scholarship this is seen as flowing from a process of primitive accumulation in the development of capitalist agriculture on a world-historical scale (Bernstein 2003). To be sure, the uprooting, displacement, and expulsions of labour tenant peasant families from farmland into surplus labour off-farm settlements of the Qwaqwa labour reserve/Bantustan. Chapter Four also traced how some of the former labour tenants, and share-croppers emerged as differentiated petty commodity producers and small-scale capitalists of various stripes when they were not expected to succeed in the Qwaqwa labour reserve. The material conditions they faced without land on which to rear livestock, forced many to convert their livestock into 'deadstock' embodied in the small-scale enterprises that mushroomed in Qwaqwa from the 1970s onwards (Bank 1991, 1992). By the late 1980s many of the latter were thriving enterprises and a perfect match for land redistribution as per screening requirements of the state, which targeted black entrepreneurs as beneficiaries (Claassen et al. 2014). Spatially, these can be conceptualised as livelihood trajectories that transcend space and time (Murray 2002), indicated by the heading of a subsection in Chapter Four entitled: *Farm labour tenancy to off-farm petty commodity production and diversification to farming on redistributed land, 1960s to 1980s*. How class formation has unfolded on the redistributed land and with what livelihood implications, has been summarised above and can be conceptualised as fluid and intersecting processes of social reproduction (Chapter Seven), simple reproduction (Chapter Eight), and accumulation (Chapter Nine). In other words, more than 30 years after the first farmers were allocated land in the area of study, three broad classes of agricultural households have formed, namely, agricultural households engaged in (i) social reproduction, (ii) simple reproduction, and (iii) accumulation.

The researcher's greatest hope is that these research findings will lead to appreciation of the strength of historically-informed agrarian Marxism as an approach to the analysis of class formation in post-land reform contexts, as well as wider processes of agrarian

and social change. This could lead to a much-needed appreciation of heterogeneity in land reform outcomes, the existence of alternative pathways in the evolution of farm production systems, and the central importance of the attendant class implications in thinking about policies of poverty reduction through land redistribution.



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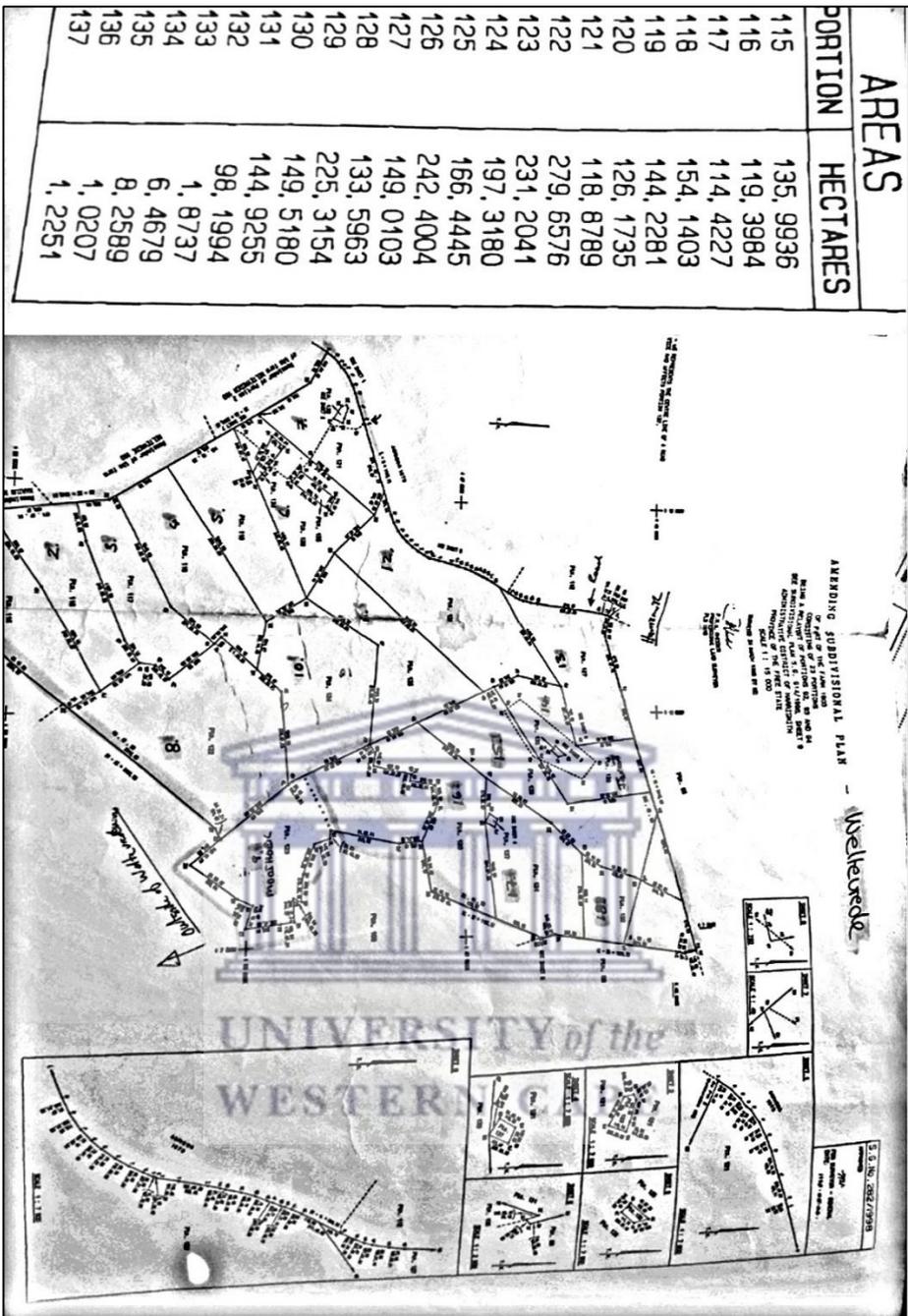
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Appendix 1: Subdivision of farmland in the Eastern Free State



