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2015-02-13
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Farm Worker Uprising in the Western Cape

A Case Study of Protest, Organising, and Collective Action

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Research Report

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September 26th, 2014

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Labour, Policy, and Globalisation at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This report has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other University

Signed_____ __ day of _____2014

Jesse Wilderman

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Note of Appreciation

Doing research and writing this report on the farm worker uprising of late 2012 and early 2013 in the Western Cape turned out to be a fascinating and engaging adventure. The wonderful thing about doing this work was the people that I was lucky enough to be able to meet and engage with, along with the guidance and support that I received from those around me. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Eddie Webster, who was always thoughtful, engaged, and constantly pushing me to dig deeper, think harder, and have a plan; his experience and history as a movement and thought leader speak for themselves and I feel honoured to have had the chance to work with him. In addition, I owe a huge amount of gratitude to the people on the ground doing amazing organising work in the Western Cape—struggling every day in their unions, NGOs, and community based organisations for the dignity that the farm workers and the rural poor deserve. This includes members, organisers and leaders from FAWU, COSATU, Women on Farms, TCOE, Citrusdal Farm Worker and Farm Dweller Forum, Surplus People's Project (special thanks to Ronald!), PASSOP, Scalabrini Centre, AIDC, WIETA, BAWUSA, and many other individuals; I was constantly inspired by your work and thankful for your willingness to share your experiences with me. A special thanks and gratitude goes out to the comrades of CSSAWU and Mawubuye in the Robertson area—Shirley, Denia, Deneco, Karel, Henry, Tumi, Mercia, Henry, and so many other courageous leaders there who gave me a small glimpse of their incredible struggle. And thanks to the observers and researchers who lent me their advice and their insights, particularly the folks at PLAAS and at the Global Labour University. Last but not least, I want to recognise and thank the farm workers who inspired and led this historic struggle; as a trade union organiser myself, I am inspired by the courage and sacrifice of these workers who stood up when no one thought it was possible against a repressive system that has kept them in poverty for hundreds of years; too often it seems that our history features stories about strong men and big leaders, but it is the struggle of these workers that gives me hope.

Abstract

This research report looks at the historic farm worker strikes and protests that took place during late 2012 and early 2013, involving thousands of farm workers and the rural poor in the Western Cape, with a view to answering: 1) why did the protests take place when they did; 2) how did the protests spread across the Western Cape; and 3) did the mass participation of the protests turn into formal organisation. The research was conducted primarily through in-depth interviews with participants and observers of the protests during field visits to the Western Cape in late 2013 and early 2014.

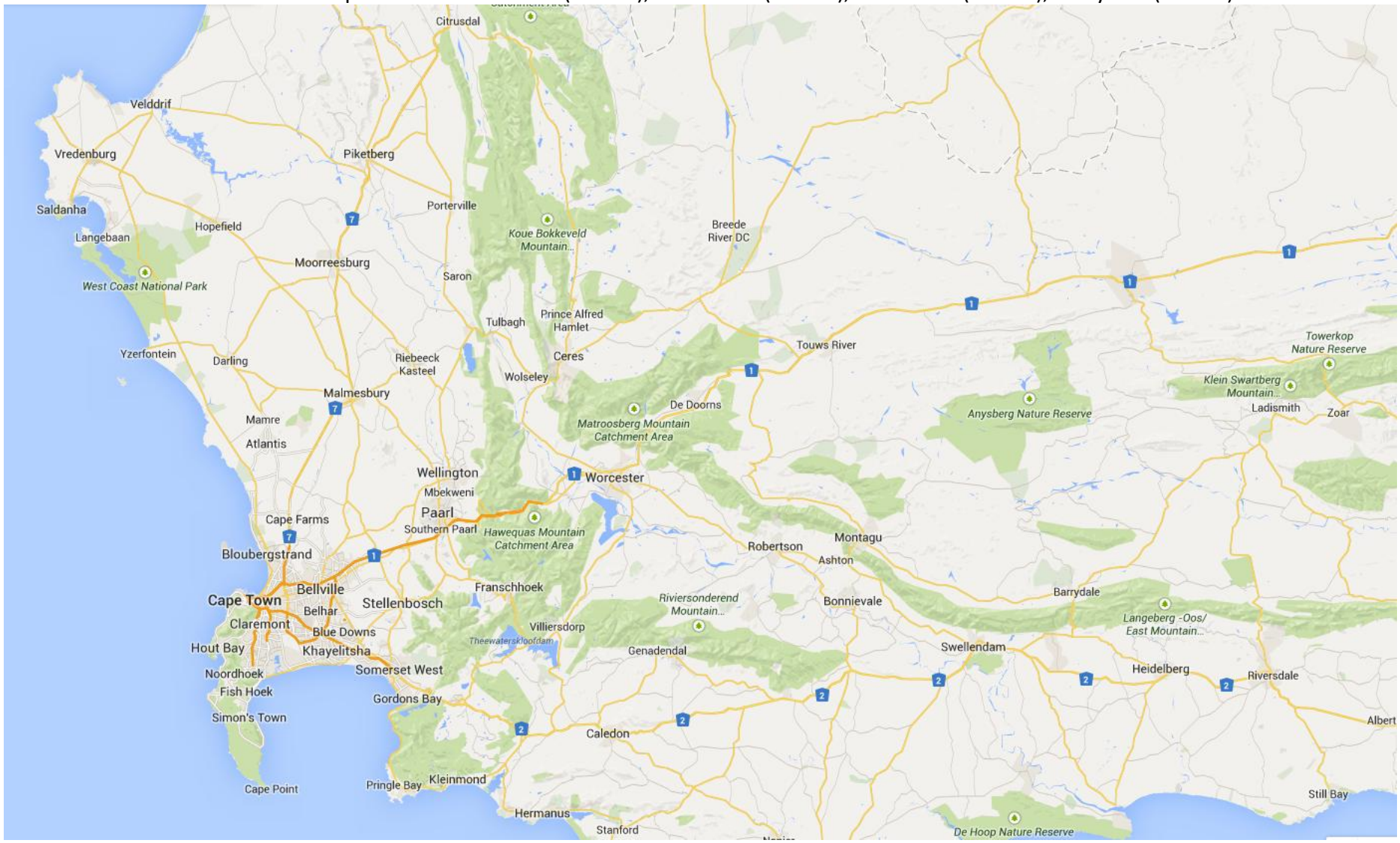
The findings of the report suggest that farm owners, responding to top-down pressures of shifting global production standards and competition, along with increased government regulation and worker protections, continue to move toward a more seasonal, outsourced, and off-farm labour force; the transformation of the workforce is leading to a breakdown or re-negotiation of two of the major impediments to overt, confrontational, and collective action, namely paternalistic social construction and farm worker isolation. These longer-term trends combined with the spark of a small, successful strike and an increasing sense of tactics, strategy, and possibility to ignite a large-scale strike in one of the major farming towns in the area. With the help of television coverage featuring scenes of this protest and a clear demand by protestors themselves for an increase in the minimum wage, local organisations then served as "coordinating" units, alongside a range of more informal networks, to spread the protest and its easily replicable tactics to towns around the region.

In part because farm workers do not have meaningful access to the more institutional vehicles for expressing their grievances, the protests took on a more bottom-up, "spontaneous" nature and spread, with the strategy of disruption and its emerging repertoires of contention serving as key sources of power. Because of the unique nature of the protests and the shifting nature of farm worker identities, most of the participating organisations were unsuccessful at translating the mass participation of the protests into greatly expanded levels of formal organisation. This challenge of turning participation into organisation was exacerbated by a major backlash by farm owners after the protest, as well as by some of the organising approaches of these organisations during and after the protests. The report concludes that there may be reasons for hope as the protests seem to have created some expanded confidence and leadership among farm workers, even if they did not primarily challenge power on the farms; the question remains as to whether this historic uprising can lead to further transformation from below.

Western Cape Map

Includes many of the fruit and wine producing towns and areas where the uprising took place

Distance From Cape Town to: Citrusdal (175km), De Doorns (140km), Roberston (160km), Barrydale (250km)



Chapter 1

The Questions, The Argument, and Why This Research Matters

"We outnumber the farmers eleven to one and they still hoard the economic power and still talk to us with disrespect. We could kill all the farmers in a weekend if we wanted to and this land will be fucked up—it could happen in one day. But until this strike we were never able to get all the farm workers and all of us to come out and fight back"

Local Councilman and supporter of the farm worker protests

"We have paid for the caskets of your families. We have paid for their funerals. We have carried their caskets in church with you, cried with you and mourned with you . . . We have bought your children's school clothes . . . I have personally loaned my wedding dress to staff, and the only ball gown I own has been worn to many of your children's matric dances . . . When you were hungry we have brought you food, when you forgot your lunch I have made you sandwiches. You have been part of our family and part of every celebration we have ever had. If you want to strike today, then don't bother coming back."

Farm Owner in letter to the Cape Times before planned strike action

In late 2012 into early 2013, thousands of farm workers and their allies across more than twenty-five towns around the Western Cape engaged in a historic series of explosive and unexpected work stoppages and protest. While the main issue associated with the uprising was a demand for an increase in the minimum wage, a myriad of grievances have plagued farm workers and the rural poor in these areas for years. Yet there had not in living-memory been a protest that reached this scale and intensity. The perceived power of the farm owners coupled with a lack of large, formal organization among farm workers seemed to have stacked the deck against overt, collective resistance; before this explosion of action, many observers thought the narrative of the Western Cape farms implied that transformation of working and living conditions would not be prompted by action from below.

Yet not only was the scale and intensity of this uprising historic, it displayed a form of resistance outside the "paternalistic" discourse that had come to characterize relationships between farm workers and farm owners; as Ewert and Du Toit explain about traditional farm worker resistance, ". . . they rely on the 'weapons of the weak', operating within the framework of the paternalistic moral universe itself, relying on individual appeals, consensual negotiations, and the avoidance of the appearance of open conflict" (2005). This uprising in the Western Cape, however, was defined by open conflict, including burning of

vineyards, protest marches, and pitched battles with the police; farm workers and their allies adopted an overt, confrontational, and adversarial approach that, in this instance, was an apparent break from the traditional discourse.

This study seeks to better understand what made this moment of uprising possible. More specifically, the study asks the questions 1) why did the protest occur when it did 2) how did the protest spread beyond its launching point to quickly reach such a large scale and 3) has the protest been turned into more formal organisation. By exploring these questions this research hopes to understand if the protests of late 2012 and early 2013 hold lessons for further organisation and mobilisation of farm workers and their allies in South Africa, and, through organisation and/or action, if there might be new possibilities for the rural poor to win a more equal distribution of resources and power in the farming communities of the Western Cape.

The Argument

While the chapters following this introduction will provide a more in-depth analysis of the research and its implications for the three questions articulated above, this introduction will provide a quick overview of the argument that frames each section. On the first question of "why now", the research suggests that changing production standards and cost pressures for farm owners along with increased government protections for farm workers and farm dwellers, reflect a set of macro-dynamics that are driving a transformation of the work force away from permanent, on-farm labour to a more seasonal, off-farm and migrant labour force. This ongoing transformation of the work force has led to a re-negotiation—or weakening—of two major impediments to organising and collective action—namely the paternalistic social construction that has defined farm owner and farm worker relationships and the isolation faced by workers who live on the farms. These trends help explain why seasonal workers played such a prominent role in launching the protests and why the hub of activity and organising tended to be the growing settlement communities in these farming towns.

As these macro-dynamics were shaping the relationships and spatial make-up of the farming communities, an explanation of why the protest happened when it did would not be complete without understanding a set of micro-dynamics that created a more immediate sense of hope, resources, and strategic possibility, turning long simmering anger into action. These micro-dynamics included the spark of a successful strike by a smaller group of workers on an individual farm in the De Doorns area along with the ability of farm workers and their allies to access a set of protest tactics built up during their participation in service delivery protests and a set of informal networks and leadership developed through a range of community based activities and interactions. At the same time, the research suggests that some of the protest leaders had lost faith in transformation from above, having had their expectations broken repeatedly with false promises of change, thereby creating additional urgency to act in new ways.

When looking at the second question of how the protest was able to rapidly spread and reach a large scale, this research report will argue that the television images of the protest in De Doorns had a galvanising effect on farm workers around the region, with the scenes of conflict coupling with a clear demand to awaken an urgency and consciousness that called people to action. In addition, more formally organised structures—generally smaller trade unions, community based organisations, and NGOs—that existed prior to the eruption of the protests served as coordinating units, shaping the energy and motivation of the workers and rural poor into concrete action; these coordinating units were again aided by informal networks—networks partly developed by the more transitory nature of the changing workforce. Finally, the spread of the protest was facilitated by a set of easily replicable tactics that drew on both structural and disruptive power. In these ways, the research suggests a specific set of stories, structures, and strategies that allowed the protest to spread. These factors also allowed the protest to take on a more "spontaneous" nature, defined by the ability of the protest to spread more quickly and on a scale beyond the more incremental planning and capacity of any organisers or organisations.

Finally, when turning to the third question of whether the protests have been turned into more formal organisation, this research report will argue that the energy and participation of the uprising has not been translated into greatly expanded membership in formal organisations like trade unions. The research suggests a host of reasons why that may be the case, including a major backlash by farm owners against farm workers after the protests as well as a set of approaches and structures, particularly among trade unions, that do not necessarily speak to the changing nature and identity of the workforce or the energy coming from this type of protest. While the report will argue that formal organisations have not dramatically grown their membership, there does appear to be other shifts generated from the protests like increased confidence among some workers, newly developed worker leaders, and an increased attention to the stories of poverty and injustice faced by the poor in these farming communities; the question remains open as to whether these shifts and the outcome of the protest itself signal new opportunities for further transformation from below.

The structure of the this report is firstly, in Chapter Two, to provide some general background regarding the conditions facing farm workers, outline what have been considered traditional impediments to building organisation and action among farm workers, and paint a very brief picture of the protests themselves; in addition, Chapter Two will explain the research methodology and some of its potential shortcomings. Chapter Three will turn the question of "why now" in trying to explore why the protests occurred when they did. Chapter Four will explore the second question of how the protests spread specifically beyond their origination point and epicentre of De Doorns to areas around the Western Cape. Chapter Five will examine the final question of if the protests have been transformed into more formal organisation and if not, some proposed explanation of why not. Chapter Six will engage theoretical tools and understandings that help more deeply explore these three questions; more specifically, Chapter Six will

explore issues around movement theory, spontaneous collective action, sources of power, and tensions between movement and organisation. Finally, Chapter Seven will attempt to draw some broad lessons from the protests about how organisations interested in organising farm workers might move forward, along with some suggestions for further research.

Why this Research Matters

Finally, the question might be asked as to why this research matters. Firstly, I would argue that the inequality and poverty faced by farm workers and the rural poor is a grave injustice, particularly when the production of fruit and wine in the Western Cape is a lucrative industry for many producers and buyers of these products. More than just material inequality, the unequal power relationships and patterns of abuse and domination between white farm owners and black and coloured workers reflect an unfair system more akin to relationships under the oppressive apartheid system than in a society almost twenty years into a non-racial, democratic political system. And while there has been talk by many leaders of the democratic government about the urgent need for transformation, it seems clear that very few of those leaders are willing to cause the kind of disruption from above that would be required for meaningful redistribution of resources and power.

This would then seem to suggest that disruption of the current system and then meaningful transformation must have a strong driver from below; farm workers and the rural poor must develop power through organisation and mobilisation to force their friends and foes in the power structure to react to their concerns. And for the first time in living memory, the protests of late 2012 and early 2013 did just that—through mobilisation and disruption, farm workers and the rural poor forced the government to act, increasing the minimum wage an unprecedented fifty-two percent; while other important injustices were not addressed—and the farm owner backlash has sought to steal away much of this victory—the protests prove that mobilisation from below into disruptive action is possible and, for at least limited purposes, effective.

The important purpose—and question—then underlying this research is how, if possible, might one prompt more action like the uprising of 2012 and 2013; by helping gain a deeper understanding of both what made these unprecedented protests possible and what were its shortcomings, organisers and organisations can explore further how farm workers might become the narrators of their own future. This exploration will also force activists to ask questions about what kinds of organisation and mobilisation speak to both the farm workers of today as well as the shifting context in which they operate, what do the protests teach about the kinds of power that could and should be exercised, and what is the right balance between mobilising and organising—between action and organisation—to drive and sustain meaningful change from below over the longer term.

Most importantly, these protests provide a glimmer of hope for those who believe that radical transformation from below is necessary in the winelands and fruit valleys of the Western Cape; this research hopes to add one small piece to exploring how farm workers might further challenge not only material conditions but, as importantly, the power relationships holding back real transformation, equality, and justice for farm workers and the rural poor. As one farm worker explains when reflecting on the protests, "I will never forget the way the people stood together—it was amazing—and we could see the power of togetherness, and I will never forget that we could see that the farmer—for once—was really afraid of us" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

Chapter 2

Farm Workers, Organising Challenges, and the Protests

In order to understand the farm worker protests of late 2012 and early 2013, one must first provide some very brief context of the working and living conditions facing farm workers along with what have been considered the traditional impediments to organising, organisation, and collective action. The plight of farm workers is relatively well documented; the Human Rights Watch Report *Ripe with Abuse* (2011) provides an in-depth look at the conditions for farm workers and farm dwellers on the fruit and wine farms of the Western Cape. The dismal working conditions and poverty outlined in the report are not newly discovered; studies by the Human Rights Commission in 2003 and 2008 point to many of the same problems facing farm workers.

The challenges for farm workers, farm dwellers, and the local residents of settlement areas and townships are often closely linked and overlap. At work, farm workers face extremely long hours, lack of access to basic standards of working conditions like drinking water or toilets, and exposure to health and safety concerns like pesticides or bodily injury; for this gruelling work, many farm workers—until the most recent uprising-- were earning a minimum wage of R69 per day. The level of this minimum wage rate, set in 2012 by the Minister of Labour through an amendment to Sectoral Determination Thirteen, left farm workers as some of the lowest paid workers in the formal sector of employment (Human Rights Watch Report 2011; Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997). Describing the poverty and vulnerability faced farm workers and their families, one worker explains, “With the wages we are paid, when you buy your food on Saturday it ends on Wednesday night and on Thursday and Friday you must depend on your neighbour or go back to the farmer and ask for some money or sometimes just go hungry” (Interview with Dube 2013).

