

WITS SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

A Late Harvest

Post '94 policy & its implications in the Hex
River Valley

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ABSTRACT:

This report presents research into policy implications in the Hex River Valley in the Western Cape Province. The research aims to understand how key policy interventions introduced by the democratic national government have performed over the past 20 years in this specific geographic area. The policy examined relate specifically to of agriculture, labour, housing, land reform, black economic empowerment, and substance abuse. The findings show mixed results. Some policy has gone a long way in improving the lives of people in the valley. In other instances it has been woefully inadequate. Often, policy is simply unable to keep up with the changing landscape and the new problems that continue to develop. All the while the table grape industry at the heart of this settlement has proved to be incredibly flexible in adapting. This report consists of two sections. The first is a long-form journalistic piece presenting the research and its findings in a narrative writing style which is intended to engage the reader. The second section is the scholarly methods document sets out the academic research supporting this work. It also analyses on the manner in which the research was conducted and the reasons therefore.

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SECTION ONE: LONG-FORM REPORT

CALM PALMS

The disa uniflora, a bright red and reclusive orchid, is native to the Western Cape. In the summer months grows unassumingly on the damp, mossy slopes of the Hex River Mountain range which encircles the verdant quilt of vineyards that has characterised this picturesque valley for over 200 years.

The red disa is at the centre of a well-worn legend of the witch of the Hex River Valley. In 1768 at Buffelskraal, one of the six original farms in the area, lived the beautiful Eliza Meiring who was daughter to a farming family. To win her heart she tasked her suitors to bring her a disa from the Matroosberg – the highest peak in the Hex River mountain range. The admirer who Eliza favoured – known as either Jean Durand or Frans, depending on which version you are hearing – made it up the mountain and indeed found a disa, only to fall to his death with the red bloom clutched in hand. The news of his death, and the immense grief that followed, turned Eliza to madness and her family were forced to lock her up. But one moonlit night dressed in her white night robes, she escaped and followed the same path to the Matroosberg cliffs where she leapt to her death. When the moon is full, the story goes, Eliza can be heard wailing and sometimes seen wondering the foothills of the mountain in search of her love.

My mother was born in the valley in mid-February, when the disa is in full bloom. But, despite spending her entire childhood here, she has never seen one with her own eyes. My grandmother, Ouma Marie, too, lived in the valley for much of her life, has never seen one either. I like to think my grandfather Jack, remembered as a flamboyant and adventurous man, would have caught sight of a disa during one of his regular rides up and into the mountains on horseback.

My grandfather – known fondly by locals as Baas Jackie van die Bo-Vallei – was a maverick. He wasn't born in the valley and certainly wasn't like the other farmers. He swanned around the small, conservative town in his Mercedes Benz and tanned himself brown as a berry with Coppertone tanning oil whenever he had the chance. He was a player on the stock exchange and a big game hunter in Mozambique and Angola and paying his way up and down the continent with crates of KWV brandy. My grandfather, and my great grandfather, farmed what everyone in the valley farms – table grapes. They are largely bound for abroad, ever since the railway to carry diamonds from Kimberly was built through this pass on route to the coast.

Charl Palm and his family are the last of my relatives to still produce table grapes in the Hex River Valley. He is the third generation to farm here. His son, Andre, will be the fourth when he takes over the 40 hectares of farmland. Palm, like many farmers I've met, is well informed and deeply concerned about politics. At the same time he has a sunny disposition and a seemingly endless repertoire of anecdotes and jokes to add to any topic of conversation. Known teasingly by locals as the "Calm Palm's" for their tendency to be late in getting anywhere, on a late Sunday afternoon I did wait – although only briefly – for Palm to meet me under the shade of a large, old, oak tree outside his late mother (aunt Hilda's) old, but large, house. "Farming table grapes is not an easy way to make money, but it is a good quality of life," Palm says. "We [farmers] are emotional people. Sentimental as well."

The fortunes of the valley's inhabitants have always been tied to agriculture, and grapes in particular, as the fertile soil of the mountain range are ideal for this kind of farming. Table grapes are by no means the easiest crop to produce and require a great deal of attention and technical skill. Farmers here have tried to diversify and throughout history attempted to cultivate a number of other crops here. But it never works; they always come back to grapes. "Like my neighbour said, 'put all your eggs in one basket. But watch that ****ing basket'. That's how we go here," Palm chuckles. The Hex River Valley is the country's main table grape production area; more than half of all grape

exports come from this district, which has the longest grape harvesting season in the world. Table grapes are among the most traded fruit types on the planet, and are one of South Africa's top five agricultural export products, with exports valued at R4.6-billion. It is a particularly important deciduous fruit because of the industry's foreign exchange earnings and employment creation. Government data shows that 40% of the permanent employees in South Africa's table grape industry were found in the Hex River Valley in 2010.

But with the prosperity the industry has brought for some, it has also cemented deep inequalities for others.

UGLY FACES

Across from the picturesque vineyards peppered with large old farm houses – over the truck-battered highway – is the burgeoning local settlement, fittingly called Stofland. Here a mix of well-worn, rusty zinc shacks and pale yellow subsidised housing populate this dusty and rocky area. The Hex River Valley has become a key pit stop for economic migrants, many coming from the North.

In the rest of South Africa too, it is an odd but common phenomenon that vast poverty is found in close proximity to immense wealth. 1300 kilometres North of the Valley, the North West province's platinum belt is another example of where immense wealth and poverty cohabitate on the same land. Ninety per cent of the world's platinum is found in this area and the rising demand for the precious metal, fuelled its price, and the industry, to new heights. Shaft after shaft was sunk and thousands of jobs created. The rising profile of the area attracted a great number of economic migrants, hoping for a job on one of the mines or to participate in other parts of the growing economy. The population explosion has seen Rustenburg become the fastest growing city in Africa and it has become an unmanageable situation for the local municipality which has failed in its service delivery. The settlements around the mines are characterised by the refuse strewn as far as the eye can see and in which goats and pigs forage all day. Protests about access to water are common here. Unemployment is chronically high.

In 2012, something gave way. The ugly face of inequality in South Africa became visible, televised, for the world to see. Strikes erupted across the platinum belt. Attitudes between mining houses, unions and workers hardened. The protests intensified and non-working community members joined ranks with the mine employees, contributing to the enduring violence in which 10 people, including two police officers and two security guards were either hacked or shot dead. On August 16, a group of protestors charging police were shot down in an event now known as the Marikana Massacre in which 34 people lost their lives. The dramatic incidence brought to the nation's attention the lethal cocktail of social ills that haunts South Africa. It served as a sharp realisation that as the promises presented at the dawn of democracy had not been fulfilled. Many communities in South Africa have similar ingredients that could make for another Marikana, and violent protest action can seemingly befall any place at any time.

Less than three months after the Marikana Massacre, chaos broke out in the little-known town of De Doorns in the Hex River Valley. Protestors took to the main road touting large wooden sticks in the air and drumming empty plastic bottles with their hands. They forced the N1 closed burning tyres on some days and lining up large rocks on others. Smoke billowed through the valley where vineyards had been torched and vehicles set alight. Protestors pelted police with stones, and riot control forces shot rubber bullets to disperse the violent crowd, 7000 strong.

The memory of the time is an emotive one for the residents here. Christiaan Olivier who works at the irrigation works in De Doorns recalls: "There was a war here. My children picked up rubber bullets. I'd never seen one in my life. My children were five years old."

"You didn't really know what hit you," said Anton Viljoen, farmer and chairman of the Hex River Valley Table Grape Association. "It just came from a little piece of paper and people walking in the road ... Our workers also didn't know what happened – where it all came from. For them it was also a big shock." The piece of paper which Viljoen refers to was a demand for a minimum wage of R150 per day, from R70 previously. Like on the platinum belt, the demand was not borne from any particular union or out of any key wage negotiation period. And, like at Marikana, the outcomes of this seemingly isolated protest in a little-known nook of the country would come have a significant impact on South Africa as a whole. "Maybe I was lucky," Palm tells me. "We had about 300 people coming this way from the informal settlement. There was one guy in front with the paraffin, and he put it wherever he liked, and another one came with the matches. They started burning this place. It

was like World War Two. This whole valley was in a dark cloud.” The group looking to enter the Palm property waited on others to join them. But when they did, they all decided to turn off onto another farm.

The farmers claim not to have seen the unrest coming; but hindsight is 20/20. Xenophobic attacks in De Doorns had begun to grab media attention in 2009 when thousands of Zimbabwean nationals were displaced. A report from the Scalabrini Centre, following the 2009 attacks said the community in which the violence took place suffered from some of the highest rates of poverty in the Cape Winelands District and “cramped inadequate shelter, a shortfall of sanitation and scant electrification led to impoverished living conditions and feelings of disempowerment”. A housing crisis prompted the municipality to begin work on a mammoth housing project in the area at that time. In 2012 discontent was expressed over the inadequate, legislated, minimum wage. De Doorns may have been the genesis of the unrest, but it quickly spread to agricultural industries far and wide. It eventually resulted in the department of labour raising the agricultural sector’s minimum wage to R105 per day. In 2015, it was further hiked to R120 a day.

BROKEN TRUST

Although heralded a victory for farmworkers, the increased minimum wage backfired in some ways. “Look. Before 2012 it was much better,” one farmworker, Sarel Pieterse tells me during his lunch break on the Karsten farm in the centre of the valley. “We were paid very little, but we went home with more. But after the strike we go home with less money and have more work.” Pieterse is a shop steward for union called Awethu. He and his colleagues, each wearing blue over-alls, supported the strike and are not hesitant to say they would support another, if warranted. “It did work,” Daniel Heins, an older man with a weather face and dreadlocks, says. He sits shaded from the midday sun under the vine leaves, the Daily Sun newspaper in hand. “But with that R120 came many complications.” One such complication, they say, is that farmers became unwilling to absorb some of the costs that they had borne before. Employees living on the farm who had never before been charged rent or electricity found it soon was deducted from their wages. Transport to the clinic and other small kindnesses were no longer provided by the farmer.