Appendix 2: Livestock for social reproduction and accumulation in South Africa



Appendix 3: (Immigrant) long-term herders on land reform farms in the Eastern Free State: Portraits



(Immigrant) Long-term Herders on Land Reform Farms in the Eastern Free State.

Appendix 4: Long walk to landownership

LONG WALK TO LAND OWNERSHIP REALISED

Title deeds were handed over to 33 beneficiaries at Phutaditjhaba in the Free State. The beneficiaries had previously leased the land.

"Yours has truly been an agonizingly lengthy journey. Since 1995 when you first made that impassionate plea to purchase this valuable land on which we stand with pride, the land on which as lessees hitherto your future and that of your children was inconveniently wrapped in an unkind blanket of uncertainty," said Deputy Director-General of Land Affairs, Sarah Choane while handing over 33 title deeds to the beneficiaries.

Four state-owned farms were also handed over to the Maluti-A-Phofung Municipality, which is a milestone in the communities' lives and history by

for Agricultural Development to change the land ownership patterns in South Africa.

Most of the farms were sold through the State Land Disposal Act, as the farmers did not qualify for the R15 000 grant. Mmabatho Mphuthi, one of the beneficiaries, said: "My unit is 154 hectares and I use it for beef, dairy, broilers and vegetables farming."

She currently has 17 beef and five dairy cattle. She presently employs two men and two women.

"When I got into this project I was unemployed. Then I took agricultural training with the Department of Agriculture. I do not say the training has made me the perfect farmer, but its contribution to my skills is immense," she conceded.

Edited report by TK

Appendix 5: Mbele success story of farmer



Ephraim Mbele, an emerging dairy farmer, and CenDel mentor, Kotie Annandale

A new dairy for Ephraim

Another success story from the Centre for Producer Development (CenDel) is that of Ephraim Mbele, a dairy farmer from Qwaqwa.

Mbele has been involved with dairy farming for about five years and has since February 2007, been under the mentorship of Kotie Annandale. He is now the proud owner of a brand new four-station dairy.

The cows were previously milked in the open. The new dairy will increase milk quality and hygiene standards. Mbele currently milks seven Shorthorn cows and delivers 85 litres of milk per day to Nestlé.

Are you an emerging dairy farmer who is producing more milk than you can use? Would you like to take part in the mentorship programmes of the Centre for Producer Development (CenDel) as a mentee?

If you want to take part, you can apply for a chance to participate in the CenDel programmes where an experienced dairy farmer acts as your mentor. Mentors share their knowledge and teach you the ropes of successful dairy farming.

If you want to be considered as a mentee, you can contact Dr Nico Schutte of CenDel on telephone 012 843 5744 or 082 807 1539 or e-mail him at nico.schutte@mpo.co.za for more information. **UM**

12 UBISI MAIL | DECEMBER 2007

Appendix 6. Survey Questionnaire

Investigating socio-spatial trajectories of class formation: accumulation from below and above on 'New Qwaqwa Farms' from the mid-1980s to 2016

Questionnaire number				
Site				
Location				

Name of respondent	
--------------------	--

Farm name	
Extension number	

Location	
----------	--

Particulars of visit	Date	Time started	Time ended
First visit			

Hello, my name is Mngqobi Ngubane, I am a PhD student supervised by Professor Ben Cousins of the University of Western Cape in Cape Town. I am conducting a study of class formation on the "New Qwaqwa Farms". Your farm has been selected for participation in this survey. I would like to ask permission to interview the main farmer from this homestead. The selected farmer's participation is voluntary i.e. he or she has the right to refuse. The information obtained from all participating farmers will be compiled in a report and the findings will be presented to people in the surveyed areas. No names will be referred to in the report. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you have any questions before we start? **IF NO, CONTINUE WITH THE INTERVIEW.**