It is important to note that there are also variances in working conditions between farm workers; these differences often break down by gender, immigration status, race, and employment status. Generally, women earn less than men, partially because they make up a higher percentage of the casual or seasonal workers, but even in situations where their employment status is the same. There is also traditionally been a divide—if uneven or inconsistent in many places—between “coloured” workers, who tend to hold more of the permanent jobs, and “African” workers who make up a greater percentage of the casual or seasonal workers. More skilled workers, of whom there are fewer, tend to be paid higher wages while migrant or contract workers—workers who are sometimes employed by labour brokers—are sometimes paid below the minimum wage and face higher rates of vulnerability based on lack of consistent work (Human Rights Watch Report 2011; BFAP Report 2012).

Conditions for farm workers outside the workplace are also very poor. Fewer farm workers are given housing on the farms than in the past and the housing that does exist on the farms is often substandard. Because tenancy on farms is tied to employment, farmers hold a tremendous amount of power over farm workers and the fear of eviction is constant, even though there are laws designed to protect against abuse. Of those workers who do not live on the farms, many live in informal settlements in nearby towns; not only is housing in these settlements substandard but there are major challenges with basic service delivery of electricity, water, sanitation and other basic needs. Farm workers also face challenges with access to basic health services; clinics and doctors may be a prohibitively far distance away. Finally, transport is a constant struggle and farm workers are often forced to travel in unsafe conditions, leading too often to incidents of deadly road accidents that kill or injure many people at one time (Human Rights Watch Report 2011; BFAP Report 2012; Naledi Report 2011).

While the ANC government has sought to strengthen farm worker and farm dweller protections through the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and creation of the Labour Tenants Act and Extension of Security of Tenure Act (Anseeuw & Pons-Vignon 2009; Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997), the results, as we will see in a later chapter, have not in many cases led to significantly better living and working conditions for farm workers. There are also major challenges with enforcement of these laws. In the Western Cape, there are roughly 107 labour inspectors responsible for covering roughly 6,000 farms and all other workplaces in the province. Moreover, an agreement between Agri SA, the largest farmer owners' association, and the Department of Labour requires that inspectors provide prior notice before being permitted to inspect farms. And, as mentioned previously, the proliferation of labour brokers, with many different employers, makes enforcement even more challenging. Finally, general awareness by workers of their basic rights is often limited by lack of information or misinformation. The end result is that even where there are regulations, even those as basic as the minimum wage, lack of enforcement and awareness means that many of the rules are not adhered to (Human Rights Watch Report 2011; ILO Report 20110).

Organizing Challenges

While overall union density—the percentage of workers who are in unions-- in South Africa hovers around thirty percent, farm workers remain mostly unorganized, with anywhere between three to ten percent organized throughout the country. While different reports suggest varying numbers for the percentage of farm workers in the Western Cape who are union members, the general consensus is that the number is somewhere between three to five percent. And while the main trade union federation, COSATU, and its farm work affiliate FAWU have talked about the urgent need to organize farm workers, there has been little progress to date (Human Rights Watch Report 2011; Naledi Report 2011). It is also worth noting that there are other types of organizations that have been engaged in organizing farm workers—smaller, unaffiliated trade unions; non-governmental organizations; women led trade unions;

community-based organizations; and immigrant rights groups. While some of the methods of organization associated with these groups—and traditional trade unions—will be reviewed in later chapters, none of these organizations *individually* have built large scale membership or been able to implement large scale collective action before the recent uprising.

Impediments to union organizing, some of which may also impede other types of organizing, include employer opposition, vulnerability of the workers, and challenges to traditional union strategies or models. Farm owners are generally hostile to unions and often make this well known to farm workers; farm owners may punish or fire workers who attempt to organize and, while this may technically be a violation of the law, the likelihood of prosecution is relatively small. In addition, the social construction of paternalism creates a culture of domination and subordination and farm owners generally use their private property rights to deny access to union organizers. Farm owners have also been known to use other tactics to avoid unionization, like setting up employer dominated worker committees to "speak for" workers or using large numbers of labour brokers to make organization difficult (Naledi Report 2011).

At the same time, farm workers face a high level of vulnerability which amplifies the employers' power over them. Given the poverty that many farm workers face, the risk of organizing is increased, particularly when an employer may cut hours or fire a worker for trying to join a trade union; this problem is exacerbated by the high levels of unemployment and the relatively low skill required for many jobs, meaning the farm owner can more easily find replacements. This vulnerability can again be amplified when the farm worker lives on the farm; because tenancy is connected to employment, a farm worker and her family may lose their home if a farmer decides to retaliate for union organizing.

Finally, traditional unions face technical and political challenges to successful organizing. Firstly, farms are often spread out, meaning that organizing on-farm workers can require extensive travel to talk to a limited number of workers and the interaction between groups of workers themselves may be limited; this also speaks to the challenge of self-funding through adequate subscriptions—particularly given the smaller subscriptions generated by these low wage workers and the fact that farm owners often refuse to deduct these subscriptions.

There are also divisions among workers—ethnicity, immigration status, language—that can complicate organizing and communication. In addition, there are divides between permanent workers, who enjoy a comparatively better position, and casual, seasonal, or contract workers who generally have lower standards; rather than a common fight against employers, these workers may sometimes feel threatened by each other. This divide may also help entrench the schemas and repertoires of more traditional and established unions, meaning that the more permanent workers capture the resources and focus of the organization to the detriment of new approaches to organizing with the more precarious workers (Chun 2013).

Finally, traditional unions have very few examples of success to point to—sources of hope—for farm workers. In many ways, the apartheid status of agricultural production has not changed very much since 1994, and this can lead to a cynicism and mistrust of organizations making unfulfilled promises of change. Along with this challenge, some farm workers have come to mistrust unions based on a lack of "servicing" that has been experienced on the local level; traditional unions may be seen as national in focus or as outsiders, not concerned about local problems or needs. In a similar vein, trade unions may also been seen as excessively focused on work place issues to the determent of a broader and community based agenda (ILO Report 2011; Naledi Report 2011). Despite all of these obstacles, according a recent ILO study, an overwhelming majority of farm workers still believe a union and collective bargaining could make an important difference in the quality of their jobs. And as we have seen in the recent uprising, despite all of these impediments, farm workers and their communities figured out how to act collectively—at least in this one instance—against the injustices they face. The focus of this report then is to explore how, in the face of such difficult living and working conditions along with all of these perceived hurdles to organisation and collective action, farm workers and many of their allies were able to rise up in protest, spread that protest around the region, and win a major concession in the form of government action.

The Protests

The large scale protests began in De Doorns in early November, 2012 and by early December had spread to well over twenty towns across the Western Cape, involving tens of thousands of workers, unemployed, youth, and other members of the poor in the rural areas (Interview with Wesso 2013). The exact nature and size of the protests varied from town to town, but generally the activities of protestors involved marches, blocking of roads, and, importantly, a refusal to go to work; in many cases, the protests also involved some destruction of property as well as confrontations with the police that involved tear gas, rubber bullets, and arrests. In the second week of the protest, the *Daily Maverick*, a newspaper that covered the protests, described the scene:

> By Wednesday, the Cape winelands had morphed into a battlefield . . . many roads and thoroughfares were rendered almost impassable by rocks heaped by protestors across the road. Tree branches, lead pipes, barbed wire, and even the turn-off sign to a winery further blockaded the motorist's path. . . Close to Robertson, fires burned on both sides of the road. The vines of the "Constitution Road Wine Growers" flickered with flame. . . A steady stream of farm workers appeared out of the smoke shrouding the town. "Een-vyftig!" they shouted, a reference to their wage demand of R150. "Die boere wil vir ons fokol gee!" one yelled: the farmers want to give us nothing. (Nov 15th, 2012)

Similar scenes of farm workers and residents of the rural settlements blocking roads with burning tires and debris, refusing to work, and holding up placards demanding R150 per day could be seen in towns around the region. In De Doorns, media reports suggested that "about 8000 farm workers have abandoned vineyards and brought traffic on the N1 highway to a standstill" (*In Edition*, Nov 8th, 2012). In Citrusdal, thousands of farm workers and members of the settlement communities marched into town to deliver a memorandum to government before being forced to disperse in a pitched battle with police. In Robertson, farm workers blocked the main traffic circle outside the settlement community of Nkqebela while farm workers who lived on faraway farms took to the streets at the entrances to their own farms, picketing and blocking the roads. In Bonnievale, protestors blocked the main entrance to the settlement area until police arrested several protestors and local councilors intervened. In all of these cases, large scale work stoppages were a defining feature of the protests as well as activities to disrupt the movement of goods and people (Interviews with Brink 2013; Draghoender 2013; Philander 2013; Dube 2013; Vollenhoven 2014).

These types of overt, confrontational and collective protests took place across the region for the first two weeks in November, at which point the strike was called off by COSATU, the largest trade union federation in South Africa; the response of protestors to this call was varied and mixed, with some areas returning to work while other areas continued with uneven or sporadic protests and work stoppages. The protest then picked up in early December, with larger numbers again taking to the streets in a shorter period of action around the region. The action slowed down during the holiday season only to pick up again in January, when protestors planned another round of action; the action in January involved thousands of farm workers and the rural poor with large scale and mostly peaceful actions combining with major confrontations with police and private security; one media report describes a day of protest in early January that involved thousands of protestors in towns around the region:

> Journalists on the scene in De Doorns on Thursday suggested that things were, if anything, more volatile than the previous day. The shell of the Independent Newspapers car torched on Wednesday appeared to become something of a symbolic conflict-point: footage from ENCA showed police moving it off the N1, only to have it repeatedly dragged back on to the motorway by protestors. Two tractors commandeered by protestors were also driven onto the N1, with police eventually using water cannons and stun grenades to disperse the crowd. In Grabouw and Clanwillian, there were reports of stand-offs between protestors and police, with tyre-burning and rock-throwing—the two pastimes which have become the hallmarks of the winelands protest action—taking place in both locations. . . by the end of Thursday, a reported 62 protestors had been arrested during the two days of strike action (*Daily Maverick*, Jan 11th, 2013).

Finally, the protests came to an end in late January and early February, 2013 when the Department of Labour announced its intention to implement a new sectoral determination starting on March 1st that would increase the minimum wage for farm workers. During the course of the uprising, three protestors were killed by police and private security and hundreds were arrested. And while many issues facing farm workers and the rural poor were highlighted by the protestors, the demand for an increase in the daily pay rate for farm workers to R150 was a primary rallying cry. From media reports and first hand interviews, we see that the type, scale, and nature of this large scale, overt, and confrontational collective action was unique and unprecedented for farm workers in the Western Cape. The questions then, and the focus for the rest of this report, arise as to why the protest could happen when it did, how it spread, and whether it has turned into more lasting and formal organisation.

Research Methodology

This research project consisted primarily of a case study approach to the Western Cape farm workers' protest and strike action of late 2012 and early 2013; it was an effort to develop a more "in-depth" and "context specific" analysis that might be required for understanding complex events and social phenomena (Burawoy 1998; Flyvberg 2006; Callus & Kitay 1998). The field research took a primarily qualitative approach, seeking to provide detailed descriptions and interpretive understanding of the participants, organizers, and organizations involved in the uprising (Babbie & Mouton 2001).

The core data collection method of the study was semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a range of participants and observers of the farm workers protest and the rural and agricultural sector of the Western Cape more broadly. In-depth interviews seemed particularly well suited for the goals of the research project as they are meant to develop detailed and holistic descriptions, integrate multiple perspectives, describe process, and learn how events are interpreted (Weiss 1994).

Over fifty in-depth interviews were completed, including with farm workers, community leaders, NGO leaders, trade union leaders, trade union organisers, elected officials, government officials, academics, journalists, and farm owners. In addition, further data collection was done through observation and participation, including spending approximately a week living in a farming community settlement area as well as observing shop steward meetings of farm workers, eviction proceedings, organising meetings, and small group organising work on the farms. This field work was complemented by a literature review to help develop a theoretical framework to approach the core questions of the research project.

The sampling method did not seek to be representative in a quantitative sense but rather qualitative or non-random in that it sought participants who were most relevant or have intimate knowledge of the research topic-- otherwise known as purposive sampling (Newman 2000). As with much qualitative sampling, participants emerged over the course of the research, as participants with key content were

uncovered and sought out; in other words, snowball sampling—where referrals from one participant led to other potential participants—was a key methodology used. In an attempt to make sure that snowballing allowed varied voices to come through, a range of entry people were sought out, although most of the "gatekeepers" were connected to more formally established organisations.

The semi-structured interview instrument was designed around three key questions—why did the protest take place when it did, how did the protest spread, and has the participation of the protest been turned into organisation; the data was then analyzed around these same three themes. As mentioned, the semi-structured nature of the in-depth interviews did not use rigid questions meant to establish strictly quantitative data but rather allowed the participants to explore and emphasize a range of questions and answers within the broader frame work. The interviews were conducted during two research visits to the Western Cape over approximately two weeks in November 2013 and two weeks in March 2014. Several of the interviews, particularly with farm workers themselves, relied on unpaid translators who were generally either fellow workers or organisers associated with a farm worker organisation. Finally, due to issues of practicality, particularly when conducting interviews in the context of ongoing organising or campaigning work, some interviews took the shape of group interviews, where questions were directed at a number of protest participants at one time, creating a slightly different group dynamic or setting for the interview.

Throughout these interviews and observation, I generally identified myself as being a trade unionist (with the exception of my interviews with farm owners) who had some interest in more deeply understanding the protests because, at least partially, I was interested in seeing further transformation and empowerment of workers and the poor in the rural communities.

Research Challenges and Limitations

The most obvious challenge that the research faced was gaining access to a wide and diverse range of participants. The snowball sampling approach to finding interviewees and the lack of pre-existing connections (and lack of easy access to work places), meant that participants were skewed—particularly when thinking about farm workers themselves—toward union members and other organisationally affiliated workers. With such low union density in the sector, this would suggest that the sample was not necessarily representative of the broader farm worker; the views of many of these interviewees are likely to be mediated by their participation in these organisations. In other words, the reliance on organisationally affiliated gate keepers may have limited and biased the range of perspectives that could be used in understanding the protests.

In addition, the constrained resources available for the research meant that field visits were limited in terms of both time and geography; for interviews with direct protest participants—particularly farm workers, farm owners, organisers, and community leaders—the study was able to conduct interviews and

observation in the De Doorns, Citrusdal, and Robertson areas; additional interviews with union leaders, NGO leaders, journalists, academics, and others generally took place in the Cape Town area. As was mentioned previously, for some interviews the language barrier meant the reliance on translators added to the difficulty of capturing the details, meanings, and understandings within the conversations.

My status as an outsider had both pluses and negatives in terms of more deeply understanding the story; on the one hand, the fact that I am American sparked some interest and I think willingness to share while, at the same time, the fact that I am white and do not speak languages other than English might have limited some of my interactions with participants. For me, the challenge was to figure out how best to ". . . show that I want to learn and am worth teaching. That I know something, but not everything. So they can inform me, and I'll understand" (Weiss 1994); finding this balance between exploration and understanding, between outsider and insider, was a clear complication in getting the most out of the interviews.

Finally, the lack of a more quantitative approach or analysis makes it hard to draw broader conclusions from this study; while the relatively decent number of in-depth interviews might suggest some limited extrapolation, a more quantitative and disciplined survey instrument and a more representative sample might have allowed the report to draw more clear conclusions.

Recognizing its limitations and challenges, the findings of this research do seem to provide some understandings and suggestions for further explorations as to why the protest took place when it did, how it spread, and its transformation or lack thereof into organisation. And while this research in itself may not be broad enough to provide any sort of general or explicitly conclusive answers, it can hopefully contribute to the further understandings of how relationships of domination and subordination might be challenged through the combination of people acting together. In the next three chapters the report will turn to the three questions outlined in Chapter One to see if the data collected provides any clues.

Chapter 3

Why Now?

The Macro and Micro Dynamics

One of the key questions that the research is trying to explore is "why" did the uprising take place when it did. The primary grievances of farm workers and many of the rural poor—poverty level wages, substandard housing, lack of access to basic services--are not new. So why then did workers rise up at this moment, engaging in mass collective action on a scale that, by some estimates, has never occurred in farming communities in the Western Cape? Or as one farm worker from De Doorns put it, "We never had a strike like this, this was history!" (Interview with Prins 2013).

To better understand "why now", we must look at the "macro-dynamics" that are shaping the agricultural sector and re-shaping the relationships and spatial arrangements that make up the mechanisms of social control**.** At the same time, understanding the macro trends that have been taking place over many years would not explain this moment of uprising without an understanding of the "micro-dynamics" that triggered and allowed for the mobilisation of mass collective action**.**

Macro-Dynamics: Increasing Pressures and a Changing Workforce

The "macro-dynamics" are driven first and foremost by a changing agricultural sector that is facing increased global competition, decreased protection and subsidies from government, and the increasing power of consolidated buyers imposing greater demands in terms of lower costs and higher quality. These pressures, along with other changes in the South African economy, have meant that agricultural production plays a shrinking role in the economy, and agriculture's share in exports has fallen by two thirds since the 1970s, while its share in formal employment has fallen by the same proportion in just 12 years (BFAP Report 2012).

More specifically, similar trends are evident in the Western Cape, although agriculture still retains a more significant role in the Western Cape than is does in other provinces, with 121,000 people employed in agriculture (Moseley 2006; Human Rights Watch Report 2011). Yet the number of farm units in the Western Cape is shrinking, and many small or marginal commercial farms have merged or closed since the end of apartheid and the loss of protective tariffs. The rise of mechanisation is also leading to fewer, but potentially more skilled, farm worker jobs (Moseley 2006).

Fruit and wine farms, where the uprising was strongest, are dominated by farms of 200 to 300 hectares in size, with generally higher numbers of workers than many other types of agriculture; this is at least partly

driven by a production process which makes higher levels of mechanisation more difficult. The permanent workers on these farms have traditionally been coloured workers, while farmers have turned to African workers for more temporary or seasonal needs; there is also a gender divide as women are more prevalent in the casual or seasonal work (Moseley 2006).