For some farmers the cutting of benefits was purely a financial decision. For others, it was also emotional. The trust had been broken. “In the Hex River Valley, there are a lot of families that live on the farms and it is part of you. You see them every day, every weekend. You know them. So it’s different from other places. You know your labour force,” Viljoen said. “Relations changed on some farms, I wouldn’t say on a lot of farms.” Only some farmers had elected to cut benefits, he stressed. Viljoen’s family farm, AS Viljoen & Seuns Boerdery, is one of the industry leaders in both table grape production and sales. “We are a shipper-grower. We do our own exports.” Viljoen explains over the large glossy boardroom table at the farm’s onsite office. “We’ve got about 300 permanent labourers here and I can’t say with one of them I had a bad experience during that whole thing. And with the seasonal workers of 700 and 800, maybe one or two. We just wanted to have that whole thing over with for them. I’d say it was worse for the labourers than the farmers,” he said. Asked about the overall impact of the higher minimum wage, Viljoen said: “It was definitely for the better for the workers.”

Pieterse however said the strike also resulted in a lot of people getting fired. “They say just, ‘ja, we don’t need you anymore,’” he says gesturing as if swatting a fly. Viljoen acknowledges the new minimum wage resulted in a reduction of 15% of the work force at his farm, even though table grapes are a notoriously labour intensive crop. “It opened our eyes as farmers. We were in a luxury position. We used too many labourers, I think because it was at a cheaper price,” he says. We realised we can use less labour if you do fewer manipulations on the vineyard than we used to do every year. Now we just leave it, we don’t have to do it ... the grapes remain export quality.” Such manipulations include removing all the leaves around bunches of the fruit so that they hang prominently from the vine, or taking all the shoots away.

The labour requirements of this produce, particularly because of the high export standards, means mechanisation has not become as prevalent in this agricultural industry as it has in others. For every cultivar there is a specific way to manipulate it on order to get the best out of it. But technology is lessening the labour requirements of table grape producers in De Doorns. But it has not taken the form of machinery but, rather, new cultivars. Take for example the fat black Barlinka grape with its large alkaline seeds and thick skin which my mother munched on as a young girl on hot summer days. It was smuggled from Algeria and introduced to South Africa in the early 1900s by Izak Perold – the very same who created the famous South African cultivar, the Pinotage. The Barlinka thrived in the Hex River Valley and is still grown here today, but it is a different fruit compared to that which my grandfather produced in the 1960s. The new cultivars today are entirely different and far easier to farm with. “With the older varieties there was a lot of labour involved. You have to basically touch a bunch 14 times,” said Viljoen. “You know. You shorten it in, you take away all the small berries, you loosen it up again, and then you work again on it. It was just a lot of work.” The increasing ease

of growing new varieties is playing a big role in the labour demand in the industry. “And that comes from America where labour is even more expensive than in South Africa,” Viljoen said.

The economics of the matter is not lost on the workers. “Some farms here pay R108 a day” one farmworker, David Killian, tells me. “Some smaller farms now have workers for fewer hours – short time – because the farmer can’t afford the new wages.” His colleague, a slight man with a disproportionately gruff voice, interjects: “But if you want the work done reward the man for what he does per day, not just that R120. Pay him so that he feels his work has earned him a decent salary per day. Pay the people justly man, verstaan?” In February this year the sectoral determination increased the minimum wage for farmworkers by just 95 cents an hour, to R128.86 per day. For the two years following, the determination will be the previous minimum wage plus Consumer Price Inflation plus 1%. The Rural and Allied Workers Union has described the determination as “outrageous”. But the matter has since gone quiet. At least for now.

THE WORKS

“That year, when the minimum wage came, the market was good, so we could absorb that big increase in the labour cost,” said Viljoen. “This year [2014/15] there was an oversupply and the people who had it bad were the early areas”. The harvesting season in the Northern Cape is earlier than the industry in the Western Cape. Between R60 and R80 was the average price they received per box of grapes, even though it would have cost them between R80 and R90 to produce, said Viljoen. “So that’s where, if the market goes down, with the high wages, then you will feel it.” A persistent drought affecting the country is expected to affect table grape production in the Hex River area in 2016. Labour is but one of the expenses of the industry.

“People don’t understand farming,” Palm explains. “You must take your wallet put it on the table and everyone who needs the money can come and take the money. The left overs are yours.” He and I sit on a weathered wooden bench placed on the large wrap-around stoep of Aunt Hilda’s house and overlook the Palm’s vineyards at dusk. Palm tells me how his father and oupa Jack, would often sit on this very bench drinking port and Buchu brandy. As the sun settles down, I’m offered a choice of white wine, red wine, or grape juice. I opt for the white.

“When we grew up here it was illegal to send grapes to Johannesburg,” said Palm. “You had to deliver your fruit to the deciduous fruit board in the old days. They had only one export organisation. They did all the local distribution of grapes. Farmer could not sell anywhere. It was totally regulated. Even a permit system and had to apply for permit to sell your goods.” After 1994 certain laws were scrapped or changed and it opened up the field for different players and opened the way for access to new markets.

Rising costs in table grape farming, as seen in many industries, has resulted in consolidation. “What you see now, in contrast to what the government keep on telling us, is that the people who make money are actually the big role players,” Palm says. “I think it’s an absolute economic trend for the bigger operations to take over. I see no future for small holds.” In the valley there are 98 farmers. The number used to be 169 two decades ago – every year there are less, Viljoen says. Years back you could have made a profit on 10 hectares today you need at least 30. A lot of people are moving out, the bigger guys are just buying up the neighbouring farms, Viljoen says. “It’s economies of scale. It’s bad. It’s bad to see it. But that’s reality. That’s how it works.”

“In a generation it has really changed to just being clear cut business – you must have a clear goal and cash flow and a lot of technical know-how. And you must have the markets overseas and so on,” Palm says. South African legislation specifies minimum requirements for export including berry size, colour, weight and sugar content. All of which are tested for. Then certain supermarket chains have their own requirements like certain packaging material which can add to the cost of the product. The Perishable Products Export Control Board, a state-owned enterprise – will test for these requirements as well as for test for pesticide levels, the allowance for which is very low. Apart from domestic regulation, farming to export means international requirements also regulate table grape production in the Valley. Global GAP certification, an initiative first started by European retailers, is required by most overseas supermarkets. The initiative, its website says, was borne out of an awareness of consumers’ growing concerns relating to product safety, environmental impact and health, safety and welfare of workers and animals. “So we are certified every year, if you are not successful you won’t be able to export,” Palm explains. “Even the bigger super markets of Africa will ask for you Global Gap certificate, and that’s a good thing. They are slowly catching on.”

During winter in North America, South American table grape producers supply that market. Similarly South Africa supplies Europe. “Australia is just not good it, maybe they can play cricket or whatever,” Palm jokes. “Australians produce some wine, but they don’t have the labour of Africa or South America. It’s very expensive for labour intensive industries there.” Then there is cold storage of the

fruit – which my oupa Jack was one of the first in the valley to implement – and shipping costs, insurance for crops too. Seeded grapes are ready for harvesting earlier in the season, and are hardier, but have grown unpopular, “due to exquisite taste of the ladies in England,” Palm jests pointing out that most shopping and purchasing choices are done by the women in households. Seedless varieties fetch a better price, but it is a bigger risk for the farmer. It is more sensitive to the elements and the production period is shorter putting more pressure on the pack houses and supply chain. Punnets are the preferred form of packaging these days, possibly viewed as more hygienic. But it means an extra R18 to the conventional packing cost of R12 per box. To be more cost-efficient the new trend now is for all things in the pack house, where possible, to be computerised – to the extent that the scale will tell the packer how many berries to add. “It’s much smarter farming now,” Palm enthuses.

So ‘is the minimum wage now, almost double what it was in 2012, now adequate?’ Pausing to think about it, Viljoen responds: “No, maybe not ... But there are a lot of things that can make it easier for us in the fruit export industry to pay workers more. Simple things like government can get the farmers better market access say to Thailand, Korea and to the Far East.” Palm used to export table grapes to Thailand and received good prices for his grape there. Years back the minister of Agriculture visited Thailand to sign certain trade agreements. “As far as I know there was a boat on its way to Thailand when it was informed these agreements are not in place and it was diverted to Malaysia. It’s now been five years without access to that market.” Palm says. “I think there is not enough political will.” Viljoen says the result is that South African producers need to pay duties and extra costs, while their competition from Chile and Peru go into markets, like Thailand, duty free. “We don’t have the same markets as our other competitors in South America. For us it’s a lot more expensive and we have fewer markets than them. And it’s also easy for us to oversupply our own markets,” Viljoen said.

HOUSE PROUD

A housing crisis in the valley prompted government to embark on an immense subsidised housing project, establishing 1755 RDP houses in Stofland. Sonja Greyling has been intimately involved with the housing project in De Doorns. We meet at the modest municipal offices in the town centre. Her pink and blue eye shadow provides a pop of colour in the otherwise dull surroundings. Greyling explains the project was done in phases. The very first handover was done in 2010. Once the houses are handed over, the title is transferred into the applicants name and they become immediately responsible for their properties. They may, however, not sell it for eight years – a frustration for some. One RDP house is worth R94 500. “People will say the house is not worth it, but the entire infrastructure, like the water pipes, had to be laid down ... and a fly-over had to be constructed from the highway” Greyling explains. “We physically built a new town ... But no one realised what the impact would be. This post office here can’t cater to everyone. People often don’t get their bills. Water is a problem – there isn’t enough of it.” Curbing the growth of the informal settlement remains a challenge. As witnessed in other parts of the country, some owners of RDP houses in De Doorns have also taken to renting out their former shacks. Some enterprising property owners also put additional shacks on the RDP property for rental income. Some home owners have also taken to running shops from their homes, something which is not technically permitted but which is a welcome service in a community far removed from established shops. To have qualified for an RDP house applicants must have earned less than R3 500 per household at the time of applying. “Many of the farmworkers, they don’t qualify because they earn too much,” Greyling says, speaking in Afrikaans. “If a man and his wife both work, then they earn too much.” It was really De Doorns’ poorest people who got the houses, Greyling says. “But I mean it is just right ... But it isn’t always right,” she says recalling how a number of people sat in the small front area of the municipal offices crying for a house.