1. FARM HOUSEHOLD

NAME OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD:

	Col 1 1. Full name	Col 2 2. Gender		Col 3 3. Year of birth and age of this person	Col 4 4. How is this person related to you?	Col 5 5. What is the marital status of this person?	Col 6 6. How often is this person present at this homestead?	Col 7 7. Level of education
		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	/				



INCOME SOURCES OF FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDING IN THE HOUSEHOLD

	Col 1		Income source 1		Income source 2		Income source 3	
	Full name	Description	Cash per month	Description	Cash per month	Description	Cash per month	
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
11								
12								



2. INCOME SOURCES OF FAMILY MEMBERS NOT RESIDING IN THE HOUSEHOLD THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FARMING ENTERPRISE

Col 1	Income source 1		Income source 2		Income source 3		
	Full name	Description	Cash per month	Description	Cash per month	Description	Cash per month
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							



4. INCOME SOURCES OF FAMILY MEMBERS PRIOR TO SETTLEMENT ON THIS FARM

Col 1		Col 3			Col 4	Col 5
Full Name	Income source	Description	Cash/Month (estimation)	Is this a source of income today? Yes = 1; No = 2	Location e.g. Qwaqwa	Year (e.g. 1984 1990)
1.	Income source 1:			1		
	Income source 2:			2		
	Income source 3:					
2.	Income source 1:			1		
	Income source 2:			2		
	Income source 3:					
3.	Income source 1:			1		
	Income source 2:			2		
	Income source 3:					
4.	Income source 1:			1		
	Income source 2:			2		
	Income source 3:					

5.3. Have you owned other farms in the past (Please describe history of farming)

6. LAND OWNERSHIP ON "NEW QWAQWA FARMS"

Col 1	Col 2	From whom do you rent land?		Duration (Months/Yrs)	Col 3	To whom do you rent out?		Duration (Months/Yrs)
How much land do you own?	How much land do you rent in?				How much land do you rent out?			
Ha	Ha	1	Ha		Ha	1	Ha	
		2	Ha			2	Ha	
		3	Ha			3	Ha	

6.1. Land Ownership elsewhere

If yes, how many animals?

Cattle	
Sheep	
Goats	
Pigs	
Poultry	
Other	

7. LAND USE TYPES ON FARM(S) {i.e. On 'New Qwaqwa farms' & elsewhere}

Farm name	Extension number	Total # of hectares	Location (e.g. 'New Qwaqwa Farms or old Qwaqwa)	Arable land Dry cropping	Arable land Irrigated cropping	Grazing land	Irrigated Pastures	Residential land	Total Hectares of Worked land on farm
1		ha		ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha
2		ha		ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha
3		ha		ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha
4		ha		ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha
5		ha		ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha

8. CROPPING ENTERPRISES IN 2015/16

Crop type	Ha under crop	Total yield/ha	Yield/ha	Value of sales	Gross margin
Yellow maize					
White maize					
Green maize					
Maize for silage					
Sugar beans					
Dry beans					
Wheat					
Sorghum					
Groundnuts					
Potatoes					
Vegetables					
Cherries					
Apples					
Other					



9. CROPPING ENTERPRISES IN 2014/15

Crop type	Ha under crop	Total yield/ha	Yield/ha	Value of sales	Gross margin
Yellow maize					
White maize					
Green maize					
Maize for silage					
Sugar beans					
Dry beans					
Wheat					
Sorghum					
Groundnuts					
Potatoes					
Vegetables					
Cherries					
Apples					
Other					



10. LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES

Livestock Type	No. of owned animals	Purchases in last 12 months	Cash spent	Sales in last 12 months	Cash received (Rands)	No. of Deaths	No. Slaughtered animals	Comments
Dairy								
Cattle (beef production)								
Sheep								
Goats								
Poultry								
Other (specify)								



11. FARMING ASSETS

Asset Type	No. Owned	Year acquired	Age (years)	Working order?		Cost
				Yes=1;No=2		
Farm equipment				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Other farm equipment (specify)				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Vehicles				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Irrigation equipment				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Other irrigation equipment				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Buildings				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	
Other buildings (Specify)				1	2	
				1	2	
				1	2	

12. MAJOR PROBLEMS FACED

13. INVOLVEMENT IN FARMER ASSOCIATION AND/OR ORGANISATIONS

Name of Organisation/Association	Duration of Membership	Type of Assistance	Notes