Agriculture in the Western Cape is also more strongly oriented towards export markets – primarily Europe – which, in some ways, exacerbates its challenges. For example, 80 percent of table grapes produced in De Doorns are slated for the export market (Interview with Visser 2014). Global competition for these markets lowers prices, creating pressure for tight production schedules and greater productivity, while large buyers—primarily supermarket chains—exercise their power within the global value chain to demand higher quality products that meet stringent requirements of production and schedule. Growers are thus facing added pressure for higher quality, lower prices, and tight production timelines (Barrientos & Kritzinger 2004).

This is a major shift for South African farm owners; until 1997, the only way for farm owners to export was through a state controlled marketing board. With grapes, for example, there used to be a table grape marketing board that negotiated prices on behalf of all farm owners with overseas markets. Once these boards were abolished by the new ANC government, farm owners were left to negotiate on their own or in smaller groups with supermarket chains; it was also during this period that supermarket chains more aggressively continued their own consolidation, creating a smaller number of dominant chains that controlled more and more market share. This shift in power meant that farm owners became price takers rather than price setters. Some statistics suggest that farm owners are only capturing about 18 percent of the value of their products, with the vast majority of value being captured higher up the chain by exporters, importers, and particularly supermarkets (Visser 2014). According to one wine farm owner, 70 percent of the wine produced in his area is sold by four or five marketers who carry tremendous power in setting prices that farm owners receive for their product (Interview with De Wet 2014). Or, as a risk coordinator who advises farm owners on export processes explained, “No supermarket buys on a fixed rate for grapes; it is like gambling and it is the worst scenario of gambling in that the supermarkets hold all the cards” (Interview with Gouws 2014).

In addition to this shift in bargaining power around prices, farm owners talked extensively about the increased costs arising from new standards and processes mandated by buyers of their product. According to a risk coordinator who works with farm owners to ensure their products meet export standards, most buyers are now requiring suppliers to meet international standards in the areas of food safety and health, ethical production, and environmental impact. These standards range from making sure that every product is “traceable” back to its point of production (all the way back to the worker who cut the grapes from the vine), to limits on the kinds of pesticides or chemicals used, to verifying health and safety standards, to complying with local labour regulations (Gouws 2014).

As mentioned previously, these increased production standards are coupled with an increase in standards of quality and timing. One grower of table grapes explained that increasing competition from places like Spain, Egypt, and South America is forcing him to hit a very specific "market window" if he wants to get the best prices for his grapes; this window is quite narrow and has actually led him to alter the varieties of grapes that he grows (Interview with Knill 2014). Interestingly from a labour perspective, changes in types of grapes, for example from seeded to seedless grapes, have altered the length of the season, in some cases making it shorter by over a month, thereby further incentivising the use of seasonal labour as a cost saving device; this also results in a greater number of farm workers who are unemployed or finding alternative means of survival for longer periods during the year. In addition, seedless grapes require less manual labour as they can be grown with approximately three "rounds" of pruning while seeded grapes take up to seven "rounds" (Interviews with Gouws 2014; Knill 2014).

According to farm owners, these increasing standards are particularly acute for wine, grape, and fruit farms given their targeted market—primarily high-end consumers overseas, and a small number of high-end consumers in South Africa. According to the head of WIETA, the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association, these high-end consumers, particularly overseas, tend to have a greater sensitivity to both ethical and environmentally sustainable production; in other words, high-end consumers are driving supermarkets to increase their requirements on producers, thereby driving changes in production processes, and according to farm owners, increases in production costs (Interview with Lipparoni 2104). If a farm is unable to attain these higher production and quality standards, then it is forced to sell on either local markets or low quality markets overseas. In either case, the farm owner may receive less than one-half the price he would receive from high-end supermarkets and consumers (Interviews with Gouws 2014; Knill 2014).

One clear example of these processes in action can be seen with South African wine sold in Scandinavian countries. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and other Baltic countries are leading purchasers of South African wines; in Norway and Sweden most of the top-selling red and white wines in the country come from South Africa. Each of these countries has a state entity which serves as the monopoly purchaser for wines. These five countries came together and built a joint consortium which, based on pressure from engaged consumers, created an ethical purchasing policy; according to the head of WIETA, this kind of action was responsible for driving change among production processes for South African wine producers. Interestingly, every farm owner I met with had a system of traceability for their products (and each indicated this was now required practice), 90 percent of wines are certified with the environmental sustainability and integrity seal, but only about 30 percent of the wines are certified with the WIETA seal for ethical work place practices (Interview with Lipparoni 2014). The question, of course, remains as to why there is such high compliance with changing requirements for food safety processes

and environmental sustainability but strong resistance and less outside pressure to become ethically certified in relation to labour practices.

Overall, the elimination of trade protection and subsidies for farmers, coupled with increasing standards on production, quality, and timing have, according to the farm owners interviewed, put increased cost and economic pressures on the farms. Overall, farm owners have seen their support from government dramatically decrease while at the same time their overall power within the global supply chain—their ability to claim value-- has shrunk. As one farm manager explains "Way back we had something like a socialist system, everyone had a job and job security, everything was regulation—wheat board, meat board, grape board, cooperatives that regulated the industry. We would get a quote and were limited to what we planted and had to guarantee we could deliver, but we would be guaranteed a price. Farmers still were subsidised, but that has all disappeared in South Africa. We now have a completely free market system, where we sell things on the futures, borrow against our future sales, and we are at the will of the market" (Interview with Mouton 2014).

While these global market shifts are taking place, post-apartheid regulatory and legislative transformation within South Africa are also driving change within the agriculture sector, creating the a second major element to macro-dynamics. Post-1994, the ANC government sought to bring farm workers into the network of labour and social protections, adopting regulations and legislation that grant farm workers protections of unemployment insurance, basic conditions of employment, the right to organize and strike, minimum wages, and some health and safety protections. Around this same period, the government sought to improve land and housing rights by passing the Labour Tenants Act and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA), which provided a legal framework around evictions (Anseeuw & Pons-Vignon 2009; Barrientos & Kritzinger 2004).

These increased labour and tenancy protections for farm workers, coupled with increased cost pressures from more powerful buyers, global competition, and an end to government support, led farm owners to begin shifting away from live-on-farm, full-time labourers, instead increasing the use of workers who live off-farm and are seasonal, casual, and/or contract labour. Contract labour allows more flexibility, giving the farmer the ability to adjust the amount of labour based on seasonal needs, while also insulating him from responsibility for rights granted in employment legislation. At the same time, using off-farm labour further insulates the farmer from tenancy issues now protected under the tenant rights legislation (Barrientos & Kritzinger 2004).

The result of these pressures—or more accurately, the chosen response of farm owners to these changes—is that more than half of the workers on fruit and wine farms in the Western Cape are casual or seasonal; according to Margareet Visser from UCT, seasonal workers make up approximately 80 percent of the workforce in De Doorns (2014). This means that the majority of farm workers are also now living

off farms; and, while a limited number of seasonal workers live on the farms (often family members of permanent workers), we also find more and more permanent workers do not live on the farm. This shift is also changing the gender and ethnic make-up of the workforce. The casual or seasonal workforce is majority female, while male workers still maintain a majority of the permanent positions. There is also an increase in the number of migrant workers, some of whom move around based on availability of work; the vast majority of migrants in the areas of my investigation were from Lesotho, the Eastern Cape, and Zimbabwe. Not surprisingly, these casual or seasonal workers are also characterized by greater levels of insecurity and vulnerability (Human Rights Watch Report 2011).

This shift away from on-farm labour has been taking place for many years. Almost a million black and coloured people were evicted from farm dwellings in the ten years after the end of apartheid and farmers are more reluctant to take on tenants for fear that they will gain tenure rights; this means that many farm workers, along with seasonal or migrant workers, are moving to settlements in farming communities of the Western Cape (Human Rights Watch Report 2011). According to Ronald Wesso, an organiser with the Surplus People's Project who works with farm workers and farm dwellers, only a tiny percentage of these evictions were done according to the law (2014). Several workers and organisers interviewed also reflected this transformation and the ongoing trend of evictions they were fighting; while in Robertson, I saw this first hand at the local magistrate court where a farm owner was attempting to evict a farm worker—who had worked on the farm for more than a dozen years but more recently been dismissed—from the house he shared on the farm with his farm worker wife. The worker explained that working on his farm, "there are lots of casual and seasonal workers now—there is a labour broker and he is a white guy, they use him to get people from town to work the farm and he takes his own bakkie to collect people to come and work; he wants people from town to sign a contract—a few, even permanent contracts—but wants people not to live on the farm" (Interview with Kammies 2014).

Farm owners who were interviewed also reflected their continued concern and frustration with the Extension of Security and Tenure Act and their shift away from on-farm labour. As one farmer outside of Robertson explained, "ESTA was always a bit of a swearword" among farmers and most farms in his area are using a more seasonal, off-farm approach to labour (Interview with De Wet 2014). Complaints about on-farm labour ranged from adult unemployed children living on farms and, in some cases, bringing in additional family members or children, dismissed workers who continue to "cost" the farmer, and the lengthy and expensive process associated with eviction (Interviews with De Wet 2014; Gouws 2014; Knill 2014).

In addition, there was an undercurrent of resentment among farm owners that the government is not perceived as taking into account the "social wage"—what on-farm labour receives beyond its hourly wage in the form of housing, water, electricity, transport, and other benefits that some farms provide—when setting sectoral determinations or other regulations; as one farmer in Robertson explained, "The

government does not account for other costs associated with clothing, skills development, UIF, housing, and other related costs to the company; if you count cost to company, than the rate is really R150 per day" (Interview with De Wet 2014). After the new sectoral determination was issued in 2013, this farm owner began charging rent for the first time, eliminated electricity subsidy payments for farm workers, and indicated that he will no longer allow additional people to move onto the farm as people move out or are evicted; as he explained, "There needs to be honest discussions and the labour organisations and ANC want their cake and to eat it too; they want high wages and high employment but cannot have it both ways. Labour must be cost to company, benefits must be included—if we keep giving everything for free, people and the government won't take responsibility for these things" (De Wet 2014).

Building on this frustration, several farm owners interviewed felt that, in this new age of global competition and lack of subsidies or government supports, it was unfair for the government to expect farm owners to be what some described the social safety net, by employing on-farm labour. As a farmer in De Doorns explained, "But it is not only the wages, why must I give them a house, in most other jobs we do not pay for a house; we pay for them to go to the doctor and then take back that money in deductions but that still costs me money. Why must I subsidize electricity? So we are trying to stop some of these things and say that the law is what we will follow and that is all we will pay for and nothing else" (Interview with Knill 2014).

Whether the movement of workers off the farms is done through attrition or eviction, farm owners often move quickly to make sure other farm workers do not try to claim empty houses; as the wife of a farm owner in De Doorns explained, as soon as a house goes empty farm owners either take off the roof or bulldoze it to make sure no one else can take up tenancy there (Interview with Susan 2014). Some farm owners are also exploring purchasing "Agri-Villages" where they buy up plots of land, build houses, and then give those houses to farm workers on the condition they move off of the farms (Interview with De Wet 2014).

While farm owners are clearly moving away from permanent, on-farm labour, the expansion of available RDP houses—creating the possibility of a more independent life for farm workers--has also impacted the shift away from on-farm labour. In De Doorns, one of the leaders of the strike had put herself on the list to request an RDP house in the late nineties. After twenty-three years living on a farm with her husband, last year she received and moved into an RDP house in Stofland, the major farm worker settlement in the area. Her husband still works on the farm where they used to live and they left by their own free choice, as she said they would prefer to have a house of their own rather than one owned by the farm owner (Interview with Witbooi 2014). Another husband and wife couple I interviewed were preparing to move into their own RDP house after twenty seven years living on the farm; organisers from FAWU were encouraging the couple to bargain with the farm owner for a once-off payment to agree to move off the farm, even though the couple wanted to move of their own volition. The farm owner had offered them a

measly fifteen hundred rand and the organiser was encouraging them fight for more, sharing with them that other farm owners had provided ten times that in efforts to get farm workers to move out of their on-farm houses (FAWU Members group interview on 2nd Farm 2014).

In other words, the slow push and pull over the last 20 years—farm owners pushing that on-farm and permanent labour was both burdensome and not cost effective in the post-apartheid environment with the somewhat slower pull of available housing—are key factors that are transforming the composition of the workforce and the jobs, along with shifting the spatial make-up of the farm worker communities. As one of the organisers of Mawubuye, a land rights group in the Western Cape, explained, "A smaller and smaller number now live on farms with many people now living in RDP houses; the availability of RDP houses and the farmers not wanting people on the farm—because having them on the farm creates problems for them—means that it is easier for farm owners to just pick people up [for work] from the community where many people now live" (Interview with Michaels 2014).

Within these macro-dynamics, it is worth noting the shifting nature of the "migrant labour system", which has added to the expansion of settlement communities and the challenges of unemployment and service delivery. While many farms used migrant labour before the democratic transition in 1994, the migrant farm labourers of pre-1994 faced a much more regulated system of movement and duration of tenure. As one farm manager explains, "Seasonal labour has been around for a long time. . . [in the past] workers were limited to homelands, if you wanted them to come work on the farm you had to get a permit that says you can get 'X' number of workers and give them accommodations and then they did the job and went back home. As regulations eased up and we had more pressure from the outside world, as people came to do seasonal work they saw that the standard of living in Western Cape is better. . . we used to have small informal settlements which became settlements and we got stuck with these workers, the importation of labour came and stayed" (Interview with Mouton 2014). In other words, unlike in the past, larger numbers of migrants, even those that came simply for the season, came and stayed, finding housing or building shacks in the rapidly expanding settlements. According to an organiser with the immigrants' rights organisation PASSOP—himself a Zimbabwean who immigrated to De Doorns—De Doorns, the epicentre of the uprising, is known as a "place in South Africa where without documentation and no skills you can start working and make something; there were so many [farms] and most of the people can get jobs" (Interview with Marowmo 2014). Or as one farm consultant put it, "You must go and look at the Google Earth photo of Stofland before [the year] 2000 and have a look at it now—you can't believe all the people. De Doorns is sitting on the N1 [highway], so we get an influx from the north, Grabouw is on the N2 [highway], each highway has its "towns", where all these people are moving into the Cape" (Interview with Gouws 2014).

This large influx of more "permanent" migrants, both documented and undocumented, has serious implications for everything from service delivery to unemployment to community conflicts. De Doorns has

seen large service delivery protests in 2004, 2007, and 2011, along with a major xenophobic backlash against the influx of Zimbabwean immigrants in 2009 (Interview with Carciotto 2013). In some cases, the municipalities are struggling to keep up with the increasing needs in housing, water, and sanitation. As an ANC councillor in the Bonnievale area explains about the settlement community in his town, "We have more people living without proper water, electricity, and other things because the community cannot keep up with the growth; there were 68 families and now there are something like 240 families just in the last 15 years living in our squatter camp and they must be helped by municipalities" (Interview with Vollenhoven 2014).

At the same time, many people interviewed suggested that this influx of migrants was helping to shift the "profile" of the traditional Western Cape farm worker; organisers and farm workers used words like "younger", "more educated", "exposure to other things beyond the farm" to describe the changing nature of farm workers brought on by greater numbers of migrants; this study did not seek to quantify to what extent these assessments were true, except that those assessments were more prominent among farm workers and organisers who worked with people in the settlement communities than those who lived on the farms (Interviews with Yanda 2014; Witbooi 2014; Jansen 2013). As one researcher and activist in the agricultural sector explained, "Many farm workers are now more politically conscious than people who used to be isolated on the farm, where the farmers had control over what people accessed. . . more farm workers now are matriculates, read the newspaper, have been employed in other sectors, and may be part of a civic organisation. . . this may be particularly true of seasonal workers and part of the reason why the opportunity to mobilise them is greater" (Interview with Kleinbooi 2013).

The influx of more "permanent" migrants to the Western Cape farming towns, while at the time the number of farm jobs is actually declining, also means that there continues to be an oversupply of labour, particularly during the off-season. And with the increasing reliance on seasonal rather than permanent labour, many households in the settlement communities have a connection and relationship to the farms and farm work for part of the year but are forced to find other means to survive at other times. As the ANC councillor from Bonnievale explains, "There is lots of unemployment seasonally. For four months of the year there is zero unemployment; for the other eight months there is a real challenge. . . and now it [the harvest season] is shortened to four months as it used to be six months" (Interview with Vollenhoven 2014). These frustratingly high levels of unemployment during periods of the year—and even, in some areas during the "season"—mixed in complicated ways with a set of expectations and experiences among both newer migrants and longer term farm workers; and the greater concentration of farm workers in settlement communities means that expectations and frustrations can be more easily shared in collaboration or conflict. On the other hand, farm owners, while expressing some level of dismay over the large influx based on the "mess" of shack dwellings it creates (Interview with Knill 2014), recognize that this influx provides them with a readily available pool of labour to choose from. For example, after the

strike, some farm owners admit to travelling to more distant settlement communities to find alternative seasonal workers rather than re-employ the ones who were involved in the uprising (Interview with Susan 2014).

Implications of Macro-Dynamics: Paternalism and Spatial Arrangements

The next question is to understand the implications of these macro-dynamics in creating the possibility for more overt and collective forms of action and resistance; what do these trends and transformations have to do with our question of "why now?"

These macro-dynamics have slowly transformed the industry and the farming communities of the Western Cape, leaving us with an agricultural sector where seasonal labourers at least equal permanent workers, where greater numbers of farm workers are living off-farms, where more permanent migrant workers make up an expanding part of the workforce, and where larger and larger formal and informal settlement communities occupy the hillsides of most farming towns. These trends have transformed farm worker-farm owner relationships, altered the composition of the work force, and changed the spatial make-up of the countryside. Each of these transformations contributes to the breakdown of some of the key impediments to collective action—paternalistic social construction and isolation, fear, and, in conflicting ways, vulnerability.