Johanna Jacobs and Salie Pretorius take pride in their little property on 3rd Lane of Stofland. Salie takes care to maintain the small little garden outside, which perseveres in spite of the parched land here. They each get a monthly disability payment of R1400 from government. It’s the middle of the day and they sit on either end of a couch in silence watching TV. The neighbours living in shacks just a stone’s throw away understand why Johanna qualified for a house. Despite missing all fingers on both hands she is taking care of a neighbour’s young child who cries in awakening from its sleep in the second bedroom. Johanna rushes to shush it. She has never worked. Salie, who sits seemingly uncomfortably in my presence with legs crossed tightly together, used to work as a labourer on a grape farm in the valley. “We struggle; we have to take a taxi to get out to a town to buy necessities at the Usave. It takes me an hour to walk there – I have two artificial legs,” says Johanna who is wearing a long, grey tracksuit pants. Even so Johanna has no intention to go anywhere else. “Nee wat. I waited too long for this house to sell it.” Salie says the RDP house is an improvement to the living quarters on the farm. “There you have outside toilets and when the rain comes It’s easier to have it inside the houses,” he says. “Farmers used to drive people to the clinics and stuff but those days are gone. So it’s better to be closer now.”

At Karsten, the workers are clearly amused by my unpractised Afrikaans and they even laugh out loud when I get some words horribly wrong. They happily correct me as we continue to chat. They tell me how many of them received a government subsidised house in Stofland. They were all happy to go. Pieterse however, decided to stay. “I have a big house here on the farm. Now all my furniture can’t all go in that [RDP] house. And they don’t want to build on a room for this furniture. So now I must throw my furniture away?” he says. “If it were bigger I would go.” His colleagues don’t share his reasoning. Says Heins: “It’s better there. The electricity doesn’t go off. Nothing is going to happen there.” Also, “You get your salary clean, clean. [No deductions].” Another worker, Steven Pietersen, chimes in, “And in Stofland your family and children can come and stay. Asked whether they could

not come and stay at the farm house, he replies: “That R120 changed the relationship. They are now more strict.”

But even before the protests and subsequent increase in minimum wage, housing and security of tenure had been a sticky and emotive issue in the agricultural industry. And it is certainly no different in the valley. South Africa’s labour legislation is often criticised by business as being a major obstruction for capital in the country. But it is praised by organised labour for, in principle, offering sufficient protection for workers. “There are just a lot of problems with labour legislation. It has developed certain problems between farmers and workers,” Viljoen says. A number of laws have sought to protect the security of tenure for the poorest South Africans. For example, one provision in labour law allows for an employee to earn ownership rights for working for a business owner, such as a farmer, for a long time. The result can be that occupants on a farm do not necessarily still work there and, farmers say, sometimes run shebeens from the property. Farmers however do still want skilled labourers such as irrigation staff, truck and tractor drivers, to be resident on the farm. “In the olden days workers just had a room. That’s not acceptable for the people to live in any more. There is no bathroom or anything in, and it’s small,” Viljoen said. “When people moved to the RDP houses, we moved people out of the rooms into nicer, bigger, homes. With just the key personnel on you farm you have enough money to make it nice.” The problem, Viljoen, is that at times people who don’t work on the farm or who were fired, “went through the right channels” and occupy the house.

“The Esta [Extension of Security of Tenure] Act. That’s a tough act that for us,” he says. The Act, passed in 1997, says it aims to extend the right of occupiers and to regulate the eviction of vulnerable occupiers from land in a fair manner. But it recognises the right of land owners to apply to court for an eviction order in appropriate circumstances. However, according to non-profit organisation Passop (People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty), a national survey on evictions conducted in 2005 showed that more people living on farms had been evicted in the 10 years of democracy between 1994-2003 than in the 10 years prior. The breakdown of an employment relationship, through dismissal or retrenchment, is often a precursor to eviction. On its website, the organisation says that the general failure to prosecute and convict transgressors of ESTA has been a major shortcoming. Also, “many farm dwellers are not aware that they have tenure rights at all, and those that know their rights may not be familiar with remedies and support available to them should they be evicted”. According to a report by the Mail & Guardian following the 2012 unrest in the valley, the growth of informal settlements in the Breede Valley area, the municipality under which De Doorns falls, is linked to the growing evictions, both legal and illegal, of workers from farms. “In a study done in 2011 on the growth of an informal settlement in nearby Rawsonville, about 68% of respondents said they had been evicted from nearby farms. Many of these are ‘constructed evictions’ that see farmers cut off electricity or water supplies in a bid to force farmworkers and their dependants to move, the report said. Through the courts such matter can take a few years and costs thousands of rands. Alternatively, farmers resort to paying people to leave. “We’ve spent R55 000 now to get a guy out of a house. He had been there for six years. Then he had a shebeen on the farm,” said Viljoen. “Now when you get a new family, you think before you giving them a house. It’s just a headache to get them out. And you are always the guy that’s wrong. But the house on the farm is for the guy who wants to work on the farm. It’s things like that, I think, that has created a tendency to have less people working and living on the farm and to rather bring in workers in as they are needed,” he says. “If you look at the legislation environment I think anyone could see this is eventually what would happen.”

Many workers with the opportunity to move to a RDP house in Stofland take it up whole-heartedly. Lulu Makhendlana was born in the valley and lived here her whole life. Her parents were economic migrants from the Eastern Cape. She too worked on a farm her whole life until her leg began to trouble her. The fuzzy television plays in the small house and several kids flop around, restless and

curious about my visit. Lulu is watching the neighbour's children. "I can say that I am happy with this house. I had a house in Osig. It was in pieces, it was a farm house. I definitely would rather live here." Charmaine Pretorius has complained to the municipality about the roof which threatens to fly off the RDP house when strong winds sweep the valley. Her complaints go unanswered. As the property owner she is expected to maintain the house now. She is also concerned about troublesome "glue children" who run around the houses at times looking to steal. She is however startled at the suggestion that she might ever sell her house. "Nog nooit nie! Dis my eiendom [No never, it's my property]," she exclaims.

GETTING LUCKY

The issue of housing is one of many that have had an impact on the way modern-day farms run. As a result there is a trend toward more temporary and less permanent employment in the industry. As such economic migration to the valley endures. And the embers of xenophobia glow brighter. Of 12 800 permanent employees in South Africa's table grape industry recorded in 2010, 5 340 permanent employees were found in the Hex River Valley. A further 8700 people were employed in the area as seasonal workers. This is quite the opposite of 2008's numbers – published by the department of agriculture – which showed 8450 permanent workers in the Hex River Valley's table grape industry, and 5470 seasonal workers. "I still think this is the easiest place for a person out of the north to get lucky to get work, because of the seasonal work and a lot of farmers before Christmas, they want a lot of people to get in here to finish the manipulation of the vines before the holidays," says Viljoen. Palm says more than housing is needed. "Thousands of houses are being built but without enough schools or clinics or any projects to employ people," he says. "There are no initiatives to build factories or to create employment. It's just space that was made available."

In October, when the manipulations on the vines begin, people start walking. They move along the road, from one farm to the next, hoping to find work at one of the 100 or so farms in the valley. Even with the influx of migrant workers, Pieterse and his fellow employees don't feel they can be replaced easily. In this industry there is a home ground advantage and the old hands have become prized employees. "Our seasonal workers, some are with us for 34 years already," Viljoen says noting some will be brought from as far as Worcester, 30kms away, each day in season to work. "It's becoming more of a skilled job. So to get the new labourers in and teach them every year it's becoming a problem now. Each year we have 4000 people coming in from the north and they haven't ever seen a vineyard or a vine," said Viljoen. "The old seasonal workers are very valuable for us."

"Xenophobia can happen again," Pieterse says. "You get people here from Polokwane, from Rustenburg; from all over ... The owners think Zim people work harder. I can't say that they work harder, they work the same as us." ... "Hulle werk hard jong," his one friend mutters.

MOEDELOOS

It's been a while since my grandmother has seen the vineyards of De Doorns. She now resides in the Strand, just a short walk from the beach, in what was once a slave master's house. It's unlikely she will make the trip to the Valley again, but she remembers it well. "It would snow there a lot in August. I can remember because my mother's birthday was on the 3rd of August, and the mountains would get white white, all the way down into the valley," she tells me as we sitting alongside each other in the lounge. "At that time of year, the moon would still be shining, and they would take their first dop of the day." Abolished in the 1990s, the dop system involved workers being paid in part or incentivised with alcohol. Typically it was a dry white wine made from table grapes and known as Vaaljaapie, a term also used to describe an unremarkable person. After learning about the dop system in junior high school, I remember asking my mother about it. She told me how, sometimes to incentivise workers my grandfather would offer a dop reward to whoever finished de-weeding their row of vines first. I was surprised to learn the workers would typically gulp it all own on the spot. "They enjoyed it," I remembered her saying quite seriously. One dop or tot was typically a serving from one enamel tin cup and workers would drink in turns. At night bottles would be filled up with wine syphoned with a pipe from a vat. "They used take that bottle right there and then and would go 'goong goong goong goon goong'. Finished," my mother said. To hear her speak about it so matter-of-factly is both jarring and refreshing. The dop system has become something few people in the winelands want to talk about. But its legacy is plain to see in social ills plaguing the communities, as well as in the high rate of foetal alcohol syndrome documented in the Western Cape.