To understand how these macro trends might have created a new terrain on which a larger-scale, overt and confrontational uprising was possible, we must first understand the dominant form of social construction and control that existed (and, of course, still exists in many ways) in the agricultural sector. Firstly, the nature of power in the agricultural sector is intimately tied to the question of land ownership and dispossession. From the early days of white settlement and colonization to the Native Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, people have been forcefully dispossessed of their land. This dispossession, in effect confining all but the white population to 13 percent of the country, made up of often scattered and infertile pieces of land, led to the emergence of a reserve army of cheap labour for large scale agriculture and industrial needs. Commercial agriculture became dependent on this cheap labour, and sharecropping and labour tenancy arrangements emerged, where farm workers paid rent to land owners or exchanged their labour for the right to live on the farm (Anseeuw & Pons-Vignon 2009). The dominant "paternalistic" power relationship developed in this context; land owners were both the providers for the farm "family", including farm workers, as well as the final authority over all those who lived on their land. This social formation significantly shaped and limited the arenas of contestation between farm owner and farm worker, white, black and coloured; as Ewert and Du Toit explain, "Generations of colonial settlement, slavery, and racial domination have knitted these concepts deeply into the social construction of white *and* black identities" (2005).

This paternalistic social construction is cited as a major impediment to the ability of farm workers to engage in collective action or join trade unions (Naledi Report 2011). The dependence on the farm owner for housing, transport, water, and so many other basic necessities creates a level of vulnerability unique to on-farm labour; losing a job can also mean losing access to the roof over your head. But paternalism creates much more than vulnerability; it is a set of institutions and arrangements that create a ". . . deeply *organic* and *hierarchical* conceptualisation of the relationship between farmer and worker" where "obligations between worker and farmer extend far beyond the labour-wage nexus" and where ". . . the most important day-to-day question is one's relationship to and one's place within this 'family'" that is the farm" (Du Toit 1993). This social construction, along with its arrangements, strategies, and ideologies, tends to deny the possibility that farm worker and farm owner could be systematically opposed in their goals or relationship; and while concerns may be raised, they are always in the frame of their impact on the farm, with the farmer having the final say. This social construction is facilitated, at least partially, by the disconnection of farm workers to the outside world off the farm, where competing understandings and definitions of self and society might be found. Using this analysis, ". . . paternalism smothers any possibility of resistance" (Du Toit 1993).

This paternalistic construction contributes to and works alongside other powerful obstacles to collective action—fear and isolation. Farms are often spread across large distances and, without transport of their own, farm workers who live on the farms have traditionally been limited in their access to information or ability to coordinate and collaborate. This spatial isolation, coupled with a strict enforcement of private property rights by farm owners opposed to any sort of organising, means that the ability to gather any sort of strength or safety in numbers is very challenging. This made farm workers more vulnerable and more susceptible to farm owner intimidation or retaliation.

The changing nature of the workforce—the use of more seasonal and off-farm labour along with the expansion of migrant labour—weakens these traditional barriers to collective action. Paternalistic social dominance by farm owners is weakened as seasonal, off-farm labour is less dependent on the farm owner for all of their basic needs; in addition, the influx of migrants and the transitory nature of less stable and permanent employment relationships means that this paternalistic social construction is less dominant among these workers. This "re-negotiation" of paternalism has been going on for many years and taken many forms, but when the farm owner is removed from his role as landlord, service provider, and in some cases even permanent employer, then the paternalistic connection is much less likely to exist or hold. As Andries Du Toit, a leading researcher of these dynamics on the Western Cape, explained in an interview, farm workers who live in informal settlements and may only relate to the farm owner as an employer on a temporary basis or through a labour broker are not likely to adhere to many of the institutions, identities, or norms associated with paternalism; their demands are more likely to be

antagonistically focused on disparity in outcomes and rights rather than harmony and the appreciation of the farm owner's "gifts" to them (2014).

Not surprisingly, the seasonal, off-farm workers were credited with initiating the strike and uprising action, particularly in its epicentre of De Doorns. This is of particular note because the small levels of formal organisation that do exist—for example in trade unions-- tend to be among permanent workers. As Tony Ehrenreich, the Western Cape provincial secretary of COSATU and someone who was very engaged in the strike, explains about who was involved, "the majority were seasonal and potential seasonal workers—workers who are unemployed and live in those communities. . . the main leadership—the more militant leadership came from seasonal workers. . . the informal communities that have sprung up in those small towns include both local coloured people (for lack of a better word), who have lived there historically in the backyards and have moved to the informal settlement, and then people from outside these towns who have come in, from the Eastern Cape or Lesotho or other places" (Interview in New Agenda 2013).

Ehrenreich's observation about who led the strike and protests—"seasonal and potential seasonal workers"-- points also to how the protests were shaped by the changing structure of the workforce. The demands of the workers, while more multifaceted in some regions, were primarily about demanding a daily wage of 150 Rand. Unlike on-farm labour, where survival is dependent on a range of services provided by the farmer, the seasonal workers who live in the rural settlements are dependent on their wages and provision of municipal services and social grants. As a Department of Labour official from the region who works with farm workers and was involved in helping to mediate the dispute explains, "Eighty percent of the strike was because they [farm workers] wanted more money and that demand came mostly from the seasonal workers. The seasonal worker is an ordinary worker and has to shop at Shoprite and has to take a taxi to town and has to pay for water and electricity and these things are all getting more expensive. . . [the seasonal worker] is not there to see any of the challenges or drought or other issues on the farm, he doesn't see or care about those issues and is not as compliant as workers on the farm and the low wages [paid] do not speak to his social condition" (2014). In other words, the connection of the seasonal worker to the farm is much more transactional and less susceptible to the relationship and power dynamics that breed paternalistic social construction.

Farm owners also make a clear distinction in their relationship and obligations to seasonal workers. While one white farm consultant explained that the "permanent labour force on the farm is part and parcel of the family on the farm" he went on to explain that seasonal workers—specifically black workers who were involved in the protest—were not "our people like the Cape Coloureds" because that is "not the way our people act" (Interview Gouws 2014). This highlights—at least in the mind of some in the farm owner community—the racial divide between on-farm and off-farm labour as well as between those who may still be in the "farm family" and those who are not and never have been.

While “farmers see the seasonal worker as a factor of production, period” (Interview with Visser 2014), there also seems to be some recognition and shift away from a completely paternalistic approach by farm owners among their relationships with permanent and on-farm labour as well. As one 5th generation farm owner near Robertson explains, “My father thinks they [on-farm labour] prefer a paternal system, but I don’t think it’s healthy. . . when my mother and father took over in 1970, they would buy the staff underpants and decide the colour. . . we are moving away from it but it will still be with us for a while unless we have a huge disruption. . . not all paternalism is completely bad—it has an element of care and taking an interest in their lives but ideally we want to move away from it and give people more responsibility and freedom” (Interview with De Wet 2014). This slow re-negotiation of relationships and paternalism by farm owners themselves is also driven by the more business-like approach forced upon them by the pressures of global competition and increasing standards. As one farm manager explains, “Farming has changed from a lifestyle to a business, a very serious business. People have a very romantic idea about the sector but nowadays it is just strict business” (Interview with Mouton 2014).

In addition, the greater use of a seasonal, off-farm workforce—particularly more migrants—means that the isolation and lack of exposure or information, which is one key to the maintenance of paternalism, is less prevalent with these newer farm workers. As one farm worker explained, “Many of these seasonal workers have come from other places, had other jobs, speak other languages so they know their rights and are less likely to worry about what the farmer thinks of them” (Interview with Yanda 2014). These same workers also tend to move around more within and between the farming towns, building networks and sharing experiences; as we will see, these networks were key vehicles for sharing information and the spread of collective action. At the same time, this movement of work—the more transient nature of the jobs—means that farm workers have less of a relationship with any one farm owner and are thereby less beholden to any one farm owner’s wishes. This was a complaint that each farm owner regularly raised—seasonal workers may be working for them one day and then the next day they find out that same worker is working on another farm nearby (Interview with Knill 2014).

These transformations of the work force and living arrangements also raise interesting questions about the changing nature of how workers perceive their identities in the farming communities; as Ehrenreich points out in his quote above, the protest was led not only by seasonal workers but by “potential seasonal workers” as well. As farm owners move away from year-round employment and to more fluid, sporadic, and temporary employment arrangements, workers are required to find others means of employment or survival, particularly during the off-season. I met farm workers who worked on the farms for about six months and then found sporadic work in construction for the rest of the year; I met other farm workers who were security guards for much of the off-season but worked in the fields during harvest time. As Du Toit explains, “Farm workers have other things to do in others parts of the year—maybe a car guard; in some cases your [farm workers’] most important leaders are municipalities, where you are most

dependent. In other words you [farm workers] may be beholden to other concerns or other types of leaders, meaning you don't organise or maybe even identify as a 'farm worker' per se" (Interview with Du Toit 2014). At the same time, there is clearly still a deep connection and expectation of the farm as a central source of income and survival for most people living in the settlement communities. Du Toit goes on to raise the important question of whether the protests were primarily about worker issues and power on the farm or a much broader expression of "black anger" against the structure of power in the Western Cape and the lack of opportunities and political marginalisation of poor people ; while this study is not able to conclusively answer this question, the shifting identities of farm workers and the community clearly contributed to the opportunity to engage broader groups of people in overt and confrontational collective action outside the dampening effect of the paternalistic social construction.

In other words, when thinking about "why now" we have to ask fundamental questions about the nature of the protests themselves and the shifting "identity" of the rural community. The changing spatial make-up and work arrangements made more and more farm workers—in some ways—less dependent on farm owners and more dependent on government in the form of service delivery, social grants, and housing; as mentioned, these shifts are serving to weaken the inhibiting social construction of paternalism while not greatly reducing the level of grievances and anger among farm workers.

At the same time, the greater dependence on government gives rise to growing numbers of protests around lack of services and inadequate living conditions; consistent with the rising number of service delivery protests seen around the country, farm workers and their communities saw these forms of collective action as legitimate expressions of their grievances. And clearly, at least in De Doorns, service delivery protests that involved the large numbers from the rural settlements were a familiar form of protest; as one leader of the strike explained, "We have blocked the road before for housing and service delivery issues. . . if we want everyone to listen to us than we block the N1 [highway]" (Interview with Prins 2013).

What is also clear is that the explosion of the larger farm worker protests of late 2012 and early 2013 involved and engaged people in the rural settlements well beyond farm workers, including the unemployed, people working but not on the farms, and youth and the elderly. As one farm worker in Citrusdal reported, "It [the protest] was a mixture of all the groups—unemployed, farm workers, township workers, people who worked in the town, youth, coloured workers and even the mayor was sympathetic" (Interview with Brink 2013). Similarly, a farm worker in De Doorns reported that, "Everyone came out to protest, not just farm workers—taxi drivers, construction workers, security guards, teachers, nurses—the whole town shut down and every time we would march it would get bigger" (Interview with Yanda 2013). The mass participation in the protests and the shifting identity of parts of the workforce might seem to suggest that the macro-dynamics that are driving changes to the employment relationships and spatial make-up of the towns are also helping to, in some ways, strengthen the common elements of identity

across different groupings of the rural poor and promote new paths for mobilisation, informal and community-based organisation, and action.

When exploring the question of "why now", we must note, so as to not give the wrong impression, that in the main towns where I interviewed farm workers or key protest organisers—De Doorns, Robertson, Citrusdal, Barrydale, Bonnievale—permanent and on-farm labour was also involved in the protest and, in some cases, played key leadership roles. In most of these cases, the epicentre of activity was the settlement communities near the towns; on-farm labour in places like Barrydale or Bonnievale was, at times, recruited off the farms to come join the main protest activities (Interviews with Vollenhoven 2014; Michaels 2013). In other places, like De Doorns, some farm owners themselves actually put on-farm labour on trucks and took them to the settlement community once the protests started, for fear that their on-farm workers would participate in the burning of the vineyards where they live (Interview with Prins 2013). And in places like Robertson, some on-farm labour, particularly those located far away from the settlement areas, engaged in protest actions at their own farms (Interview with Dube 2014). The key point is not that permanent and on-farm labour did not participate, but that their recruitment and engagement was most often sparked by activities in the settlement communities and, more specifically, that the seasonal workers of De Doorns played the critical role in inspiring and launching the protest. The macro-trends that are transforming the work force and towns in the fruit and wine sectors allowed these workers to break through some of the dominance of paternalism that, until now, had "smothered" the possibility of more overt, confrontational, and collective resistance.

There is also a more practical and obvious consequence of the transformation of the spatial make-up of the farming communities—coordination, collaboration, and the sharing of grievances, which is critical for mass collective action, becomes much easier when everyone lives in one area. As previously noted, the isolation that comes with living on farms that are spread out and where most farm workers have little access to transport beyond what the farm owner will provide are huge impediments to organising. The first major component of the uprising was born in Stofland, which is a rural settlement of thousands of farm workers and their families living in a settlement of shacks and government-provided houses off the farms in De Doorns. When these workers explained how the initial strike was organised and how the entire settlement community was mobilized, the spatial make-up and ability to communicate and coordinate was critical. From twice daily meetings on the local rugby field, to nightly house-by-house communication, to the use of whistles to bring people out of their houses in the morning, the concentration of farm workers in one area was a critical component of enabling collective action. The arrangement of Stofland is also particularly well laid out both for leaders of the protest to stop farm owners from picking up potential scab labour and for monitoring that no workers from the rural settlement are tempted to violate the no-work part of the protest; most of the "sheep trucks" pick up and drop off workers at a main circle in the settlement and by blocking and monitoring that spot, protestors were quite

effectively able to ensure a high level of compliance with the protest (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Witbooi 2013; Marowmo 2014; Jacobs 2013).

These centralized settlements became places where workers could share grievances and, in some cases, places where "influencing" organisations—defined as organisations not directly involved in planning and organising the strike itself but whose activities leading up to the action may impact eventual participants, facilitate participation, or shift the broader context (IIE Study 1973)—could train and support farm worker leaders who would later become key in the protest. Women on Farms (WoF), an non-governmental organisation that works with women farm workers and more broadly women in farming communities, engaged in organising and meetings in places like Stofland; having less access to farms, the WoF organiser explained that she would simply visit the settlement of Stofland, stop women on the street or knock on their doors and talk to them about getting involved, eventually calling a meeting in the community itself to bring women together to share experiences and challenges. The impact of having a centralised place to organise meant that WoF "members" gained skills as well as a better understanding of their shared grievances and basic rights. As the WoF organiser explained, "I know that our work contributed to the strike, some of the leadership we developed were the people who ended up being on the strike committee" (Interview with Jacobs 2013).

Similarly, an NGO called Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), the land rights group Mawubuye, and a trade union, the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU), partnered together and with other organisations to run a "Speak Out" campaign in 2011 in farming towns around the Western Cape; these "Speak Outs" brought together farm workers, small-scale farmers, and poor people to talk about the challenges they face in the rural areas and to develop a set of demands for change. Much of the organising and work of the "Speak Outs" happened in these growing settlement communities; while the "Speak Outs" were not focused on building for any sort of immediate mass action, many of the demands of the "Speak Out" found voice in the strike (Interview with Andrews 2013).

In addition to the close networks, collaboration, and sharing of information which are facilitated by the spatial make-up of these growing settlement communities, the close proximity of people allows for safety in numbers that helps reduce the fear and create momentum for mass, collective action. Workers reported that during the very initial negotiations between the protestors, farm owners, and the government, people from the community would wait in large numbers on the sports field for communications and to provide mandates; at certain points, anger would boil over and workers would march onto the streets, even in the face of police presence and resistance. Workers reported that when they saw the large numbers and could look down the N1 and see so many people, the fear of what might happen was greatly diminished (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Witbooi 2013).

The increasing concentration of farm workers in settlement communities also seems to break down another key impediment cited by organisers to organising larger number of workers—the need for large amounts of resources just to reach people. While organisers for Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) and other unions raised concerns about their ability to reach large numbers of workers with few resources (Interviews with Ndongeni 2013), worker organisers in places like Stofland seem to suggest that the make-up of the town allows them to mobilize thousands without the use of transport or other tools. As one key strike committee member from De Doorns explains, "Thousands of people were mobilized by just a few of us without speakers, money, car—we had nothing . . . just using our voices and going around telling people . . . some people told us we were crazy and would not achieve what we want but the next morning everyone would come out; we had large meetings and it was easy when everyone was coming out every night" (Interview with Yanda 2013). Of course the scale of the organising was connected to other dynamics of the moment, but the ability to reach large numbers of workers with smaller amounts of resources is clearly facilitated by the growing concentration of workers in settlement communities.

This is not to suggest that organising and the uprising did not also take place on some farms, but rather the settlements of off-farm and seasonal labour were critical places of organisation where isolation and the dominance of paternalistic social construction were less likely to dominate. After hearing about the De Doorns strike, the organisers of the "Citrusdal Farm Worker and Farm Dweller Forum"—a small group of farm workers and their allies who had been organising for some time in the Citrusdal area—were unable to mobilize people to participate in their own strike; seven or eight of them gathered along the road with placards to demand R150 per day with the hope of rousing other farm workers to join in but only a few additional workers came to participate. This small group then went to the local "squatter camp"—Riverview—where they were at first quite sceptically received, as the people of Riverview were mostly seasonal workers and the traditional constituency of their group was permanent, on-farm labour. After convincing the committee of leaders in Riverview to call a larger community meeting—something that can be done quickly and with little resources only in a settlement—the organisers convinced the community of seasonal off-farm workers to participate in the protest on a large scale. Participation in their activities grew to several thousand during the protest, including dramatic marches and confrontations with the police when they would march into town; the make-up of that participation was quite different than their core group of permanent on-farm labour, instead being made up of seasonal and casual farm workers (Interviews with Brink 2013; Mehlo 2013; Draghoender 2013).

In summation, every town where I had a chance to interview workers and protest organisers—De Doorns, Robertson, Citrusdal, Bonnievale, Barrydale—the settlement areas were the key epicentre of protest activity and organising. And while the workers there tended to be more seasonal, more black, and more migrant than then the general population of farm workers, there is no question that permanent workers, coloured workers, and local workers can also be found in these communities. The protest and organising

driven by these centres served as a launching point, in many instances, to draw in further participation from workers living on-farms; as one group of on-farm workers in De Doorns describe, "There was a strike committee that would meet at four AM in the morning and the meeting would be in Stofland; but then they would go along the road and blow whistles telling the people [on the farms] to go to the sports field. . . people from Stofland were striking but it was also everyone" (Interview with FAWU members on 1st Farm 2014). As Ronald Wesso, an organiser with Surplus People's Project, sums up, "The strike was possible because organising was in the informal settlements—seasonal, migrant, and even permanent workers now had a place to organise" (Interview with Wesso 2013).