Low productivity rates or absenteeism on Mondays, as a result of weekend drinking binges, is a persistent problem for the farmers here. In a 2012 review of current socio-economic realities within the Hex River Valley, commissioned by the Cape Winelands District Municipality, it was found that the prevalent social pathology present on farms and amongst farm worker livelihoods in the Valley is undoubtedly the phenomenon of substance abuse, extending to drugs like Dagga and Tik (the street name for crystal meth) but particularly alcohol. As other research has also shown, the review notes that misuse of alcohol typically occurs only over weekends. "Alcohol was stated as the single most common cause for the dismissal of workers on farms in the Hex River Valley," the report said. The impact of promotions on alcohol abuse was also indicated. Promotions and thus higher spending power, is often associated with increased alcohol consumption and often results in workers being demoted again." The research also noted the youth were prone to developing the same behaviour. "The lack of recreational activities for the local population and particularly for the youth was mentioned as a need," the review said. "Especially over weekends the local youth is idle. This was reported to lead to anti-social and potential destructive behavioural patterns, including substance abuse." Grape producers, the report states, say it is prohibitively expensive to send workers to an alcohol treatment centre should they require it. Further, "the long term success rate of this treatment appears to be modest, mainly due to the fact that the worker returns to the same social environment of numerous temptations."

The closest treatment centre is Toevlug (Retreat) in Worcester. Here, state subsidies are available for inpatient treatment if the person in question is referred to the treatment centre by the likes of a social worker or even a minister. This year the National Department of Social development plans to spend R101-million on its substance abuse programmes, citing substance abuse as a key government priority. According to the department's budget vote, there are currently seven operational in-patient treatment centres in four of the provinces, and they are located in cities. The construction of additional substance abuse in-patient treatment centres in Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North West and Free State will be completed by the end of 2016/17, it said. At Toevlug the state buys in 170 adult "beds" per year and 70 for the youth (those aged between 13 and 18 years of age) says the centre's manager Theresa Rossouw. The centre takes in patients from all over the country, not just the immediate surroundings. For a standard five weeks of inpatient treatment the minimum fee

is R6000 for private patients. The cost to company can however run up to R30 000 per patient, the balance of which is subsidised by the state. The state also provides bursaries in the field of substance abuse and other's related to social work. "A lot is being done to empower people in the field of addiction," Rossouw said.

The patients admitted into Toevlug have however become more and more sick, Rossouw observes. "We see more and more TB and more HIV over the years." There is a close link between substance abuse and these ailments, Rossouw explains. Addicts often aren't well-nourished and have weak immune systems and are more vulnerable to TB – of which there are high rates in the Western Cape. "The youth is particularly difficult to treat, said Rossouw. "Most come out of environments which are not helpful for recovery. You'll find they are sent here to be treated for addiction, but often parents are also using. ... It's difficult on the outside, and its difficult getting back into school," she says. In the gardens outside a group of loud and lively boys play soccer. They come from all over – from Saladanha Bay to Ceres, a fruit farming area just on the other side of the Matroosberg. The substances they are being treated for range from Dagga, to Mandrax and Tik. Some of these boys even ran drugs for dealers and were paid in drugs. Many are small for their age – a legacy of foetal alcohol syndrome or perhaps just poor nutrition, Rossouw says. "You can get moedeloos [disheartened] with the kids. They come in with nothing, no soap no toothpaste nothing, their parents don't even make contact,' she says. "If a child is 11 years old and uses Dagga, but his father also uses. He is not the one with the problem ... they should send the dads here." Toevlug attempts to work with the parents where possible, but often they are simply unreachable.

Alcoholism amongst farmers is less visible. But during my interviews in the valley, it was tacitly acknowledged that it is a problem occurring amongst farmers too. I'd only thought to enquire about this after my mother recently shared a memory from her childhood. She recalled how her grandfather, every lunch hour, would go into the bathroom and pull out a bottle of KWV brandy and a small glass. "He would come in and pour himself a neat shot, swig it down and put it back there," she said. "I only realise now that he must have been an alcoholic."

CAKES AND CRUMBS

“I wouldn’t say that I’m not a scared person. But I forget in that moment ... when the danger comes ... I forget to be scared.” Elize Boer sits in her office, sleeves rolled up, in the empty pack house at Elim farm. The farm is located at the very upper end of the valley, where she has been employed as farm manager for many years. “When 7000 people came here, to the pack house from the N1. I forgot to be scared. They stood there, and me and here,” she says demonstrating the proximity with her fingers in the air. “Said the one guy: ‘I’m waiting for you’. I said to him: ‘but I’m standing here. Come. I’m not going anywhere. This is my bread and butter. That which I built up, I am not going to burn down. And I not going to see that you burn it off’.” Flanked by five other workers, Boer stood her ground. “I forget to be scared and then they forget to be scared.” The security fired a shot in the distance and prompted the crowd to run across the veld and away. The 2012 situation hurt a lot of relationships. “Many were heart sore, many were disappointed because there was trust and that trust was broken. But that relationship is beginning to recover.”

Boer has lived in the valley her whole life. Her father was a supervisor on a farm and her mother worked in the kitchen on the Reynecke family farm. Apart from managing production at Elim, Boer is also one of 36 shareholders of Osplaas Farm – a Black Economic Empowerment project in the valley. It’s considered to be one of the few BEE success stories in valley. “It works, BEE works. But it has its positives and its negatives,” Boer says. “A few years back my boss gave me money to go in on this BEE project. We took a few years to get to know each other. We built it up ourselves, and put in applications in ourselves. We vote on everything.” But BEE can also bring conflict. “Some BEE farmers are doing well, but there are lots of fights. Often its 100 and something people with only 15 Hectares ... When there are more than 10 people, it’s too many. The more people eating, the smaller the cake gets.” The Osplaas shareholders leased their 40 hectare farm to the one farmer for ten years so he can run the day to day operations while they continue to work on their respective farms jobs across the valley. The shareholders work on their own farm whenever they have the chance. Boer goes to Osplaas every Saturday to work. “We put up wires, we put the pipes in, we planted the sticks,” she says. If she can’t make it, she pays someone to go work in her absence. “We get very good dividends once a year and we decide together what we will do. If we want to plant vines we say ‘no let’s take less out’.” Boer explains. The dividend thus far has been few thousand once a year. “I can’t send my kid to college with that. But it’s the sort of thing I can spend on a holiday for us, because I can’t afford to do that on my salary.” Many people tell Boer BEE isn’t going to work. “I’d say the one the state has now doesn’t work ... The government say they want to empower everyone, they say they want to do it, but they don’t come close at all to doing what they have said.”

Kobus van der Horst, another one of the Osplaas shareholders looks forward to the day when the land is fully planted. “It’s a bit difficult at the moment. But I can say: Osplaas is small but it is successful,” Van der Horst, a burly man with a kind face. His eyes are bright as he talks about the future of his farm. “I think we can only get better as we go forward – When its 100% planted.” The difficulty for these up and coming farm owners has been numerous and expenses such as start-up capital, input costs and loan repayments have weighed particularly heavy on the business. Attempts to access BEE funds have proved impossible after numerous applications in the face of ambiguity and heaps of red tape. At one point the Department of Agriculture questioned why Osplaas paid dividends to shareholders yet still wanted a loan. “What is the business for if we can’t take dividends?” van der Horst laughs. “Nee, oh, jinne.” He and Boer say the project would not have succeeded to this point without the help from established local farmers. “There was time when those guys, with no stake in the project, had to take their own money and push it into our project, because they didn’t want to see it fail,” van der Horst says. “If those men didn’t stand in, our project would have surely gone under.” Other small kindnesses have helped Osplaas along. Local farmer Boetie Kriel, has taken it upon himself to assist with Osplaas shareholders with planning and implementation. Theo Rabe comes to spray vineyards at Osplaas and charges next to nothing for it.

The biggest expense is repayment of the loan, provided by Absa with no preferential interest rate. “When people see you, they think there is money. But the farm pays you once a year. You must have enough money to pay your debt and running costs” says van der Horst. “Your Flame [a popular but rain-sensitive grape cultivar] may be rained away, but the people who work under you, they want their money every other week.” He says that to cut it in farming, you have to have a passion for it. “Because you must be able to take the loss, just like when you win,” he says. “I’m glad for the opportunity I’ve gotten, like I say, it can just get better. When it is fully planted.”

Not everyone has a good story to tell so far.

Lunch time is almost over at Karsten where, under the vines, the farmworkers tell me they too are involved in a BEE project, the participants are 280 in total for a farm in nearby Robertson. It’s called Vergelegen. The farm, they say, was bought by the government, for R27-million before it was given to the BEE shareholders. The workers say they have helped out on weekend at the farm when there is a lot to do. “And we wait every year we don’t get dividends. It’s been seven years now. We don’t know where to complain. Government says they don’t manage the farm,” Pieterse says. “We were supposed to get part of the harvest. But they don’t give it to us.” Philip du Plessis, executive manager of production and projects at the Karsten Group said Karsten was the mentor and not a shareholder of the project and could not provide me detailed information without the approval of the representatives of the trust. He however explained that the Karsten Group has been involved in the project since 2013 and so cannot take responsibility for decision and results taken before then. “When Karsten Group started the project was in debt and was incurring losses on an annual basis. Since Karsten Group has taken over the responsibility for the operations, Vergelegen was and is currently very successful and profitable,” du Plessis said. “Karsten Group and the Board of Directors of Vergelegen are bound to the rules set out in the agreements stated above and dividends can only be declared if all debt is paid and there is enough funds for one year’s production costs.” That is not the case at the moment. Karsten Group also assists the project to receive funds from both The National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the South African Table Grape Industry (Satgi) and The Provincial Department of Agriculture.

“We want to empower our workers, but government doesn’t come to the table with that,” said Viljoen. The whole thing falls apart when the government doesn’t pay what is required in time, often leaving the farmers to buy the flailing project out. “The channels are too slow to get anything back, and who do you speak to? I think the farmers are open to it, but the system is just not there. It’s not working,” Viljoen said. Established farmers in the valley want to see BEE work, he said. “I would love a black farmer next to me that’s a good farmer, that can sit with me on the board so that can go with me together to government to say we have this problem.”