Before we conclude, it is important to note that these macro-dynamics are not without their internal contradictions. For example, while moving off-farm makes farm workers less dependent and therefore less vulnerable to the will of the farm owner, the transformation to a more seasonal employment actually adds to the economic vulnerability of these same workers. And because farm owners are able to and do pick and choose who will work for them season to season, one could make the argument that seasonal farm workers might be less inclined to engage in collective action. And in fact, in De Doorns for example, farm owners are refusing to rehire seasonal workers who engaged in protest activity (Interview with Yanda 2013). Yet the increased economic vulnerability of seasonal workers, it could be argued, creates a stronger set of issues and anger to mobilize and organise around; in different ways, seasonal workers have the most to lose and also the least to lose by taking the risk of engaging in collective resistance.

Similarly, increasing number of migrants who may be less susceptible to the dominance of paternalism may face the alternative vulnerability of not having proper employment documentation. In this way, these workers may be more susceptible to exploitation and less likely or willing to participate in protest against the farm owner or anyone else. And these same workers may also face persecution and division from fellow farm workers, who see their arrival and numbers as a threat to their own prospects for more stable employment (Interview with Marowmo 2014).

Another contradictory trend within these macro-dynamics is that the opening up to global competition that created greater pressure on farm owners around quality, pricing, and production standards has also provided opportunities for farm owners to access new markets. As one wine farm owner explained, since the end of apartheid and end of the international boycott of some South African products, his opportunity and the scale of where he sells has grown dramatically, driving up his overall profitability (Interview with De Wet 2014). In these and other ways, we see that these macro-trends bring internal contradictions to questions around of how agriculture is changing and whether these trends enable or retard farm workers engaging in overt, confrontational, collective action; in other words, taken in isolation they could send us conflicting messages about "why now?"

In conclusion, the key macro-dynamics of the changing workforce—more seasonal, off-farm and migrant labour—has been driven by the farm owners' reactions to a specific kind of liberalisation and globalisation along with increased tenancy and labour rights. This transformation is serving to create new spatial arrangements in farming communities while severing some of the key bindings of the paternalistic social construction. These new arrangements therefore break down some of the key impediments to overt, confrontational, and collective action.

The underlying argument that the research seems to suggest is that shifting pressures on the production process and the impact of reactions to those changes on the make-up and relationship to the workforce are creating opportunities for different and new kinds of organising and community-based solidarity; and, because these workers have historically had very little access to more traditional vehicles of collective resistance, these actions emerge outside the institutional structures intended to channel this resistance. In addition, as we will explore in later chapters, these same pressures on production processes may also be providing a new sense of power and source of leverage for workers in a highly globalised and competitive world-- a path to exercising old sources of workplace power (withholding labour) in a new context that amplifies the strength of the workers.

But understanding these macro-dynamics, most of which have been going on for years, is not enough of an explanation for "why now"; understanding why farm workers and their communities rose up on a scale never seen before requires understand the "sparks" and local dynamics that triggered the explosion of action at this moment in time.

Micro-Dynamics: Sparks, Tactics, and Broken Expectations

Explaining the emergence of large-scale collective action at this moment requires an understanding of not only the macro-dynamics which develop over a longer period of time, but also the micro-dynamics of both the moment and the place—including triggering events that precipitated the launch of the major protest. The uprising began in De Doorns, which is an area with a history of protest and conflict. At the moment of the uprising and on the local level, the ability to engage in mass collective action was driven by local events and experiences, coupled with the long-standing grievances of farm workers and events in the country at large. These dynamics made collective action possible by allowing for 1) an increasing sense of hopefulness and possibility 2) the opportunity to draw on a familiar set of tactics and strategy along with some pre-existing, informal leadership and 3) the accessing of anger fuelled by broken expectations.

The increasing sense of hope and possibility emerged initially from a relatively smaller strike that took place in De Doorns in August and September, 2012, several months before the full strike and protest of November that same year. Pierre Smit, the farm owner of Keurboschkloof Farm, became terminally ill and leased his farm to a multinational company, South African Food Exporters. The farm owner notified

the three hundred plus workers of the transition to the new company but assured them that the new company had committed to maintain their current wage rates. These workers were paid significantly higher than the minimum daily rate, which at that time was R69 per day; by some reports, their wages ran anywhere from R95 to R120 per day. Almost all of the workers on this farm lived in Stofland, the settlement of thousands of farm workers and their families in De Doorns—the same location that was later to be the epicentre of the larger uprising. The workforce on Keurboschkloof Farm included both local South Africans as well as migrants from Lesotho, the Eastern Cape, and Zimbabwe (Interviews with Knoetze 2013; Visser 2014; Marowmo 2014).

While the new company maintained the current wages rates for some time, after about six months and when many of the seasonal workers were returning for the new season, the company announced that the wages would be lowered to be more consistent with the wages across the river valley. (De Doorns sits in the Breede River Valley, with dozens and dozens of table grape farms lining the N1 national highway; this highway is a major thoroughfare which runs approximately two hours south to Cape Town and fourteen hours north to Johannesburg.) Having no union, these workers quietly organised themselves for a number of small meetings after church or in the evenings in shacks around Stofland. They selected seven or eight of the workers as their "committee" and then organised a short, two or three day "unprotected" work stoppage in August; "unprotected" means that the strike was not authorized by established governmental processes, therefore workers could legally be dismissed. After this strike, management agreed to talk with the workers but then, after some brief discussion with the workers, indicated that they were planning to implement the new wage rates and that workers could be dismissed if they went on strike again (Interview with Knoetze 2013).

Workers at this time reached out to Owen Marowmo, a Zimbabwean, former farm worker in De Doorns, and now an organiser there with PASSOP, an immigrants' rights organisation. Marowmo was known to some of the Zimbabwean workers because he, and PASSOP, had been working in the local community for several years following the major xenophobic attacks on Zimbabweans that took place in 2009; Owen was also known for having been an organiser for the opposition party MDC back in Zimbabwe and thought to have some expertise in organising. With Marowmo's help the workers decided to organise a second strike. As Owen explains, "Everyone was doubting that this thing was going to profit but we did some teaching and I tried to tell them how important it was to have a united strike . . . the foreigners knew I used to be an organiser in Zim [Zimbabwe] and the locals don't know much about it [striking] and they think there is no other help so I was there organising" (2014).

The second strike at Keurboschkloof Farm happened in mid-September and this time the employer attempted to bring in replacement workers (and by some reports dismiss over 200 of the existing workers); while the workers formed human chains to try to block the transports from bringing in replacement workers, the police fired rubber bullets, injuring one woman who ended up in the hospital

(Interview with Knoetze 2014). This conflict went on for a week with the workers protesting every day and, without transport, walking back and forth between the farm and their houses or shacks in Stofland. Owen recounts his proudest moment of the strike when they successfully stopped the replacement workers—or scabs—from entering, "We knew the farmer would try to bring in scab labour at four AM so we told people they had to be prepared to sleep there [at the farm gate] and when the lorries are coming people were sleeping on the [protest] line and they managed to stop the trucks from going through to deliver people. That same day, the farmer called us for negotiations when he saw he would not succeed" (2014).

After approximately a week of conflict, and eventually some help with negotiations from the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), the workers on Keurboschkloof Farm won their strike and had their higher than average wage rates restored and in some cases increased. While this struggle was taking place, word was quickly spreading throughout the rural settlement. Strikes of this sort were not common, and, interestingly, reports are that the Keurboschkloof strikers faced mostly ridicule from fellow workers and community members. As Daneel Knoetze, a reporter for Cape Argus newspaper who was assigned to this story and interviewed many of the workers explains, "Workers were ridiculed by workers from other farms; everyone else was arriving [back in the settlement of Stofland] by farmers' transport and they had to walk back from their picket line. [The strikers were] being called crazy and told they cannot win this fight—they made a mockery of them. 'How long do you think your luck will last?' is what community people were saying" (2014). Needless to say, when the unexpected happened and the workers actually won, word spread rapidly through the close knit settlement of Stofland and then eventually back to the farms. As Owen explains, "Word spread like fire to almost every farm. . . every farmer was afraid of this kind of uprising and don't know what is going to happen. . .[they] see that this is well organised and can spread in the valley. . . everyone was talking about it; everyone was willing and ready and wanted to do something" (2014).

Every worker interviewed for this study in the De Doorns area mentioned the Keurboschkloof strike by saying things like "It encouraged and inspired us" (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014) or "They won the strike and got paid. . . they showed that if you are not going to complain you are not going to get anything" (Interview with Yanda 2013) or "The first strike that broke out was Keurboschkloof and those people already earn R120. . . it showed that farm workers must stand up because it is going to be for our benefit" (Interview with Prins 2013). Clearly, news of this strike and then victory spread quickly throughout De Doorns; the fact that the outcome was unexpected among the community amplified the sense of hope that workers can make progress and that the tactic of a strike might be an effective way to get there. And the demand itself—a much higher wage than most other workers in the valley were earning—helped raise expectations and shape the nature and focus of the large protest that would soon emerge. Finally, the Keurboschkloof strike and victory provided the spark and sense of confidence that

farm workers previously lacked around the idea of collective action; as Marowmo explains, "The courage [for the larger action] came from Keurboschkloof and the farm owner there was tough and people said that if they [the Keurboschkloof workers] can succeed, that they can convince the farmer to pay them more than why not on other farms?" (2014). This question of "why not other farms" would be answered as strikes and protest erupted across the De Doorns valley and later in over 20 towns across the Western Cape.

Most immediately, the Keurboschkloof strike led to several other less successful, small strikes in the area, but the sense that workers were collectively fighting back, particularly for significant wage demands, was reinforced by the broader goings-on in the country, particularly the Marikana strike which had taken place in August of that same year. Several workers, when asked about the Marikana strike, mentioned it as a source of inspiration for their action; as one farm worker explained, "We were encouraged by Marikana--when they demand R12,500 per month and succeed" (Interview with Jacobs 2013) and "I feel more power when I look at the TV and see Marikana" (Mehlo 2013). Interestingly, these workers both interpreted the Marikana struggle as a victory, even though thirty-four miners were killed and the workers did not actually achieve their wage demands.

And while the Marikana struggle was clearly known to many farm workers and a broader part of the social context, it also became an organising tool and potential rallying cry for organisations that joined the protest; there was broad use of the symbolism of Marikana by these mobilising organisations, but it is not clear how influential the Marikana dynamic was in the lead up to the protests. Non-worker organisers and leaders who were interviewed were much more likely to talk unprompted about the link between the Marikana strike and the farm worker protest (interviews with Ehrenreich 2013; Louw 2013; Andrews 2013; Michaels 2014), whereas workers needed to be asked directly; one organiser explained that after the initial protest in De Doorns, her organisation quickly created a pamphlet highlighting that "Marikana Comes to the Farms" which "went like wildfire" in terms of its spread (Interview with Andrews 2013). In addition, after the outbreak of the strike, the media routinely mentioned the Marikana strike in conjunction with their coverage of the farm worker protests (see COSATU's Ehrenreich Warns of Marikana in De Doorns, *IOL, Nov 8th, 2012*; Farm Unions Pull Together—For Now, *Mail and Guardian, Jan 25th, 2013*). In other words, there is some reason to believe that workers who mentioned Marikana were reflecting on the incident as it had been interpreted and used as a tool of mobilization during the strike, rather than as a deep source of organic inspiration. As Margareet Visser from the University of Cape Town, who has interviewed dozens of strike participants from De Doorns, reflects, "It [the protest] was easier in the whole context of the Marikana situation, but these groups [formal organisations who joined the strike] made the connection deliberately and had to band together to do this" (2014).

The micro-dynamics also include a local experience in De Doorns of service delivery protests and a large xenophobic attack in 2009 which led to both the engagement of outside organisations and the

development of leadership, networks, and a set of available protest tactics; this infrastructure and these experiences, coupled with long-standing grievances, made it more likely that a spark of hope such as the Keurboschkloof strike might ignite into full blown fire.

As mentioned previously, De Doorns was the site of service delivery protests in 2004, 2007, and 2011 (Interview with Carciotto 2013). These protests required and allowed for some level of organisation-building within Stofland and also helped develop a set of repertoires of contention—defined as forms of resistance based on "learned routines" that are within the experience and traditions of collective actors (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 1996); these repertoires were generally outside the more limited and "hidden" forms of resistance that typically exist within the strong paternalistic social construction of the farms. Karin Kleinbooi, a researcher and activist on issues in the agricultural sector, sat on a investigatory panel that engaged with all the stakeholders after the end of the major strike and looked at the experience of some of these protests; looking at the evolution of the dynamics in the area, she explains that, "Seasonal workers [living in the settlements] were not organised and had no access to trade unions; people developed civic committees in these townships, with the big motivation of these committees being service-related issues; first they organised around these issues and then also started to take on issues around farm employment and migrants in the area. . . service delivery issues drove them together" (Interview with Kleinbooi 2013). In this way, some recognized leadership started to develop in the settlement community; this wasn't formal leadership or organisation but rather individuals were emerging in the minds of others as leaders, and community members were learning to engage (or in some cases refreshing skills they had used before) in marches, protests, and blockades (Interview with Wesso 2013).

As mentioned previously, there was also a major xenophobic attack against Zimbabwean immigrants that took place in De Doorns in 2009; this attack led to a number of interventions from the state and civil society. Looking back at our macro-trends—increasing permanent migrants, decreasing availability of jobs, along with greater numbers of local and migrant workers living together in settlement communities—we may find some contributors to the tensions that created this terrible conflict; the attacks resulted in many Zimbabweans being displaced into a "refugee" camp on the local rugby field, where they lived for several months before either moving away from De Doorns or, for a limited number, being re-integrated into the farm worker community. Groups like PASSOP and the Scalabrini Centre, both immigrants' rights organisations, sent staff to work in De Doorns and engaged in strategies aimed at both bringing people together across their differences and providing material support and advocacy for the Zimbabweans who had been attacked. The state also engaged with a range of initiatives aimed at ending the conflict and preventing further conflict from emerging at a later date (Interviews with Hannekom 2013; Carciotto 2013). As noted earlier, PASSOP was the first organisation that was called when the Keurboschkloof workers went on strike; by some reports, people called PASSOP because they had witnessed their advocacy on behalf of Zimbabwean immigrants during their long "refugee" encampment on the rugby

field following the xenophobic attacks. PASSOP had succeeded in winning a form of reparations for the refugees and had shown that they could both win and were not corrupt (Interview with Hannekom 2013). In either case, known as a group for Zimbabweans, PASSOP was still asked to intervene by a very diverse group of workers—including migrants and non-migrants—who were working together in struggle and solidarity on Keurboschkloof Farm.

The interventions around the xenophobic attacks also helped to build bridges across the different groups of farm workers and community members; these bridges would be one important contributor to achieving the kind of large-scale protest that would later take place. By most reports, when the large-scale farm worker strike broke out in November of 2012, participation ranged across the different groupings of migrants and locals. As one strike committee leader explained, "The people were all united—Zim, Sotho, coloured, Xhosa speaking—everyone was united. . . I was willing to give my neighbour something he doesn't have; the strike brought back the struggle culture the 1980s and we were really united across the whole group" (Interview with Yanda 2013).

In addition, these interventions around the xenophobic attacks focused on the idea that Zimbabweans were not the enemy, which forced people to ask questions about who is the real enemy and who is responsible for the poverty and poor living conditions; in this way, these interventions pointed workers and community members toward questions around working conditions and relationships to white farm owners (Interview with Wesso 2013).

As noted earlier in our section on macro-dynamics, there were additional "influencing organisations" that, while not organising directly for mass collective action or the strike itself, had been doing work on the ground in De Doorns to build leadership among the rural poor-- leadership that was activated and utilized in the uprising. For example, Women on Farms (WoF) had been running ongoing rights-based trainings for women farm workers and women in the community; several of the women involved in the strike were part of WoF and received training and empowerment from this organisation. And while trade union presence was relatively limited in De Doorns and not the mobilising or organising operation behind the initial strike, some trade union members played an important role in leading co-workers and community members during the strike. As one strike leader explained, "When we were joining the union a long time ago, we had to work underground. . . I was in the union for nineteen years and had done training and other work with the union. . . so even though I am not working on the farm right now, when we started the strike people asked me for help" (Interview with Witbooi 2013). In these ways, organisations, the history of service delivery protests, and the xenophobic attacks (or rather, the responses to them) helped develop community leaders, networks, solidarity, and a set of tactics that could be built upon.

When looking at the micro-dynamics around the question of "why now", there seems to be an open question about the role of the African National Congress (ANC), its local councillors, and its networks.

While some farm owners and their allies suggested that the entire protest and strike was orchestrated behind the scenes as part of a "political" ploy by the ANC (Interviews with Susan 2014; Gouws 2014), I did not find any evidence from farm workers, organisers, or others to suggest that this was the case. On the other hand, the local ANC councillors in De Doorns clearly played a very critical role early on in the protest, and the ongoing dynamics of political contestation within the community—both before and after the eruption of the protest—may have been a contributing factor to the urgency that the local councillors and even national ANC leaders felt to intervene. According to Braam Hannekom, the director of PASSOP who was involved in the first strike at Keurboschkloof, national ANC leadership was very quick to engage and show their support for the workers, and this support played a key role in validating the workers' concerns, both for the workers involved but also for the broader community of the rural poor (Interview with Hannekom 2014). Given the pending national election in 2014, the fact that the Western Cape is the one province controlled by the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), and the fact that farm owners are historically antagonistic to the ANC, one might conclude that the broader political dynamics contributed to the success of Keurboschkloof workers and the momentum building towards a larger uprising. In addition, farm owners have been known to "encourage" their employees to vote for the DA, including making special arrangements on election day for transport and time off; the ANC might have seen this as an opportunity to drive a wedge between workers and employers, not to mention break the broader narrative surrounding the relationships and effective functioning of the Western Cape.

Without more information, it may be hard to draw these kinds of conclusions about how the political dynamics on the national or provincial level might have impacted the possibility for large-scale collective action. On the more local level, we see that concerns about political relevance and contestation did contribute to the protest gaining steam. Owen Marowmo, the first organiser to work with the Keurboschkloof workers, reports that local politicians approached him as the rumours of a larger protest started to circulate because they thought that people were unhappy with their performance and were worried that he was a threat because people were turning to him for help; according to his report, these officials told him that he should not be involved in local politics and that they were going to get involved in the organising activity that was informally taking shape (Interview with Marowmo 2014).