MAKE IT RAIN

One thing working in favour of BEE in the valley is water. The Osplaas shareholders are 36 workers who all had specialist posts on the farms where they worked. They were put forward to be part of the projects, by member of the water users association. All of the 100 or so farms in the valley were given the option to sign up one person. Some could nominate two. "Not everyone nominated. But it's worked out better for the shareholders in terms of numbers," says Christiaan Olivier, CEO of the Hex Valley Water Users Association. The valley water is of a good quality – something about the sandstone in the mountains that makes it so special, Palm says. But it is now largely used for drinking purposes only. Decades ago farmers, like my oupa Jack, began building dams to store water for irrigation. Olivier speaking from his office at Hex Valley Water Users Association represents farms consisting about 5000 hectares of table grapes with each planted hectare consuming 7500 cubic metres of water per annum. The existing water supply is already spoken for; there is no additional or new water available to be allocated for farms. "You will see there is still land in the Hex River Valley. But how come there are no vineyards on? The only reason is because there is no water," Olivier says. The new water act, implemented in 1998, sees to it that BEE and water are now closely aligned.

The Water Users Association implemented the Osplaas dam project in 2007. "From the Osplaas dam we made 400 000 cubic meters of additional water available. 200 000 cubic metres was allocated to municipality for this informal settlement," Oliver says gesturing to Stofland just down the road. The other 200 000 was made available to four 100% BEE projects. Osplaas farm was one of them. However, to create new water in the Hex River Valley is very expensive, Olivier says. The association's members subsidised the tariff from the Osplaas dam by well over R3-million. They do so, because their fortunes are intertwined with that of black farmers in the area. "We are busy with new projects worth over R210-million to make available new water," Olivier says. "We won't get the licence for that if it goes toward commercial farmers. At least 30 to 50% of that water will have to go toward emerging farmers. "Olivier believes water can be a powerful tool for transformation in the valley. But it needs to be adequately subsidised by government. "At this moment I would say water costs between R1 and R1.50 per cubic metre per year. New water will be about R4.50." he says intently. "So it's three times more." It's a big problem for emerging farmers who will have new water available to them, but at an unaffordable rate. Olivier explains that to finance new water infrastructure the association has to loan the money and pay it back, with interest, over 10 years. This pushes the price up. And new farmers are at an automatic disadvantage. Commercial farmers currently pay the maximum R1.50 per cubic metre for existing water. They may only have another 5-10% of unplanted land on their existing farms for which they require new water. "So the weighted average is still affordable. Emerging farmers must start with 100%, and that is not affordable," Olivier says. "That is a very big hurdle in the Hex River Valley. "The Department of Water Affairs does provide subsidies but it does not cover more than 10% of that, he says. "It is so small doesn't help them anyway. If we can get a 30% subsidy for the emerging farmers, we can start those projects in the next two to three years". If the subsidy doesn't come through the projects won't happen Olivier insists. "They can't pay R4.50. There is no way."

Van der Horst still believes the empowerment project he is involved in can create wealth. "As soon as the land is planted 100% full, I just see good things going forward," he says. He is in it for the long haul. "The farmers that are now successful, they began here 90 or 100 years ago. You can't suddenly farm for 2 or 3 years and then suddenly think you will have the same ... So that's what I see. One day when I'm old I can sit on the stoep and see my kids will be part of the agriculture, or my grandchildren." Boer too sees a bright future ahead. But her plans go beyond BEE. Her employer has agreed to her proposal where she will lease 16 hectares of land from him for a period of nine and a half years. An option to buy the land eventually is also part of plan. "When I put my 10 year plan on the table, my boss said: 'go for it Elize'. I trust him to direct me. He trusts me with his farm, so I trust him with this." Boer says she is not doing this for herself but so that her children too can have a life-

long love for agriculture. Although, living in the city is not for her, she admits. "I am a farmer. I will die in the city. There inside. I will suffocate."

THE FALL GUY

Land Reform was key to the ANC's 1955 Freedom Charter but the policies implemented thus far have been widely criticised as having failed. Farm land has found itself entangled in a broken promise by the democratic government. Through adopting its current land reform policy in 1994, the ruling party committed itself that 30% of all agricultural land would be redistributed to the rural poor by 1999. 17 years past that deadline, and it has not been achieved as yet. These aspirations have been constrained by the Constitution which states that land can only be expropriated subject to compensation. The amount of which, and the time and manner of payment of which, have either been agreed to by those affected or decided or approved by a court. Political opposition parties, particularly Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters, have been quick to take on this emotive issue, in an attempt to highlight the failings of the ANC-led government to the South African electorate. Its stance is expropriation of land without compensation for equitable redistribution.

In October 2015 this delicate matter came up again in the African National Congress (ANC) national general council meeting. And a policy proposal that commercial farmers give up 50% of the equity of their farms to farm workers was endorsed by the council. "It can work. It's a good idea that," says Pieterse. "But Zuma just says these things, they never pass these things through," his colleagues interject. "Ja, it's just politics." Van der Horst said he could see it working, in some measure. "People's thoughts need to change. It can work but it must first be about the people and for them to understand how a business works. Sorry to say, but many of people are ignorant of the facts. There is a warped perception of farming. One year you win, on year you are on the line, the other you are behind the line," says van der Horst. "I also thought like that in the beginning, but after all the courses I was sent on I saw what a business needs to go on. The important thing is not what you can get now, what's important is to go on." Boer says she doesn't believe in the land reform action where land is taken back from farmers. "I am also a black woman, but it is wrong. Like I say that's a tough one for me, but that is how I feel." She foresees that such a policy would cause havoc. Viljoen has a different take. "Being negative doesn't help. I'm here on the farm now I have to work with what I have," he says. "If government says its 50 /50, and they don't want to listen to the ideas or plans of organised agriculture, then that's it. What can we do then? You just buy more farms, maybe at a lower value."

BULLS AND BEARS

The fortune my grandfather built up in the valley was lost to him overnight.

He first found himself in De Doorns for his brother-in-law's funeral. His sister, Elfrieda had married a grape farmer there. They had a 6-week old child. Elfrieda's husband had bought her a revolver as protection for when she and the child were at home alone. "So they were having tea at a friend's house and Elfrieda's husband had a biscuit. He took a bite and put it down and said: 'let me see the gun'," my ouma Marie tells me, pretending to take a bite of the unseen biscuit she has held up to her lips. "And she passed it on this guy. And the next minute the shot went off and he was dead. He died instantly."

So my grandfather had to come down from Johannesburg for the funeral, and he stayed on.

He met my grandmother – a genuinely beautiful woman – upon visiting her uncle one afternoon.

"He asked me: 'don't you want to go for a drive'," ouma Marie said. "I must have said yes because I went. And that was now the start." Many years later, oupa Jack and ouma Marie had three children and acquired a number of farms in the valley. My grandfather eventually sold up and moved to Johannesburg. With the money from the farms, he decided to play the stock market.

"He said 'I'm going to put all my money on the stock exchange', because of that bull and bear and things like that. 'I'm going make a hell of a lot of money'," ouma Marie recalled. "What do I know about bears and bulls ... So we moved up there..." The broker's name was Cecil Swiden. "One morning Jack came home and threw the paper there and said have a look at that." Turns out Swiden had been living the good life with his client's money. "He sent rugby teams overseas; he went berserk with the people's money. The money was lost, all of it. I think he [Jack] got out R2000. And that's the end. Swiden shot himself after that," ouma Marie says. Thereafter my grandfather operated a boerewors roll stand to make a living, before cancer took him away at the age of 61.

SEEING RED

Aeropetes Tulbaghia, also known as the Mountain Pride butterfly, is one of very few insects that can see the colour red. Its fixation with all things scarlet draws it toward the red disa's brilliant, large flower where it drinks deeply of its nectar as pollen collects on its feet. It will not drink from a flower of another colour. The red disa is entirely dependent on the Mountain Pride butterfly, its sole pollinator, for its survival. Without the one, the other cannot exist. The same is true for the other inhabitants of the Hex River Valley.

The town of De Doorns, as my mother knew it, does not appear to have changed much in 20 years. That is – the post office, the bank, the church hall, cemetery and the schools stand where they always did, although worse for wear. But across the road, in Stofland, the change is visible, and significant, as whole new and substantially bigger town is on the rise. It is a microcosm of the new South Africa. In De Doorns, like elsewhere in the country, well-intentioned policy implemented after 1994 has offered mixed results. In some cases it just isn't working, in others instance, it is simply not enough. Often where it does work, there are unintended consequences. Historical issues continue to impact the valley today. As quickly as solutions are found for some problems, new ones develop. It is the only logical outcome when great wealth and vast poverty live side by side. Relationships grow increasingly complex in and around this valley and its table grape industry. They are both positive and troubled. But the valley has so far proved innovative in solving its problems and incredibly flexible in accommodating the growing needs of its people.

The occupants of this valley share a common love for this land. Although it appears rife with competing interests, there is an unspoken understanding that a problem for one party is ultimately a problem for all. One cannot survive without the other. Their fortunes, and futures, are inextricably intertwined.

SECTION TWO: METHODS DOCUMENT

ABSTRACT

This method document accompanies the preceding long-form narrative piece of work which aims to tell the story of the small grape-farming town of De Doorns in its pursuit to transform itself in line with local and global expectations while remaining internationally competitive. In using the area as a case study, the research sought to look at key policy interventions which have been introduced into this area since 1994 and to examine whether they had, as intended, improved the lives of people who live there. The policy interventions examined relate to key issues such as wages and labour, land reform and housing, economic empowerment and substance abuse. This research aims to assess how these interventions have impacted on the lives of the town's inhabitants. This can be viewed even more broadly as how policy has improved the lives of all South Africans – with De Doorns and the Hex River Valley as a starting point for this critique. This methods document provides the academic framework which supported the research and also analyses how the research was conducted.