These same councillors became publicly and actively involved in the actual protest from almost the first day; when the strike began in De Doorns, worker leaders were selected from the crowd by the police (there was obviously some reason that the police focused on the specific people they chose) to come to the police station and write a memorandum of their demands that could be delivered to the farm owners and government. The workers immediately turned to the local councillors who helped to formalize and write their demands (Interviews with Witbooi and Prins 2013; Yanda 2013). In addition, these same councillors ended up not only as part of the marches, but actually visiting farms in the first days of the strike, telling workers that they should join the strike. As one group of farm workers who live on a farm

explained, “The farmer said that it is illegal and will chase us away if we go on strike; people who belong to the ANC—the councillors—come to our farm and told people not to be afraid because the farmer could not chase us away” (Interview with FAWU members at 2nd farm 2014). These workers then joined the strike and protest. The ability to mobilise was thus also affected by pre-existing political networks and leadership that was, at least partially, motivated by concerns about ongoing political contestation within the community. Visser from UCT, who takes a slightly more “orchestrated” explanation to the strike than fits my understanding, explains that the “strike did not happen ‘organically’—Women on Farms, PASSOP, town councillors and ANC were used to organise people; there was some level of organisation, tapping into these pre-existing networks they were able to bring people out—networks connected and created the energy for the strike” (2014).

If the strike on Keurboschkloof farm created a spark of hope, it also, along with the history of service delivery protests, provided a suggestion about the kinds of tactics that might make collective action seem more possible. The Keurboschkloof strike modelled the idea to farm workers that withholding their labour might actually be an effective tool for bringing farm owners to the table. In addition, the blocking of the N1 highway, the national road that runs from Zimbabwe, through Johannesburg, and all the way to Cape Town, had been used as a tool in previous service delivery protests and was a well known tactic to people in Stofland and De Doorns more generally. And, as has been pointed out before, the physical layout of Stofland is quite conducive to both of these activities. As one leader of COSATU who was involved in the strike explains, “The way the town is laid out is conducive to successful protest action . . . most of the seasonal and contracted workers live in a settlement called Stofland, right beside the N1—a fairly isolated, close knit community . . . they are able to all talk with each other and mobilize within hours to block the highway. . . the biggest strength is to be able to close the place off completely” (Interview with Louw 2013). Or as Braam Hannekom explains, “There are only two entrances to Stofland and if you block those entrances you shut down labour; it’s very hard to get to work without being noticed by the community, so you can force the community to be on strike” (2013).

Several workers interviewed explained that they had blocked the main highway before for housing and service delivery protests; clearly this was a familiar tactic that had been perfected into something of an art. While standing on the only bridge that crosses over the N1 from Stofland to the town of De Doorns, one of the young strike leaders explains, “We stand here on the bridge and throw some big rocks down onto the road and then people move out from up there,” pointing up the highway to a gap in the fencing “and put some rocks up that way. And at the same time people move in from down there,” pointing in the opposite direction to another hole in the fencing on the side of the highway. “And then we have it. Taking the N1 is easy, it’s like taking candy from a baby. They can put hundreds of police on the road and we can still take it. And then we move in with metal tools to start breaking up the road. And we burn tires all night. If you want attention you just have to block the road” (Interview with Yanda 2013).

This tactic was seen to have several purposes. One, as articulated above, was to get attention. Several workers mentioned the instant media attention, including national media attention, they get when they block the road (Interview with Prins 2013; Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014). Other workers thought, like the Keurboschkloof strikers, that the key to winning was stopping replacement workers from taking their jobs; blocking the N1 was "part of the strategy to keep the workers outside of De Doorns, out" (Interview with workers FAWU members at 1st Farm). And yet others pointed to the idea that blocking the N1 made it impossible for farm owners to move their goods and also paralysed a main road used by many others to move materials and products across the country (Interview with Yanda 2014). Finally, the N1 itself served as an important protest area for marches and other activities; because many farms line the sides of the road, the geography is perfect for allowing strikers to go onto the farms and encourage on-farm labour to join them as well as, at limited points, burning some of the vineyards.

The differing ideas about the blocking of the N1 point to a mixture of ideas about the strategy and sources of power that might bring victory around the farm worker demands. Some workers reported that their power came from their ability to disrupt; if they were able to disrupt enough of the normal activity of the community and larger society, than the government would be required to intervene and force farmers to agree to their demands (Interviews with Prins 2013; Yanda 2013). Other workers pointed to a more structural power, where their refusal to work, along with blocking replacement labour would force the farmers to agree to their demands (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014). Of course, the tactics that emerged were a product of familiarity coupled with the examples set at Keurboschkloof; no matter which theory of power and change workers chose, blocking the roads and withholding labour-- and requiring others to withhold their labour-- were tactics that applied across the spectrum.

In addition, for both the closing of the N1 and the strike tactic, workers saw a time element related to their strategy. For the strike, the farms were approaching harvest season and the window to harvest, for example the grapes, was quite time sensitive; the potential for a delay in the harvest gave an increased sense of strategic leverage to the workers (Interviews with Dube 2013; Interview with FAWU members at 2nd Farm 2014). In addition, one worker mentioned that given the holiday season, any delay or breakdown in the ability to move goods and people along the N1—a critical cross country artery-- would be both costly and cause public outrage (Yanda 2013). In any case, this was a group of people with what Du Toit called "a readily available vocabulary and tactics that people could adopt" (Interview 2014).

Finally, while the dynamics described provide workers with a sense of hope and strategy, long-standing grievances coupled with a cynicism about the existing avenues for change—particularly exacerbated by broken expectations—created a level of anger that facilitated the uprising. Several workers in De Doorns and beyond mentioned they were led to engage in more overt, confrontational, collective action by a sense that they lacked any other alternative to bring about change for their long-standing grievances; this

lack of alternative venues or formats to resolve their concerns was driven, at least in part, by a sense of broken expectations brought on by repeated attempts to engage them in change processes followed by a complete lack of action. Several workers mentioned attending conferences to discuss the challenges of farm workers and being asked to explain their concerns to government, farm owners, and other civil society actors; without fail, each worker reported that no changes took place following these events. As one farm worker explains, "In 2008, we were called to a summit and every part of government was involved. . . rural development, labour department, etc. . . all the unions came and AgriSA, AgriWeskaap, Hex River Table Grapes association and we complained about our salary and we told them they must look at our working conditions. . . people getting asthma from blowers and no protection, the poison was sprayed on the grapes and we just had to turn around. . . there was no limit on hours, no overtime, we just had to work whenever we were told. . . we told people at the summit everything and they must look at our points, look at our demands. . . nothing changed after the conference. . . they were supposed to work with us but they never did anything" (Interview with Witbooi 2013). In this way, workers expressed a frustration that allowed them to justify their more overt and confrontational approach to their long-standing grievances.

In conclusion, this combination of micro-dynamics, some of which were present in other towns but all of which were amplified in De Doorns, the epicentre of the protest, created the anger, hope, and sense of a plan that made action more likely to happen at this moment. The spark of the successful work stoppage at Keurboschkloof ignited a sense of hope and sense of strategy—the strike; the history of protest and conflict in the settlement community created leadership, networks, and a ready vocabulary of tactics, some of which came directly from the workers and others which were facilitated by influencing organisations. Finally, the anger of long-standing grievances around poverty and working conditions, combined with a sense of the futility of existing institutions and pathways of change, un-tethered an anger that could be channelled into the strategies and tactics that were both familiar and inspired at that moment. In other words, the anger of a long history of abuse and neglect of these workers and their communities found new hope and action in an increased sense of strategic possibility. When combined with the macro-dynamics that have been, for years, shaping and re-shaping the farming communities of the Western Cape, we begin to develop a better grasp of how the strike and uprising could happen, and more specifically "why now."

With this understanding of at least some of the elements which set the stage and ignited the protest, we will turn in the next chapter to the question of how the protest spread, gaining a scale that gave it a truly historic and groundbreaking character.

Chapter 4

How Did the Protest Spread?

From Local Protest to Regional Uprising

"It [the strike] just exploded, and then spread like wildfire"; this is how Tony Ehrereich, Provincial Secretary, COSATU, described the uprising that took place in the Western Cape (Interview in New Agenda 2013). While the last chapter focused on the macro and micro dynamics that might have made this "explosion"—particularly in De Doorns—more likely to occur, the report will now turn to the question of how the strike spread beyond its launching point in De Doorns to encompass thousands of protestors in towns and farms around the region. While the micro and macro dynamics described in the last chapter are similar—to varying degrees—on farms and settlement communities around the Western Cape, the spread of the uprising, at least in the areas focused on in respondent interviews, was shaped and facilitated by an additional set of factors; these factors were key to creating the motivations and mechanisms that allowed workers and their allies to take up the strike and protest in their own communities. When thinking about how the protest spread we can break down the ability and likelihood of broadening participation into two components—having the necessary logistical mechanisms needed for coordination, strategizing, and mobilization and having the path to inspiring motivation and courage amongst a broader and broader group. Finally, embedded in this analysis is an underlying question of whether these factors allowed the protest to be more "spontaneous" in nature—did the convergence of these factors facilitate a scale of protest and participation beyond what one might find in more incremental and planned protests.

At the height of the strikes and protests, reports are that approximately twenty-six towns in the region were impacted by strikes and protests among farm workers; over the course of the uprising in late 2012 and early 2013 tens of thousands of people in the Western Cape participated in everything from work stoppages, to protest marches, to blocking roads and conflicts with the police (Interview with Davis 2013). Unlike the more impulsive, organic, and localized launching of the uprising in De Doorns, the spread of the protest required the broad dissemination of a compelling story through the media, a group of locally based coordinating organisations, and the sharing of a replicable set of strategies and tactics; while the frustration with living and working conditions for farm workers in the Western Cape is broadly felt, the translation of this anger into action was inspired by the De Doorns protests and facilitated by the engagement of existing networks and organisations. In other words, the protest spread because the spark of the De Doorns uprising was translated, shaped, and shared by actors across the Western Cape;

the expansion of the protest required both the motivation and mechanisms to engage thousands participants in towns around the region.

Information and Inspiration

We turn first to the question of how information, and as importantly, inspiration was spread; how did workers find out about the De Doorns uprising and what impact did it have on their desire to take action themselves. In many ways, this is a question about what kind of "story" was being told by the media and others; narratives that are successful in motivating people to act generally include the grievance that the community faces along with a picture of collective action that can redress the problem (Polletta 1998). Gramson argues that all good narratives include elements of injustice, identity, and agency (Gramson in Polletta 1998). Finally, McAdam refers to the use of story as part of his concept of "cognitive liberation" where people are able to develop a collective definition of their situation as unjust and subject to change through collective action (McAdam in Killian 1984). The story of the De Doorns protest, as recounted by farm workers in towns to where the protest spread, had all of these elements. Every farm worker outside of De Doorns who was interviewed for this study—including workers in Citrusdal, Robertson, and Barrydale-- explained that the idea to engage in large scale protest action was inspired by learning about the De Doorns uprising on their television; in fact, each of these workers indicated that the very first place that they learned about the protest was on the television, not from organisers or others in the community.

The images on the televisions—recounted as images of large numbers of black and coloured people blocking the highway, marching in protest, burning tires, throwing stones, and, importantly, holding placards demanding R150 per day—inspired a range of interpretations from farm workers that, while sometimes slightly different in focus, were all a source of inspiration to collective action. For some farm workers, they saw themselves in the protestors, which provided a sense of courage that collective action was possible; as one farm worker from the Robertson area explains, "Every farm worker has a TV in their house and it was all over the media . . . their problems are the same as our problems . . . we see in De Doorns that people are poor and if those workers can do it, we can do it also" (Interview with Sambo 2014). In other words, because farm workers perceived the media coverage of De Doorns to feature mostly scenes of struggle and conflict of people in their same circumstance—that the story was less mediated, particularly in the beginning of the protest, by more formal organisations or professionalised spokespeople—they were able to take an added level of inspiration and confidence. As a farm worker who was born and lived her whole life on the farm explains, "We were afraid in the first place and now we are not afraid; we saw De Doorns on the TV and they were farm workers like us and not afraid so we decided we would not be afraid" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

For other workers, the coverage of the De Doorns protest on the TV signalled a new opportunity that must be seized to strike back against the farmers; as another farm worker from the Robertson area

explains, “I saw De Doorns [protest] on the seven PM news and when I saw De Doorns on the TV, I thought now is the chance that we will all go out and farmers can see what we are capable of. . . I just wanted to confirm that the circumstance that I am living under is not enough” (Interview with Shirleen 2014). Along these same lines, the coverage of the De Doorns workers inspired a more “rights” based understanding of the struggle; as one farm worker explains, “When we saw De Doorns on the TV we realised that we have the right to do this” (Interview with Appollis 2014). This awaking of a rights-based analysis and discourse—in contradiction to the traditional paternalistic discourse of the area—also became a critical source of determination and perseverance for some farm workers when faced with police repression to their protest actions.

Finally, the clarity of the central demand that was articulated by the De Doorns workers—an increase in the minimum wage from R69 per day to R150 per day-- seems to have been universally motivational to farm workers, providing a clear justification for their participation in protest action. The simplicity of the demand also allowed the media to amplify the purpose of the protest clearly to those not directly involved; of course, this amplification is an interactive process in that the media may have been more likely to focus on this demand because it was easy to repeat and understand, which then served to amplify the demand amongst workers as the protest spread. In either case, this demand was clearly motivational and unifying amongst farm workers, along with being easy to articulate. As one farm worker explains, “When we saw De Doorns I encouraged other workers to come together because they [the De Doorns protestors] were fighting for R150; we must participate in the strike to stop the hunger wages that the farmers give us. . . while watching De Doorns and seeing their demand, we started to ask ourselves why can De Doorns go on strike and not us; we can lead and come out in masses” (Interview with Kammies 2014).

And because the demand was for a large increase in the minimum wage—a demand that would affect all farm workers and not just a group on one farm or one town—other farm workers felt an obligation to join in and support the struggle. This feeling of obligation to join the protests was motivated in part by the fact that the De Doorns protestors shared an identity with the farm workers who were observing them on their televisions in towns and settlements around the area; this sense of common identity is particularly true when juxtaposed to the white farmers, who were deemed as being the opposition in this struggle. This feeling of obligation to “join in” was further driven by the specifics of what farm workers were seeing on the television—scenes of conflict, where protestors were clashing with police while holding up placards demanding an increase in the minimum wage or complaining about mistreatment by farm owners. As one farm worker who was dismissed after participating in strike action on his farm near Robertson explains, “One day we are working on the farms and we see the De Doorns strike on the television and it is coming from farm workers themselves. We are doing nothing but we are sitting there in our houses and every night we see [on the television] the police shooting at them because they are talking about

R150 living wage; no one will take them seriously if it is only just them in De Doorns. . . if they are going to win, it will benefit all of us. After that, we decide we are going to join De Doorns" (Interview with Jacobs 2013). This explanation also demonstrates some sense of strategy as it articulates the notion that the spread of the strike—increasing the number of people participating in protest—would be critical to winning an increase in the minimum wage.

The clarity of the demand and, more specifically, the size of the increase that workers were demanding—a more than one hundred percent increase—served to raise expectations and spark indignation; when expectations are increased, individuals and groups are more likely to respond with action that they think might help them achieve those goals. And more than simply increasing expectations, the scale of the increase might have signalled the demand for a much broader transformation of conditions and relations among the rural poor in the Western Cape. When looking back at the Durban strikes of 1973, also an uprising that spread to encompass thousands of workers, we see that those workers also articulated a relatively high wage demand; as Fischer, who studied the dynamics of the Durban strikes, explains, the workers were articulating ". . . a wage demand so large as to signify a much broader rejection of the overall system underlying their conditions" (1978). It is unclear from my research if this is the case with farm workers in the Western Cape; when I asked in interviews where the demand for R150 per day originated, respondents outside of De Doorns said it came from De Doorns workers, while respondents who were from De Doorns or have studied De Doorns mostly answered they were not completely sure. (There were two respondents who provided somewhat speculative answers, but none of the workers that I interviewed provided a clear answer.)

Overall, the images on the television seem to have provided a critical link that sparked anger, hopefulness, and a sense of a strategy or plan that was replicable (but also adaptable) in farming communities around the Western Cape, helping to make it more likely that protest actions would spread. The tactics seen on television also allowed for and depicted participation beyond a limited set of "members", drawing in whole communities that included the unemployed, youth, and other leaders amongst the rural poor. The impact of these television images might be interpreted as one element of awakening a greater class consciousness underneath the traditional social construction of paternalism so dominant in the farming communities; as Fisher explains, the kind of class consciousness most likely to produce overt collective action requires awareness of membership of a class, conflict with another class, conflict as derived from the structure of society, and conflict finding resolution only through surfacing the fight to create a new social structure (1978). The evidence suggests that the television images sparked some of this awareness in farm workers—particularly awareness of membership in a class and conflict with another class-- but that awareness was incomplete; it is also likely that this awareness was reinforced or aided by direct participation in the protests themselves and membership or engagement with supporting organisations. (It is worth noting that most of the worker respondents for this study had

engagement with a formal organisation, for example a trade union, making it more likely that they have been exposed to some level of education around concepts of class struggle, mechanisms of exploitation, or alternative visions of society; these associations and experiences may also have made respondents more aware and likely to interpret the television images of the struggle in De Doorns as motivation to join in collective action.)

In conclusion, the media coverage—particularly the TV coverage of the "explosion" of protest in De Doorns—served as both a delivery mechanism to spread information broadly across the farming towns of the Western Cape as well as a key source of inspiration and motivation for farm workers around the region. As one reporter explains, "At first the media was seen as important to their [the protestors] cause. . . the media was important in articulating their demands. . . things [protests] had been going for a week in De Doorns and then there were strikes in other towns" (Interview with Davis 2013). The accessibility of this coverage to farm workers, along with the content of the De Doorns protests—or more accurately the content of what was conveyed via the media coverage—helped to create the conditions for action amongst farm workers and rural poor members in other towns, settlements, and farms in the region. Of course, the underlying point is that the De Doorns protest—and several specific characteristics of how it was carried out and portrayed-- served as the spark but the television coverage was one of the important mechanisms that allowed that spark to be spread so that it might catch fire across the region. More than a tool to simply share information, the accessibility of television and other media coverage of the De Doorns protests allowed farm workers to find courage and motivation as well as a hopefulness brought on by raised expectations and a sense of their own strength and possibilities. As one local organiser and participant in the protests explains, "The courage and inspiration came from De Doorns; they were fearless. . . they put their lives and bodies forward and when you see the pictures on TV, you see they have courage. And then we have the courage and don't need to be afraid of the government, farmers, or police" (Interview with Jansen 2013).