INTRODUCTION

De Doorns is a fertile grape farming town in the Hex River Valley, 32 km northeast of Worcester and 40 km southwest of Touwsrivier. It takes its name from the farm De Doorns boven aan de Hex Rivier (the thorns on the upper Hex River') (Raper). According to Hex River Valley Tourism (n.d) – from six farms established here by the end of the 18th century, today they have become nearly 150 subdivisions. The valley's economic fortunes have always been tied to agriculture. Because of its fertile soil, the vine took best here sheltered from harsh winds by the embrace of the mountains. But because of its secluded location, life for many here is lived in isolation from much else, yet still De Doorns embodies many of the contrasts that plague much of South Africa. De Doorns was initially selected for reasons influenced by my family ties as I have distant relatives who farm grapes in the area. My mother grew up on a grape farm here and her cousin still lives and works there today as he owns and runs a grape farm with produce aimed for the export market. Initially my primary pursuit was to know more about my family history and how it was intertwined with that of viticulture in South Africa. That is how I came to be in De Doorns. But having conducted some preliminary research here, I believe that my family story is a very small part of larger story about the valley, the grape, and the people who grow wealthy on its harvest and those who toil in its shadow. Of interest to me is how the town has changed from the town my mother, as a young woman, used to know, and what policy interventions have been introduced and how have they shaped the lives of the inhabitants of this area.

As described by Wilson and Cornell (2012, p. 28), during the second half of 2012 two major eruptions of violence involving workers occurred in the country. One, during August, was the infamous Marikana Massacre which occurred in the heart of the platinum mining industry; the other was the unrest in and around De Doorns. Ndlangamandla (2013) too makes this comparison: All stakeholders must view De Doorns and Marikana as just the spark that caused an explosion in a small, poorly ventilated room fill with hydrogen. In the context of South Africa some of the underlying issues are over 300 years old. These really are deeply structural issues which may take generations to resolve and to a great extent, will certainly involve a re-shaping of attitudes, unlearning of stereotypes and re-alignment of cultural mind sets. Indeed, this small town was the centre of well-publicised farm labour protests in 2012, where over 30 hectares of vineyards were destroyed (Sapa 2012) In January the next year the strike resumed and saw violent clashes between protesters and police as farmworkers in De Doorns in the Western Cape want their minimum daily wage increased (Sapa 2015). In these strikes, Xenophobia reared its head. It had done so before in 2009 where reportedly 68 foreign national members saw their shacks were dismantled and were violently displaced from the community (Scalabrini Centre 2009).

To understand the present situation, it is important to understand the past. While much is known about pre-1994 policy and its devastating legacy, current socio-economic political tensions require and analysis of what has (and has not) happened since then and how does it shape the world in which we live today. The aim of this research project is to understand and analyse: what are the impacts of selected policy intervention on the inhabitants of De Doorns in the Western Cape since 1994. This case study and its finding can be seen as a microcosm of South Africa – and some measure of how the new South Africa has performed. I argue that what unfolded in 2012 and the underlying tensions that persist can perhaps be better understood in the context of policy reform and progress and how far it has come in truly changed the lives of the people living here for the better.

MINIMUM WAGE

The Hex River Valley is the country's main table grape production area; more than half of all grape exports come from this district, which has the longest harvesting period in the country. Table grapes are among the most traded fruit types in the world, and more than 80% of table grape production in

South Africa occurs in the Western Cape region. In 2009 South African table grape exports totalled 2 708 767 metric tons. Europe is the most important market. (Department of Agriculture, 2012) Table grapes are one of the most important deciduous fruit grown in South Africa, taking into consideration their foreign exchange earnings, employment creation and linkage with support institutions. Of 12 800 permanent employees in South Africa's table grape industry recorded in 2010, 5 340 were found in the Hex River Valley (Department of Agriculture 2012).

Minimum wages and conditions of employment for farm workers were introduced into South Africa's agricultural sector through a determination by the Department of Labour in 2002. According to Murray & Van Walbeek (2007 p.117) standard economic theory suggests that the introduction of a minimum wage will increase the cost of labour and therefore could decrease employment and increase unemployment. The agricultural sector as a whole has certainly shed jobs since 2002 as many farms have consolidated and mechanised. Transvaal Agricultural Union of South Africa in a media release (2012) following a flare up of protest action in the area argued that a policy decision taken in a small town such as De Doorns, is not one that exists in isolation of the rest of the industry, or South Africa. TAU SA is of the opinion that no consideration can be given to minimum wages for the De Doorns area in isolation. Diversity in Agriculture and the reality of geographical areas also have to be taken in account ... The problems of De Doorns cannot be made the problem of the entire agricultural industry, it said. An increase in minimum wage, TAU SA argued, will certainly lead to further dismissals. TAU said that the discontent amongst farm workers is born from politics and socio-economic problems which they believe the government is responsible for rectifying. This is a commonly cited strain of economic theory which dictates that a higher minimum wage inevitably results in few jobs. Indeed, Davie (2015) argues the high price of labour is the cause of mass unemployment in South Africa. Further, labour law compliance costs form a substantial percentage of that price. Trade unions TYPICALLY ARGUED against this free-market rationale, describing it as simply a race to the bottom.

Since the minimum wage was raised to R105 in February 2013 jobs in the agriculture sector have grown from 764 000 to 891 000 at the same time this year (Stats SA) This number however does not differentiate between permanent and contract workers. There is no specific data available as yet to evaluate the impact on De Doorns. The minimum wages was revised upwards again this year and are now R2 606.78 a month, R601.61 a week and R120.32 a day. However, Murray & Van Walbeek make note of 2003 and 2005 research performed after the implementation of the statutory minimum wages in South Africa, which found that grape growers in the Breede River Valley had adjusted quickly to the new legislation. Most farmers offered wages above the minimum wage. And while no evidence of job shedding was found, there was a slowdown in job creation. Despite an increase in the minimum wage at a rate above the inflation rate, the increase was unlikely to result in significant job losses, although seasonal workers are more at risk than permanent labour. The research did however find that growers did offset the wage increase somewhat by providing fewer benefits. Of 12 800 permanent employees in South Africa's table grape industry recorded in 2010, 5 340 permanent employees were found in the Hex River Valley. A further 8700 people were employed in the area as seasonal workers. This is quite the opposite of 2008's numbers which showed 8450 permanent workers in the Hex River Valley's table grape industry, and an additional 5470 seasonal (Department of Agriculture 2011). The use of contract workers, particularly those not local to the area, became a central bone of contention in the 2012 protest. Census data of some 29 000 respondents surveyed in De Doorns indicated: Black Africans (according to Stats SA categories) account for 39% of the population. Coloured respondents made up 55% of the inhabitants. Indian or Asian inhabitants only account for 0.3% while the white population was 3.4% of the total. Of the same 29 000 respondents a lower than expected number were migrants. Five % were from elsewhere in the Western Cape; 2% were from the Eastern Cape and 6.5% were from outside of South Africa. Asked about income levels, 32% of De Doorns residents said they had no income to speak of (Breede Valley Municipality 2013).

The human resource aspect is very important for this industry. Grapes that are not for wine but intended as fruit exports cannot be handled by machinery, but need to be delicately pruned by hand in order to preserve the appearance of the fruit. Its appearance forms part of stringent quality standards stipulated by many export markets where this produce can reach high prices. Magruder (2012, p.138) says: "It seems likely that the labour market response to wage-setting institutions changes as countries develop. After all, for wage-employment trade-offs to be economically important, two structural features must hold. First, there must be substantial labour supply at low wages (below the cut of the proposed standards), and second, the government must have the capacity to actually enforce these regulations. We might expect labour markets in middle-income countries to exhibit these two features, and particularly so in countries with high rates of inequality."

LAND REFORM AND HOUSING

Another area of tension in the valley, and elsewhere, is that relating to land reform policy. These policies have been either ineffective, or had unintended, and negative, consequences. A cohesive land reform programme was one of the demands raised prominently by protesters during the infamous 2012 strike in De Doorns. (South African Labour News, 2013) According to the department of agriculture (2008): in the land, agriculture and the rural sector, South Africa inherited arguably the worst racially skewed land distribution in the world; whites who constitute about 10% of the total population owned nearly 90% of the land whilst blacks, who constitute nearly 90% of the population, owned about 10% of the land: whites owned most of commercial farms and agribusinesses whilst their black counterparts were predominantly confined to subsistence and small farms and micro agribusinesses, and lived largely by selling labour to commercial farms and agribusinesses. Farm workers and farm dwellers have always been one of the target groups for land reform, as stipulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 and the White Paper of 1997, however, according to Lahiff (2008, p.4) a few specific measures have been put in place to cater for this group. Under LARP [the Land and Agrarian Reform Project], much greater attention is paid to farm dwellers, at least at the rhetorical level, but it is not clear whether they will be treated any differently from the general mass of potential land reform beneficiaries ... While this emphasis on farm dwellers is certainly welcome, the lack of reference to the specific needs and demands of farm dwellers is cause for concern, particularly given the increased emphasis on creating new agricultural entrepreneurs' that pervades the discourse around LARP.

The objectives of LARP include: redistributing 5-million hectares of white-owned agricultural land to 10 000 new agricultural producers; increasing Black entrepreneurs in the agribusiness industry by 10 % and increasing agricultural trade by 10-15% for the target groups (Department of Agriculture, 2008). Having failed to reach the target of redistribution of 30% of land by 1998, the date by which to achieve this target was shifted to 2014. But according to Tom (200), structural changes in commercial agriculture have had a major impact on rural poverty and unemployment in the post-apartheid countryside and further government reports that 95% of all land reform projects are in crisis. As reported by Saunders (2015), research conducted for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) by four South African universities found government's land reform policies appear to be creating rather than addressing problems as it does not appreciate that the fortunes of workers and producers are interlinked. Saunders found farm subsidies have shrunk to about 3%, well below the 20% average of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The loss of subsidies had made it more difficult for local farmers to compete against countries that offered more protection to their agriculture sectors, the report said adding, "during this research, clear signs could be found that both groups are exiting the agricultural sector."