Coordinating Units, Networks, and Technology

And while the story of the De Doorns strike as spread by the television was a key source of motivation that broadened participation, the structure that allowed for this energy to be turned into collective action across dozens of farming communities were locally based organisations or vanguard groups of pre-existing community-based leadership. Among the respondents of this study—in places like Robertson, Citrusdal, and Barrydale—the awareness of the De Doorns strike was both amplified and turned into strategy and action by what might be described as "coordinating units" (Killian 1984) of pre-existing organisers and organisations; while the strategy and action that emerged as the protests spread were sometimes uneven, a product of both organisational coordination and broader engagement through more informal networks, these coordinating units were able to mobilize their know-how and resources to spread large scale, at times confrontational, collective action in their respective farming communities. If

the strike action in De Doorns can be said to have begun without the intervention of formal organisations but rather exclusively through existing social networks coupled with long festering grievances and a precipitating incident, then the spread to other towns, at least for many parts of the uprising, were facilitated by relatively small cadres of activists who seized the moment, using their core members and resources to mobilize well beyond what their organisations had been able to achieve in the past. As Ehrenreich, the COSATU Provincial Secretary who was very involved in the protest explains, "The smaller organisations are key because they made the strike possible in other towns, as a catalyst to get other things to happen. There was an environment that was conducive to this. . . these smaller groups would get involved and going back to their towns to mobilize others" (Interview 2013).

The "coordinating units", as described by this study, had several characteristics in common: 1) they were able to recognize the opportunity that the De Doorns uprising presented for much broader mobilization beyond the incremental organisation building they had done in the past 2) they were nimble enough to re-focus and take action quickly 3) they had local, volunteer capacity to do outreach and mobilization as well as local, informal networks 4) they had some experience with protest and organising 6) they had a "social base" which went beyond the work place and farm workers and 5) they were linked with other activist and social movement organisations around the Western Cape.

If we look specifically at the area around Robertson we see a "coordinating unit" that is made of up an alliance of a smaller, socialist trade union (Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Union—CSAAWU), a community based organisation focused on land rights and small scale farmers (Mawubuye Land Rights Forum) and a non-governmental organisation focused broadly on rural issues (Trust for Community Outreach and Education—TCOE); these three groups work together in a relatively formalized alliance, which includes sharing resources and joint campaigns. When these groups first learned about the De Doorns uprising, they quickly called a meeting of their core members, dropped other projects, and developed a mobilizing pamphlet which they distributed not only around the settlement community but by travelling from farm to farm; because they were not able to access some of the farms, they would generally use their networks to call someone they knew who lived on the farm and notify them that they left the pamphlets under a rock outside the gate. The protest action in the Robertson area started small but by building on their core membership along with their work and relationships in the broader settlement and farming communities, these organisers were eventually able to spread the protest action to include large numbers of participants. As one of the organisers from Mawubuye explains, "The first day of the strike very few people came out but we got together and said we must spread the pamphlet and pick a day to come out and support De Doorns; we worked through the night and go from farm to farm. . . it was popular organisations that made the strike possible here and provided coordination. Farm workers really relied on these groups, I have never been so tired in all my

life. We worked long hours to assist farm workers and did all kinds of assistance with everything, even water and food on the picket line" (Interview with Jansen 2013).

In addition to having the ability to recognize the opportunity that the energy from the De Doorns strike created in the poor, rural communities and quickly shifting their focus and resources to help to spread the protest action, these three organisations are structured in such a way as to allow them to draw on their respective strengths and diversity of relationships. As one of the leaders in CSAAWU explains, "We work closely with Mawubuye and small scale farmers which helps strengthen our social base" (Interview with Swartz 2013); this strengthening of the social base, particularly given that the nature of the protests engaged broad swaths of the rural poor, meant that these organisations were better positioned to help the spread of collective action. Looking back at the macro-trends which are re-shaping the rural communities we see that this approach to organisation speaks to the shifting and broad range of identities and struggles that poor communities in the rural areas face. As a leader of TCOE explains about their approach, "We look at the rural community as a whole, not fragmenting it, because there is a strong interrelationship between these categories of people . . . a small farmer can also be a seasonal farm worker, a farm dweller may also work in a canning factory during the peak season—there is a continuum of how people's livelihoods connect" (Interview with Andrews 2013).

Engaging with the continuum means that these organisations had deeper networks, local volunteer capacity, and an understanding and history that put them at the centre of the action. And inspired by the energy of the De Doorns protests, local farm workers turned to these groups for support—particularly skills and know-how-- in organising themselves to join the protests. After word of the De Doorns strike spread, a leader of Mawubuye recalls a story about one of their active members living near Ashton being woken up at 5:45 AM in the morning to find a group of approximately twenty farm workers at his door looking for "the people in the black t-shirts"; Mawubuye members routinely wore black t-shirts with their logo when engaging in protest or organising work around the settlement communities. When the workers saw his black t-shirt—he had gone to bed in his Mawubuye shirt—they asked for his help in teaching them how to "toi-toi" (protest). The workers explained that they had walked from a far distance to find him and that they did not know how to protest but had, in the past, seen people in these black t-shirts marching and protesting (Interview with Jansen 2013).

A similar example comes from a farm just outside Robertson where a group of farm workers who lived on their farm saw the De Doorns protest on television and, inspired by what they saw, quickly held a meeting at their farm with all the other farm workers and farm dwellers, deciding that they wanted to join the protest. But isolated on the farm and with no previous protest experience, they were not sure what to do; one of the workers then recalled that his friend on a neighbouring farm was a member of CSAAWU. These CSAAWU members then connected these would-be protestors with their union shop steward and the workers joined in the strike and protest (Interview with Paulsen 2013). In these cases, we see a

mixing of the organic energy and sense of urgency created by the De Doorns protest, coupling with the coordinating units that could turn that energy into collective action; in this way, these units served to spread the protest action.

Finally, these coordinating units not only had experience and skills along with deep local connections, but they also held relationships with broader groups around the Western Cape. Only a couple of days after the De Doorns protest broke out, TCOE along with Women on Farms (WoF) took the lead on convening a meeting of many of the farm worker and rural poor organisations of the region to discuss the protest and their approach to further mobilisation and broadening of the action; called the Farm Worker Coalition, this was an important place for sharing of information and some levels of collaboration. While the political perspectives, goals, and participation levels varied amongst the groups who were engaged in this coalition, it was an important vehicle for spreading information and planning action. As the director of TCOE explains, "We created the coalition a few days after the strike in De Doorns; these groups would all come together and discuss; from there we would go mobilize and take the 'torch' to other areas" (Interview with Andrews 2013). In other words, the coordinating units both created this coalition and then used it as a vehicle for spreading the protest action in a somewhat coordinated way across the region. And while this study did not dig deeply into the functioning of this coalition, reports are that along with helping coordinate action, the coalition was, at times, also a space of conflict and/or non-participation by different organisations involved in various places around the region (Interview with Wesso 2013).

When looking at the spread of the protest to other towns we see a similar dynamic with locally based organisations with relatively small membership playing an outsize role in the coordination and mobilisation of large numbers in the protest. In the case of Citrusdal, another area where participants in the protest were interviewed, there was a slightly different structure than the Robertson area; the coordinating unit was the Citrusdal Farm Worker and Farm Dweller Forum, a group made up primarily of permanent on-farm labour and farm dwellers that focuses on a wide range of issues facing the rural poor. During the build up to action in this area we see a comparable situation—a core group of organisers with some organising experience, local networks and understandings, links to other social movement groups around the region, and a social base beyond the workplace. As recounted in an earlier chapter, this group first learned about the De Doorns strike and immediately made protest signs and went and stood on the road where the transport would arrive carrying farm workers. After that didn't work to mobilize people, particularly the more permanent farm workers, this core group visited the Riverview settlement—where most of the seasonal farm workers lived-- and arranged for a meeting with the community where they were more successful at organising broader participation. The Citrusdal organisation before the protest was made up of a core of about 70 members but during the strike was able to mobilize thousands of people to march down the street and protest; organisers reported that this mass mobilisation involved a much broader range of seasonal workers, off-farm labour, and rural poor than had ever participated

before (Interview with Brink 2013). Their leadership and coordinating function was essential to making the larger mobilisations possible and local control and understanding the specific dynamics of each town was critical for the successful spreading of action. As one of the leaders of the Forum explains, "We were inspired by De Doorns as they gave us the power to strike; and the Farm Worker Coalition was about sharing tactics and ideas but we would go back [to our town and local group] and make our own decisions about how best to implement" (Interview with Mehlo 2013). In each of these cases, the pre-existing organisation was a key a pre-requisite for the spreading of large scale collective action but after the action began, particularly with the massive influx of new, unaffiliated participation and the speed at which scale was achieved, it was often difficult to distinguish where organisation left off and a more "spontaneous" eruption kicked in.

While these "coordinating units" played a key role in facilitating strategy, action and participation in the moment, they were also—along with some other organisations—responsible for developing some of the leadership and understanding among participants well before the actual protest—leadership that would make broad participation more probable and possible. Recognizing the importance and opportunity represented by the De Doorns uprising was more likely among farm workers and community allies who were both politicised and empowered to understand the structural underpinnings of the poverty and inequality they faced. Groups like TCOE had been running leadership schools for the rural poor, orchestrating campaigns around land rights, and providing education about the protections guaranteed in the Constitution (Andrews 2014); groups like Women on Farms had been running educational and empowerment programs on women's rights and health, on food security, and against evictions. Workers and community members who were engaged in these campaigns were more likely to be found among the leadership and mobilisers of the protest in late 2012 and early 2103 (Interview with Jacobs 2013). Maybe even more directly linked to both the uprising and its spread, as was mentioned previously, many of these same groups had been organising "Speak Outs" in towns around the Western Cape, where, in some cases, hundreds of people would gather on a Sunday to articulate their needs, concerns and demands as the rural poor; these demands, while not directly linked to the protest, clearly found voice in the protest. As one of the key organisers in Barrydale explains, "Spreading the protest required real work . . . but we had laid the ground work by organising "Speak Outs" and we could hear that this was a ticking time bomb . . . we was preparing the platform with the "Speak Outs" even though we didn't know it . . . people were very frustrated with the new South Africa" (Interview with Michaels 2014). While the "influencing" work of these organisations was less immediately directed toward strikes and confrontational collective action, these organisations were establishing a "supportive organisational context" (McAdam in Killian 1984), leadership, and networks that made the spread of the protest possible.

Looking closer at the experience of the organiser for CSAAWU in the Barrydale quote above, we see the importance of these coordinating entities and the convergence of the characteristics that made these

entities critical to the spread of the protest—a recognition of the opportunity, an ability to re-orient his organising work toward this opportunity, local capacity to do outreach and access networks, experience with mobilisation and protest, a broad social base across the various identities in the community, and a link to the larger movement. As the organiser explains, "The first demand [from De Doorns workers] was R150. . . I saw it on the TV and then I realised that I am working with farm workers and must call a community meeting and talk with them about what was happening. . . we started talking with people we knew and they decided they must join the strike. We then designed a pamphlet, what we normally do for a protest, and distributed the pamphlet and went around the community with a loud speaker to inform people . . . for the first meeting we were in the big community hall and it was packed . . . the first day [of our protest] there were not big numbers . . . it was a lot of work to encourage them . . . but day by day the numbers were growing and that generated confidence" (Interview with Michaels 2014). From this example we see that there was clearly an energy and anger within the farming communities but that it took organisers and organisation to turn that into action. The organiser goes on to explain, "We have connections to people in Robertson and other areas so we spoke with them and coordinated. . . we not only had farm workers involved by the unemployed and other people in the community. This is why a much broader approach to organising is critical because people have a cross section of issues as well as a cross section of identities in their communities—seasonal farm workers, migrants, towns people, rural people and so on" (Michaels 2014). In each of the examples explored in this study, the organisers and organisations that served as coordinating units worked hard to put farm workers and the rural poor themselves in the front of the struggle; and organisers both tended to be from the areas where they were organising and "of" the people they were organising. In this way, there was a shared risk that served as a source of inspiration for others to participate. The organiser quoted here was also a small scale farmer and long time activist from the local community who was arrested during the protest and spent over a month in jail.

While these locally based organisations were the key on the ground to spreading the protest around the region, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) also contributed to the spread—and at times contraction—of the protest. Unlike some of the smaller coordinating units, COSATU has a national profile and the media—and sometimes workers, farm owners, and government—may turn to the federation for understanding and leadership. As Tony Ehrenreich explains, "COSATU has standing in society and if COSATU were to call an action, there would be an action" (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013). So while the smaller coordinating units were responsible for the infrastructure that turned the motivation into action, COSATU provided a higher level platform and a credibility which encouraged participation and provided legitimacy. Several workers who were interviewed explained that they decided to participate after watching TV coverage of the De Doorns protest and hearing that COSATU was saying that farm workers all across the Western Cape would go on strike; as one farm worker in the Robertson area explains, "We all saw it [the De Doorns protest] on TV and heard that tomorrow all farm workers on

the Western Cape will go on strike. . . Tony from COSATU was saying everyone will go on strike" (Interview with Shirleen 2014).

The mechanics of COSATU's leadership in spreading and the contracting the strike—using its standing and bully pulpit without the local engagement and connections—was very different than the organisations which served as coordinating units; this led to some level of conflict between these different levels of mobilisation, particularly when COSATU used its position to call for the strike to be suspended or be resumed at different times. This is partly because spreading the protest actions on the ground, as we have seen, required sustained organising work, engagement, and a level of momentum that was hard to maintain in the context of action that is starting and stopping; this is particularly true because COSATU's structures were not as clearly designed as locally based organisations to engage and receive mandates from the communities who were participating in the action. Many of the participants interviewed reflected this frustration, reflecting a feeling that COSATU somehow commandeered the leadership mantle of the protest action without proper representation from people on the ground. Ehrenreich, the voice of COSATU during the protest, admitted as much explaining, "COSATU can best represent at the macro level and smaller NGOs and local unions are better at the local level. The challenge is how to build connections here—organisational on the local level along with national political clout" (2013).

While both of these levels of organisational engagement—on the broader level with COSATU and on the local level with coordinating organisations of smaller unions, NGOs, and community based organisations—contributed to the spread of the protest, they contributed in slightly different ways that were reflective of the types of resources and power that these groups brought to the table. "COSATU was trying to make sure that we brought moral suasion, public support, and government leverage sooner than later" (Interview with Ehrenreich in New Agenda 2013) while smaller, locally based organisations brought participation, networks, organisation, and action. In theory, these different sets of resources and strengths could be complimentary in spreading and sustaining the protest; in reality, the challenges of coordination, collaboration, and leadership—particularly when there is not a clear understanding of common purpose, roles, and goals—turned out to be complicated and ultimately led to significant amounts of infighting and finger pointing that was detrimental to the longer term possibilities of working together. This also points to questions about the "type" of organisation that is most suitable to engagement, mobilising, and spreading action amongst farm workers and rural communities; this is a topic we will turn to in the next chapter when we assess some of the outcomes of the uprising and their implications for organisation and action moving forward.

In addition to the role of formal organisations—big and small-- in spreading the protest, informal networks also played in a role in the spread of information and participation. Looking back to the macro-trends shaping the agricultural sector, the more transient nature of work means that farm workers are building networks by moving between seasonal jobs or even between individual farms within a local area. In

addition, as previously discussed, the shifting spatial make-up of the farming communities—particularly the growth of settlements—means that workers have more opportunities to build networks with a broader group of other farm workers and also with non-farm workers who live in the same area. Finally, the increasing numbers of migrants—particularly those that move between communities based on the availability of seasonal work—means that more and more networks are being built amongst these groups and between the farming towns. As an organiser from De Doorns explains, "Farm workers are not organised but truth is that they are organised; whenever there is a small thing, things spread because they moved around to other farms and two months and then another farm. They are moving around between farms so people know each other" (Interview with Marowmo 2014).

Farm workers respondents gave a range of answers on how these networks were built and strengthened—from going to church together to connections made in town on Saturday during shopping days to extended family members to joint conferences they attended with other workers from around the region. In addition, the relationships that are built in the settlement communities through daily life were clearly critical in expanding informal networks. During the spread of the protests from De Doorns to groups in other towns and farms, the decision to partake in action was sometimes made by a group of farm workers with a tighter network—for example they lived on the farm together-- and then this group would use their broader networks of relationships for coordination and collaboration; participants in the protest often mentioned making the decision to join the action and then quickly getting on their mobile phones to call their friends and family on other farms and towns in the region (Interviews with CSSAWU Activist members 2014; Erumas 2014; Paulsen 2014; Sambo 2014).

This also points to the critical role of technology—particularly mobile phones—in the rapid spread of the strike. Every worker and community respondent who was interviewed had the use of a mobile phone and many of the respondents used both Facebook and WhatsApp as tools to communicate with their networks and engage in group sharing. While the penetration of mobile phones and social networking is not brand new, this interconnectedness has been part of the ongoing transformation that has broken down some of the isolation faced by farm workers—isolation being one of the biggest challenges for sharing information, organising, and gaining exposure to outside ideas and influences. The increased technology has also dramatically increased the speed at which rural communities can communicate with each other and increased the ability to convey a common message or set of information. As a Department of Labour official who has spent his career working with farm workers explains, "Part of the evolution of the sector is also because of technology; ninety percent of those farm workers have cell phones and today we have television and radio and all forms of communication that have made communication easier. I could send a message to a farm dweller and tell them not to go to work because people are not going to work in De Doorns or Stofland. How do you think service delivery protests spread—the living conditions are the same, the townships are the same and they use social networks to

talk to each other and then the government starts to listen. It's 'cut and paste' communication" (Interview with Domingo 2014).