Security of tenure has for long been an issue in rural areas – particularly farmlands. And it remains a major issue today. According to Coetzee (2014), 247 farm evictions in the Western Cape were

reported to the Rural Development and Land Reform department in the past five months. These included legal and illegal evictions. In the Western Cape there were 163 evictions in the Cape Winelands prompting the Deputy Minister to call for a moratorium on farm evictions and said the government was concerned about an increase, particularly in the Cape Winelands and the Western Cape. There are many laws that seek to secure tenure of both farm dwellers and farm workers who live on commercial farming land. Documented accounts of people living the Breede River Municipality, although not in De Doorns indicate that farmers prefer that workers no longer live on their properties. As one farmworker in Robertson said: They don't want us here anymore ... It suits the farmers better if we live in town. They say they'd rather collect us on the bakkie every morning than give us houses (de Greef, 2014). Census data from the three wards comprising De Doorns shows that, in 2011, Of 7800 respondents queried about the status of their land tenure, 3900 (50%) occupied their housing rent-free; 1830 (23%) owned and fully paid off their houses; 1630 (21%) rented; and 261 owned but had not yet paid off. (Breede Valley Municipality, 2013). Having to comply with laws such as land tenure for workers had eroded farmer profits and many workers were now hired on a casual basis, with fewer living on farm property and instead moving to informal settlements in nearby towns. This placed a burden on cash-strapped small municipalities to provide state-subsidised housing and services such as water and electricity (Saunders, 2015). Indeed a number of departments of Human Settlements developments were earmarked for De Doorns, including R19-million for build environment support programme . And in 2014 the Western Cape Minister of Human Settlements handed over housing units to beneficiaries of the De Doorns project in De Doorns. This project has a budget of approximately R140-million to deliver 1 400 houses when complete (Western Cape Government, 2014) In a small town like De Doorns there is reasonable expectation that this would make a significant impact on the community.

BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The research in De Doorns also attempts assess to what degree Black Economic Empowerment policies have served to uplift the community. For agriculture in particular, an AgriBEE framework was developed in 2004 and made policy in 2006 with the intention to deliberately and systematically support Black South Africans to actively participate fully in the agricultural sector as owners, managers, professionals, skilled employers and active participants in all business interfaces in an attempt to encourage inclusive processes and a participatory culture to solicit collective efforts towards growth and development of the South African economy (Department of Agriculture, 2014). There is much literature on the potential of AgriBEE, but little of late to explain why it has been ineffectual. And certainly nothing specifically focused on De Doorns. Notoriously, the AgriBEE Fund, a grant initiative by the government to help black farmers purchase equity in farms or invest in agro-processing and value-adding of their produce, has been in a the subject of news headlines over recent years – but for all the wrong reasons. Reportedly, only one deal had been funded from the pool. Part of it could be understood, as the AgriBEE Charter Council and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries argued because the fund was suspended for two years . (Delonno, 2014) Last year, millions earmarked for the fund went unspent and taken back by the National Treasury as a result. This was after the funds sat with the Land Bank for over five years without being disbursed to previously disadvantage farmers. When National Treasury took over the Land Bank, it discovered that loans had been given wrongly and recklessly and many loans had had to be written off. (Azzakani, 2014)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Being in the Western Cape, De Doorns, like many other many other areas of the province, is still suffering the aftermath of the dop system. The dop system is where workers were paid with white wine instead of money, and was outlawed in 1961 (SA Government Agency), but it was still used long thereafter in places such as De Doorns and elsewhere and is believed to be a key reason for

persistent and pervasive alcohol use and abuse in the farmlands of the Western Cape province. The dop system and its impact on life in the vineyards today is something which cannot be ignored and remains a sensitive point for the industry which is seeking to transform itself. According to FASfacts director Francois Grobbelaar, no farms in the [Worcester] area use the (illegal) dop system, in which workers get paid with wine, which began during Jan van Riebeeck's time in the Cape. But he adds: You can't expect to eradicate a drinking culture that was nurtured over 200 to 300 years within 20, 30 or even 40 years (Malan 2015).

Although the dop system is outlawed and no longer practiced, its legacy continues to impact the wine and table grape industries today. It is generally accepted that rate of foetal alcohol syndrome occurring in the Western Cape is highest in the world, (SANCA n.d.). Monday absenteeism remains a major challenge for farmers I have canvassed on the matter in De Doorns. Malan (2015) writes that most often drinking amongst, what are considered medically as heavy drinking communities in the Cape, occurs Friday to Sunday and most people will not drink at all during the week. Malan (2015) reports that the Foundation for Alcohol Related Research in Cape Town defines binge drinking as five or more drinks — a 340ml beer or 175ml glass of wine are considered standard drinks — in one sitting of two to three hours.

Policy intervention in this area is clearly a priority for the Western Cape government. But from reading government policy documents, its concern is not primarily about the impact on the industry but rather about reducing the harmful behaviour and criminal activity that is believed to be related to substance abuse. According to the Western Cape Government (2013) every year it spends up to 80% of its health budget on preventable conditions, including injury-related deaths on our roads, and injuries and deaths from interpersonal violence fuelled by alcohol and drug use. In the Western Cape in 1999, 62% of murdered women had elevated blood alcohol concentrations at the time of death. In its policy document the provincial government said co-morbidity studies show victims and perpetrators have an increased likelihood of using alcohol as a coping mechanism for psychiatric disorders. This exacerbates the mental-health burden imposed on already traumatised communities. According to the Western Cape Government, its single largest intervention to reduce alcohol abuse and its related harms was the implementation of the Western Cape Liquor Act, passed in 2009, aimed at regulating liquor outlets. The act seeks to regulate the availability of alcohol by restricting the hours or days it can be sold. Reduced sales hours have generally been found to be associated with reduced violence and higher outlet densities with higher levels of violence. Economic modelling strongly suggests that raising alcohol prices (e.g. through increased taxes, state controlled monopolies and minimum price policies) can lower consumption and, hence, reduce violence (Western Cape Government, 2013). But the impact of the act on crime in the far-removed town of De Doorns is not clear to see. In fact, Crime Stats SA (n.d.) shows a general upward trend in crime over the past ten years (2004 -2014) with 1257 incidents in 2009, and 1883 incidents in 2014.

My reading of Paul Gorski (2008) who writes about the myth of the culture of poverty has also helped me to keep myself in check about how I view substance abuse. Gorski said much research has however strived to disprove the culture of poverty myths which paint poorer communities as being more prone to substance abuse. However, writes Gorski: Poor people are no more likely than their wealthier counterparts to abuse alcohol or drugs. Although drug sales are more visible in poor neighbourhoods, drug use is equally distributed across poor, middle class, and wealthy communities ... a history of research showing that alcohol abuse is far more prevalent among wealthy people than among poor people (Diala, Muntaner, & Walrath, 2004; Galea, Ahern, Tracy, & Vlahov, 2007).

LITERARY REVIEW

One can find a great deal of information on the history of the winelands, or the science of viticulture in grape farming or the prevalence of xenophobia, or foetal alcohol syndrome or the culture of substance of abuse in South Africa or policy in the Western Cape. From my readings, I have seen

information on these and more contained in a number of pieces. The news media published a great deal of coverage on the De Doorns protest of 2012 and did indeed attempt to illustrate policy issues that had frustrated those living in and around this small agricultural town. This coverage was however typically limited to the breaking events and was not able to look explain how the issues culminated overtime. These articles also did not profile the area very much at all but spoke more broadly about the agricultural industry and nation-wide sectorial wage determination. Academic articles offer a much richer source of information and a number of articles can be found which reference the Breede River Valley or even De Doorns, and only a selected few can be found that actually have conducted in depth case studies in these areas. These articles however each have a narrow focus in one area of interest which is documented at length - Be it the impact of minimum wage in the valley, the success of land reform, or the causes of xenophobia. Such articles include, Live Hagensen's, Understanding the Causes and the Nature of Xenophobia in South Africa: A Case Study of De Doorns.

It's a great difficulty however to track down a written work of non-fiction that ties all these and other issues together in a compelling way. The work I've come across thus far that is closest to what I am looking at is *Grape: from slavery to BEE* (Vial, J, James, W & Gerwel, J 2011). The book looks at the wine and table grape industry following it through from before Jan van Riebeeck came to South Africa and right through to modern day matters. It's an intense run-through of all issues one could imagine and a great deal of the book deals with the history of the industry up until today. It is interspersed with first-hand accounts by some interviewees which are laid-out in boxes and marked to show it is separate from the balance of the writing. My project DIFFERS in that it is shorter (long-form and not a book), and more targeted to specific issues related to policy intervention and how it has played out in one specific area – De Doorns. It will seek to bring social, political and economic issues together in an engaging way. It also differs because it is written in story-telling, narrative, style. It is intended to be commercially publishable piece which focuses centrally on De Doorns, taking into account its history and how it has shaped the lives of all people living and working in this area today. Where relevant, I include some of my own family's history as farmers in the area which believe brings a unique perspective to the reporting.

LONG-FORM, NARRATIVE, STRUCTURE

In my attempt to explore a wide range of issues – dipping into the past, and relating it to the present, documenting cultural phenomena, health issues, economic issues and matters of policy amongst many others – means long-form narrative journalism is the most suitable format in which to relate this textured research.

American writer and critic, Constance Hale, offers storytelling as an alternative word for narrative journalism. She says: narrative journalism takes the techniques of fiction and applies them to reportage. (Hale 2010) The fact that it is journalism does also matter, Hale says: when we label a work journalism, we acknowledge that the writers are reporting on people and events outside themselves, and that they subscribe to certain ethical ideas (not making up quotes, being present at a scene they are sketching, confirming facts with multiple sources). Journalism suggests a paramount concern with factual truth. Hale says this means the story must not be conceived as an inverted pyramid. (The classic structure of news journalism tells the reader in the first paragraph who, what, when, where, and maybe why, and then organizes the evidence in descending order of importance). A story is a graceful line rather than an inverted pyramid, it has an arc, a beginning-middle-end, a spine with limbs attached in just the right places. The same is said in *Writing for the media in SA* (Nel 2005) which notes that storytellers don't give away the story in the first paragraph the way news writers typically do. Instead they set up a situation, using suspense or the introduction of a compelling character to keep the reader turning pages...Rather than put the least important information at the end [not entirely relevant in this day and age], the way an inverted pyramid

writer would, the storyteller waits until the end to give the reader a big pay-off: a surprise, a twist, a resolution. Hale says literary techniques involved in narrative journalism include: precisely painted scenes, to put the reader into the story; fleshed-out characters to make the reader care about the story; plot, or a series of actions that unfold over time and lead the reader toward an endpoint or realization; paradox, to give the story twists and turns; suspense, or techniques to keep the story taut and thrilling; dramatic conflict (between characters, cultural forces, or communities); artful language and shapely sentences to pull the reader through paragraphs and inventive metaphors to surprise him or her; the presence of a narrator, what many call voice; some sense of relationship to the reader, viewer, or listener, so that there is a connection between storyteller and audience.

Indeed, the personal element in such a style of writing is clearly important. My own opinions should not become part of the material, although to a degree they will inevitably shape the piece as the information and reflection will be filtered through my eyes, the people I speak to and my experience and/or perceptions of them. It is for this reason that some introspection and calculation is required when making choices of who to interview and which voices dominate in the end product. (Nel 2005, p. 115) says there is clearly a difference between putting a story into context and writing yourself into the story. For news editors, the reasoning is simple: a reporter's job is to report news, not to become the news. I don't agree that this is always true, but in the case of this project I feel it would be accurate to say that I will step into the story here and there and contextualise myself within the story but certainly I have no intention of becoming the story.

METHODOLOGY

The interviewees were selected in a number of ways. Some voices I specifically targeted, while others I did not. My starting point for my research was a sit down interview with grape farmer, Charl Palm, who is also a family relation (although I had not seen him since I was a little child). As a first language English-speaker and a journalist, I felt he and his immediate family were not entirely comfortable in my presence. I am however aware I was likely only afforded Palm's time and help because of the family connection. Palm helped to put me in touch with the Water Users Association and the Table Grape Producers Association. He made the phone calls in front of me and told them I was family and asked they help me out. Even so, the head of the farmer association was seemingly avoiding me, and when he finally agreed to sit down made it clear that he did not trust the media as he felt farmers in the area had been unfairly depicted as the villains in the 2012 news coverage. The other interview which Palm put me in touch with at the irrigation board immediately agreed to meet with me, but he was also very stern before the interview and expressed the same concerns about how the media had portrayed events. Despite their hesitancy, I'm aware that were it not for my connection to Palm and the Palm family, I may not have had their input at all. There was a serious car accident within the Palm family before my second and final visit to the area. This may have influenced the outcome of my research as Palm was up and down to the Worcester hospital every day and not able to help more in connecting me with people. I think this worked out fine however and gave me the scope, and incentive to go out and find other and more varied interviewees. I did not expect high quality interviews from farm workers on the Palm farm as I foresaw that my association with their employer meant I would likely only get very basic and polite answers to my questions. This was indeed the case. The interviews with local government I thought best to arrange before I arrived or I would have risked coming up short. It did however require some persistence on my part to secure an interview with Sonja Greyling – which was who the municipality offered up as the best source. Finding labourers to speak openly to me proved to be a challenge at first. I had called a major worker's union who put me in touch with their representative in the area. We had arranged to meet with a group of workers one evening – but she cancelled last minute via sms. She claimed she could not reschedule but provided no reason for this. With limited time left in the Hex River Valley, I frantically pulled up registered union lists and phoned around until I located Mr Pieterse at the Karsten farm. He suggested I visit him at the farm during his lunch break. He

introduced me to a number of other workers whom I interviewed. When on farm premises I would try to speak to other workers nearby to ensure I wasn't just getting a "union line". When it came to speaking to the community I had no contacts. I simply went into the Stofland settlement and knocked on doors. This was in the middle of the day and during the week. This timing was intentional so that I was sure to speak to speak with unemployed community members or seasonal workers at best.

This, I believe is good way to approach research inquiry with the aim of producing long-form piece. I think it was effective partly because De Doorns is such a small town and the people there are so closely connected. There are of course things that can't be left to chance and identifying which voices are needed to speak to each issue, and then obtaining those voices, is important. Sometimes these voices are particular individuals, but other times it can be one of a larger group. In my experience, the sources you can't plan to speak to and are encountered by chance in the field are so often the ones who give you the most surprising, enlightening and authentic inputs that bring the core issues alive. However, there can be times where communities are hostile and such inputs are not always forthcoming. So my approach involved hedging my bets with a portion of key pre-determined interviewees which were guaranteed to give me some input into my research.

In my first trip to De Doorns I only had a very basic idea of the issues to discuss. The idea was to conduct just a few interviews, wherein I would allow the interviewee to speak at length and not attempt to steer the interview too much in order to ascertain what the key issues were and what recurring themes naturally transpired from the interviews. I analysed this information to plan a way forward. On my second trip to the area my plans was more targeted, I had done the background reading, and had a good idea of what issues were to be discussed. These are the issues that are set out above relating to labour and wages, housing and land reform, economic empowerment, and substance abuse.

The pre-determined questions were largely in line with the above points of discussion. They were asked somewhat differently, in order allow each interviewee to speak from their point of view and with authority. I would often first ask the interviewee something simple, and a little more conversational – such as something about their occupation or their history. For farmers it would start with how business has been of late; for labourers it would be about their work history on the farm. For unemployed community members I would ask how long they have lived there, and where they were born and where their parents had come from. Once the interviewees were more comfortable I would begin asking more pertinent questions which may have been seemingly simple but which I knew were in fact loaded. Of a white farmer I would ask: do you think the current wages are enough? Of a BEE farmer I would ask: Does BEE work? Of a labourer I would ask: Do you think the farmer can afford to pay you more, or do you even want to live in a farm house? Often answers would prompt me to have more, unplanned, questions. All interviewees seemed quite happy to spend as much time as necessary in order for me to understand the issues, and their points of views. As I did not have tight time pressures I too would listen to people speak for much longer than I could on an average work-day. I have found that the more interesting insights, and most powerful quotes, tend to emerge toward the tail-end of each interview.

To gain the trust of all interviewees I made a point to begin every introductory phone call and/or every sit down interview with an outline of what my research was about and its academic purposes. I also disclosed that – although my research was not done in this capacity – that I was a working journalist for a national newspaper. Although this complicated things, I thought it was only fair to let interviewees know this. I imagine that if it was not disclosed and they later found this out, that they may have felt uncomfortable with this not having been told to them. I requested permission to record the conversations. I explained that this was to ensure that I did not misunderstand or misquote anything they would say – which is indeed the primary reason I did so. All interviewees

agreed to this. The recording was even more necessary for me to capture quotes with accuracy as some interviewees were more comfortable responding in Afrikaans. Where they struggled even just slightly with English I assured them there was no problem with them responding in Afrikaans. While me being English was a hurdle with the Afrikaans white members of the community, I think it may have been an advantage with the labourers and members of the Stofland community as it was clear to them that I was not from the area. This seemed to be an advantage in getting them to open up to me. Where interviewees were seated I would sit too. If they stood around, I would also do so. Where a beverage was offered I would always accept. This is not because I indeed wanted a drink, but rather that I felt it was one way to help put my interviewees at ease. I ensured that interviewees had my contact details before I left them.

Because my family connection was a reason for how I came to do my research in De Doorns I decided that I would try to be as impartial as possible. Even so, true impartiality would never be possible. So I instead embraced the family history and incorporated it into the narrative. While interviewees gave much of their input and time to me, I often felt I was giving so little back. Where people were particularly nervous of how they would be represented, to put their minds at ease I offered to send back quotes for checking. No material changes were necessary because of the recording and transcription. Where labourers, like those at Karsten, did not know why they had seen no money from the BEE project in which they were involved I relayed the employer's response to them where possible.

CONCLUSION

Post-94 markets for the farmers in the Hex River Valley were opened substantially and Hex River Valley grapes can today travel to a number of markets they previously had no access to. There is still room for further improvement, but the industry has been relatively successful. This has translated into employment. Job opportunities, paired with the new housing and accompanying infrastructure means the valley continues to attract more and more people. The burgeoning population has brought with it the expected social ills of higher crime rate, HIV and TB, as well as substance – both alcohol and drug – abuse. This is a problem deeply rooted in the communities of Western Cape. Often the policy intervention it is just not enough, as seen with government's substance abuse programmes which are inadequate to tackle this intergenerational issue. And for those lucky enough to receive subsidised treatment at a rehabilitation facility, they face an uphill battle in maintaining sobriety when they return home to a seemingly hopeless situation. The labour force in the valley is not without its own influence – as demonstrated by the 2012 protests which forced government to raise the national agricultural workers' minimum wage by almost 60% in the course of three years. The industry in the valley largely handled this substantial change well. It did however mean that changes had to be implemented in order to do so – benefits were cut by some farmers and where needed, short-time was introduced. A social ill that has reared its head in the valley, as it has elsewhere in the country, is the phenomenon of xenophobia – thought to be rooted in the battle for resources. Black Economic Empowerment in South Africa is criticised by even the ANC-led government as being too slow, or even as having failed. In the valley too, there are not too many success stories as yet. But there are black farmers. And the conditions that the state applies to new water projects have forced the industry to consider and include empowerment projects at every interval.

Where the policy has failed, is a BEE farm's ability to access finance and established farmers have in fact stepped in to save viable BEE projects, as seen with the Osplaas farm. Along with the mammoth social housing project here has come a vast amount of infrastructure. And a huge number of locals who had expected to live out their days in substandard farm housing have now found themselves homeowners, with running water and electricity. The housing project has however failed in its aim to

reduce the amount of informal housing. But perhaps that was an unrealistic ambition to begin with, as the infrastructure paired with job opportunities has seen the valley become an increasingly enticing place to live. The inflow of people is rapid, and as some needs are met, more quickly arise. The housing need has also grown as legislation intended to protect workers' rights of tenure on farms has been so effective that farmers are very careful as to whom they now provide housing for on their farms. To have the majority of a farm's employees living in town has proved a better option for the producers, and often is a preferable arrangement for the labourers too. It's clear that those living in the valley have seen many changes over the past 20 years. Some aspects of their lives have improved significantly, but new and unexpected challenges now face this community too. And all throughout the sea change, De Doorns has held its head above water.

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