Returning to the topic of networks, a question has also been raised about the African National Congress's (ANC) networks and structures—built during the anti-apartheid struggle—and their role in spreading the protest. Most of the farm owners interviewed seemed to suggest—to one degree or another-- that the ANC networks played a large role and that the ANC was even more formally involved in orchestrating and spreading the protest for their own political purposes unconnected to the conditions facing farm workers (Interviews with De Wet 2014; Knill 2014; Gouws 2014). When interviewing participants and organisers, I found that some ANC councillors played a role in supporting the more organic uprising in De Doorns and supporting the protests that took place in towns around the region; the question is what role did these leaders and networks play in instigating and facilitating the spread of the protest. Tony Ehrenreich from COSATU, who is also an ANC councillor, believes that these structures could have played an important role but that they were not engaged aggressively enough; as he explains, "There are ANC structures in many of these communities. They have been leaders in their communities. And those black constituencies are still our constituencies where the ANC is the most powerful organisation. We should have been more organised and structured much earlier. But this is partly because how the strike came about" (Interview in New Agenda 2013). In other words, while individual councillors may have supported the strike—for example the councillor from Bonnievale who rode around on his bicycle going farm to farm to encourage on-farm workers to come to town and join the protest— the ANC networks were not the primary set of relationships activated to help the spread of the protest action.

Related to this, there is the question of whether the high level support and "endorsement" from ANC national officials helped to spread the protest by giving both the issues and action a broader sense of legitimacy. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, according to Braam Hannekom, the director of the immigrant rights organisation PASSOP who was involved in the strike on Keurboschkloof farm that was a critical trigger of the larger protest in De Doorns, senior ANC leaders publicly declared their support for the workers and their strike, thereby legitimizing both the tactic and the workers' grievances (Interview with Hannekom 2014). Ronald Wesso, an organiser with Surplus People's Project who works with farm workers and rural communities, also suggests that this higher level "endorsement" helped to create, at least in De Doorns, greater confidence amongst the workers. Of the worker respondents outside of De Doorns who were interviewed, none mentioned the higher level support from government officials as being an important element of their decision to participate in the protest, although in places like Barrydale and Citrusdal, the support and participation of local ANC councillors or mayors was mentioned as an important element of encouraging local participation (Interviews with Brink 2013; Michaels 2014).

Replicable Tactics and Strategy

Along with formal and informal networks, the basic strategies and tactics that were used in the protest made it more likely and possible for the protest to spread. Strategy can be defined as "turning the resources we have into the power we need to get what we want" (Ganz 2010). Tactics are how this strategy gets put into action. Tactics and strategy—or repertoires of resistance—are shaped by the experience and traditions of the collective actors; in other words, "the repertoire is therefore not only what people *do* when they make a claim; it is what they *know how to do*. . ." (Tarrow 1993). In this case, as has been previously pointed out, the experiences and leadership of the coordinating units were critical is spreading out the protest and shaping the tactics being used; in addition, larger and larger number of protestors, given that they reside in the settlement areas, had some previous experiences with marches or collective action around service delivery issues. As importantly, a main part of the strategy that was widely articulated—that withholding labour and shutting down transportation during the harvest period would force farm owners to deal with farm worker issues—was within the experience of farm workers understanding of production and value. As one farm worker explained the strategy, "When we are going on strike the owner will have to listen to us because we are doing the work on the farm and during that time was the harvest. . . we would also burn tires so no one could drive and we could stop all the trucks and get the attention of the bosses" (Interview with Shirleen 2014). Or as another farm worker simply defined the strategy, "Production could have stood still if everyone one of us stood still" (Interview with Sambo 2014). The perceptions that workers had of their own power—particularly at this moment—also helped with the spread of protest action; some farm workers saw themselves as taking advantage of a "political opportunity", defined as an analysis by protesting groups of their likely ability to gain access to greater power and modify the current system (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1996). As Ehrenreich explains, "The strike periods were decided by workers, mindful of the various harvest times that gave them a more strategic bargaining position" (Interview in New Agenda 2013).

While the primary strategy was linked to the resources, experiences, and understanding of their power by many of the farm workers, the tactics that were chosen were easily replicable without the need for large amounts of outside resources; there is a certain power of imitation-- action that was easily recognizable and mimicked—that helped with the spread of the action. The main tactics of the De Doorns strikers—blocking roads, burning tires, marches, refusing to work, stopping others from working—were all tactics that could easily be picked up by others who wanted to join the strike. At the same time, these tactics could be adapted to the local situation and facilitated broad participation beyond farm workers; anyone in the community could join a march, burn a tire, or help block a road. When asked "how" people who wanted to participate in the protest knew what do to, most respondents indicated that they had seen the images of De Doorns on TV and wanted to join in, which they explained as replicating the approaches of protest seen in the media coverage (Interview with CSSAWU activist members 2014; Dube 2014). In

addition to being easily imitated and allowing for broad participation, the tactics did not require a lot of advance planning or resources beyond what was easily accessible to most farm workers—most notably their bodies. Other materials like petrol, tires, stones, and hand written placards were also relatively easy for farm workers to acquire and didn't require coordination with outside support or organisations. Interestingly, the tactics adopted, quite often, did not really require confronting individual farm owners but rather, most of the conflict occurred with police near settlements and on highways. This may suggest something about the power dynamic that still existed on the farm and was never really confronted during the protests; it also points, potentially, to why farm workers might have been willing to engage in major conflict and confrontation in these protest actions but still indicated high levels of fear as being a large impediment to organising trade unions, for example, on the farms. As one farm worker explains, "You can lose your job when you join the union, but it is easy to throw stones at the police" (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014).

Coercion, the Police, and Risk

While an easily replicable set of tactics that allow broad participation combined with local coordinating units may have led to the rapid spread of the protest, there was some level of "coercion", particularly on the local level, that helped spread participation in the work stoppage, and, to a lesser degree, in protest actions. Predictably, farm owners blame coercion, particularly in De Doorns, for the high numbers of workers who participated in the work stoppage; there is some evidence from protest participants themselves that they used the physical layout of Stofland—with only two real entrances and exits to the settlement—to monitor if farm workers in the area were trying to go to work. In addition, some workers in De Doorns report that if farm workers were caught during the strike walking down the road, protestors would search their bags to make sure they didn't have indications (like a packed lunch) that they were going to work; these same farm workers indicated that strikers would target people's houses who they suspected of being at work, going in and taking out the furniture and food and, in some instances, threatening to burn down the house or shack (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014).

There is also evidence that the spread of the work stoppage to other towns was enforced through a more "coercive" approach; in addition to blocking the roads, which was seen as not only a strategy to stop trucks and goods from moving but also from replacement workers being brought in (Interview with CSSAWU activist members 2014), protestors actually went into the fields during the start of the protests to enforce the work stoppage. As one female farm worker explains, "We blocked the road; the women were the ones standing in the road and the men go and talk to the other workers to pull them out of work . . . the police come and started shooting but the women refused to move on the road and the men go to the fields and tell them [the other workers]—'you leave or there is going to be trouble'" (Interview with Erumas 2014). There were also reports that farm owners, fearing conflict or damage on their farms, removed workers from the fields or farm or refused to allow people to work for fear of the conflict, or more

likely, damage to their crops or property (Interview with Witbooi 2013); in this way, farm owners also contributed to the spread of the work stoppage. These more "coercive" means, whether actually enforced or a broadly perceived perception among farm workers and farm owners, served to broaden participation in the protest.

On the flip side, the response of the police to the protest had some impact on the spread and participation. As previously discussed, the major conflict with the police in De Doorns that was depicted on the television had a galvanising effect on farm workers around the Western Cape, fuelling a sense of urgency that farm workers must join in to support the De Doorns protestors and their demands; the scenes from the De Doorns protests depicted what many farm workers saw as brown and black people like themselves fighting for a reasonable demand—R150 per day—and being met with large scale police repression in the interest of farm owners. As a reporter who covered the protests explained, "The police actions were key moments. . . those were points that had a galvanising effect. . . and my impression was that this sparked moral outrage" (Interview with Rebecca Davis 2013). This perceived repression by police sparked a more "rights based" discourse among farm workers that inspired broader participation not just from farm workers but by community members; when met with police repression, one organiser reports that protestors started asking "Why are you [the police] interfering with us?" and justifying their participation with "We are entitled to do this!" (Interview with Swartz 2013). This more rights-based discourse was motivational in that participants were no longer simply fighting for their demands but for their fundamental rights, particularly the right to protest which was supposed to be guaranteed in the new South Africa. This shifting discourse and perception that not just farm owners but the broader structures of society were unfairly aligned against farm workers broadened participation; as one leader of COSATU who was involved in the protests explains, "Police reaction angered people further and multiplied the situation; the people believe that the police are there to protect them even in protest; to have the police come out and support the farmers created an atmosphere of violence and actually attracted more people and made them more angry; now you have a united front in the towns and it attracts everyone" (Interview with Louw 2013).

The impact of the police reactions shifted over time, particularly as police tactics shifted to involve more activities at night, raids in the settlement communities, and killing protestors; these later tactics did serve to diminish participation and increase fear. In Robertson, protestors report that as the conflict wore on, challenges emerged in mobilising people because they were afraid that the police would start shooting like they had done in previous protest days (Interview with Jansen 2013). That being said, the initial impact of the police reactions-- particularly the perception that the police were protecting and supporting the farm owners—seemed to help strengthen the urgency and justification for farm workers and some community members across the region to join in. As one farm worker explains, "Because the police started to use violence against them [protestors] and that made us angry. All they wanted was to talk

with the farmers and the police were stopping them from doing that so that made us want to join in and start fighting back" (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014).

Finally, it is worth noting that the high levels of commitment and risk that were displayed by protestors as the uprising spread were important sources of inspiration that in themselves inspired further participation. One organiser reports that without transport normally provided by farm owners, farm workers walked great distances to participate in protest actions; this inspired people in the community to join in and support what they saw as a deep level of commitment. Another organiser recounts a group of protesting youth who were told to go back to their houses for their own safety when the police started shooting; to the amazement of the organiser, the youth refused to retreat, making the case that they needed to stay because they were tired of their families being hungry (Interviews with Jansen 2013; Philander 2013). There were many incidents of this sort and through networks and technology, these incidents and stories spread across the towns and inspired greater numbers to participate; the courage and determination displayed by protestors was a major source of motivation.

In conclusion, we are tempted to ask whether the spread of the protest action that swept across the Western Cape was "spontaneous" in nature. The answer depends to a large degree on how we think about spontaneous collective action; of course, collective action by the very fact that it is collective, cannot be completely unplanned or uncoordinated. An alternative way to think about spontaneous action is protest which is more emotional and impulsive with "urgency, local initiative, and action by moral imperative rather than bureaucratic planning" (Polletta 1998). The farm worker protest action clearly had all of these elements, but the defining characteristic of spontaneous action may be the way in which it spreads. More specifically, spontaneous action gains an exponential scale beyond the incremental planning of the organisers or leaders, often with a short timeline between the idea and the action itself. With this view, some level of pre-existing organisation is a pre-requisite to successful action (IIE Study 1973).

When we look at how the farm worker protest spread from the spark of the De Doorns uprising to encompass over twenty-five towns around the Western Cape we see a motivation driven by widely disseminated television images of the struggle and a clear demand for a more liveable wage, a set of locally based coordinating organisations, and an array of relationships built on informal networks that have been expanded and strengthened by the changing nature of farm work and the spatial living arrangements of the rural communities. These core factors were aided by an easily repeatable set of tactics and strategies that existed within the experience of farm workers and supported by communication technologies that allowed for both mobilisation and rapid sharing of information.

In other words, there was a set of stories, structures, and strategies that allowed for the rapid spread of collective action. The stories had a clear demand, told by participants, with a rights based discourse, that

were spread through accessible media. The structure was made of an organic energy coupled with coordinating units with the right organisational characteristics. The strategy was an exercise of structural and some disruptive power with the tactics of direct action that were easily replicable and allowed for broad participation. When combined, these factors allowed the protest to spread faster and larger than any leader or organiser could have predicted or orchestrated; in this way, we can suggest that the spread of the protest can be characterised as spontaneous in nature. These more spontaneous protests can be clearly differentiated from other strikes or protests that spread more incrementally, are based on clearly defined roles, have centralised coordination, and are more bureaucratically planned. And the nature of the protest—how it spread—has important implications the topic we will turn to in the next chapter—namely what kind of organisation, leadership, and outcomes might emerge once the more immediate protest actions come to an end.

Chapter 5

Has the Protest Turned into Organisation?

Mass Participation, Organisation, and New Opportunities

In this chapter the reports turns to the question of whether the farm worker uprising in late 2012 and early 2013 has translated into the growth of existing or new organisations. The answer to this question may have important implications for implementing any material gains achieved through the uprising, holding on to any gains, and shifting power that would allow for further transformation of farming communities. Answering this question also allows one to reflect on "why" the energy and action of the protest may not have been translated on a large scale into existing organisations or more formal structures; exploring some of the approaches and characteristics of the organisations that were involved in the uprising should provide hints as to how their engagement may be creating opportunities or falling short. In addition, this chapter will take a quick look beyond formal organisation to assess whether the protest created other opportunities, leadership, and progress toward a more balanced power dynamic in the agricultural sector. Finally, asking these questions forces one to begin to confront the broader question of how progress might be made among farm workers and whether "moments of madness" can or should be translated into organisation.

The Question of Mass Participation into Organisation

When looking at the question of whether the energy and activity of the uprising was translated into existing organisation, the breadth and scope of the research was limited to several of the key organisational actors in geographic areas where interviews were conducted—most specifically trade unions and community based organisations.

Among trade unions, organisations like the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) and BAWSI Agricultural Workers Union of South Africa (BAWUSA) report an initial surge in membership during the uprising; several workers, particularly in De Doorns, reported that they were told by government authorities involved in negotiations that they must join trade unions to have someone to speak for them in the efforts to achieve their demands. Membership in these types of organisations generally includes signing a union membership card and paying a monthly subscription fee, often between one and two percent of income and deducted by the employer through payroll deductions. In some situations, where a majority of the employees who work for a given employer become members, the union will seek to negotiate a collective agreement to define the terms of employment for covered employees. For situations where there is not a majority of employees who are members, the union generally seeks to

provide support to members, particularly in situations of unfair disciplines or dismissals, although there may also be some "value added" benefits (like funeral cover) along with education and training on basic employment rights.

FAWU reports that over time, the membership surge that occurred during the protests resulted in several additional collective agreements among farms in the Western Cape; BAWUSA reported a similar growth. Both of these unions, while initially surprised by the protests, reported quickly deploying extra staff in the Western Cape during the uprising and engaging in major membership recruitment drives during the strike (Interviews with Pieterse 2013; Ndongeni 2013). As a leader of FAWU explains, "The strike itself was a surprise to everybody; we just saw the uprising of the workers and for us we say 'here is an opportunity for recruiting these workers'; we [FAWU organisers] went in numbers to do recruiting" (Interview with Ndongeni 2013). The Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU) along with their community based organisation partner Mawubuye reports, and several workers in the Robertson areas reflected, that there was an increase in farm workers joining the union during the protest; the union reports that it now has new membership on some additional farms and is growing "farm worker forums" in new areas and towns (Interview with Swartz 2013; CSSAWU activist members 2014). Finally, the Citrusdal Farm Workers and Farm Dwellers Forum reported that their membership has basically returned to pre-uprising levels and, in some case, slightly lower, although they do report a greater connection and relationship to seasonal and off-farm labour than they had previously (Interview with Brink 2013). For most of these organisations, particularly the trade unions, we see an increased deployment of their resources for recruitment during the protest, followed by some increased level of membership; in none of these cases, did the increase in membership seem to come close in scale to the level and numbers of participants in the strike and protest.

In addition, most of these organisations, while playing some coordinating and public role during the protest, saw major parts of their membership gains dwindle quickly after this cycle of protests died down. Workers, in De Doorns for example, reported that many people initially joined the unions but that large numbers had since resigned their membership. One general complaint heard was that unions came in and engaged in recruitment and either made promises to resolve challenges that were left unfulfilled or that union staff disappeared once they collected the membership cards. As a leader of the strike committee in De Doorns explains, "As the [strike] committee, we started to help the unions recruit people and signing them up. And afterwards they [the unions] left us—they left us half way in the strike—and disappeared. People asked us what are we going to do now, when will the union come back. . ." (Interview with Witbooi 2013). Farm owners also reported this trend of some limited increase in trade union membership followed by levels of disillusionment and resignations; as one consultant to the farm owners explains, "The unions walked in the front of the people because they wanted to build membership. The unions are here but don't have a lot of members. It hasn't changed since the strike;

there were some more guys who joined the unions but then after three months they dropped out again" (Interview with Gouws 2014).

The research did not uncover the formation of any new organisations, except for an employer aligned creation called the Farm Worker Forum; this organisation was "founded" by a woman who used to live on the farms herself and is now a staff member of the Democratic Alliance (DA) controlled municipality in Paarl. The organisation claims to have seven thousand "members", all of whom were "recruited" since the major protest. When probing more deeply, we see that the members of this Forum are actually selected and recruited by farm owners and managers, given paid time off to participate in organisational meetings, and travel to and from meetings is in transport provided by these farm owners. When speaking with the director of the organisation, she articulated the Forum as being solely representative of the farm workers themselves, independent of unions, non-governmental organisations, or the farm owners; at the same time she admits to a high level of collaboration with farm owners and the leadership—for example, the provincial minister of agriculture-- of the strongly farm owner aligned political party the Democratic Alliance (Interview with Andreas 2014).

This organisation also apparently has no funding, no offices, no staff and does not charge any money for farm workers to join or participate; at the same time, they were able to successfully "organise" a large march and gathering of farm workers—several thousand by some reports-- with the theme of the march focused on saying "no" to strikes and thanking the Lord for the harvest. And the director articulated many of the same complaints that farm owners themselves made about things like the social wage not being accounted for in the new sectoral determination or that the conflict between farm owners and farm workers was driven by outsiders and politics. As the director explains, "Before 1994, there was a good relationship between farmers and farm workers and the new laws and reforms have driven people apart from each other. . . the strike was led by BAWUSA [trade union] and they brought people in to the farm to take part in the strike. The main reason was political; it wasn't really our farm workers who wanted to take part." (Interview with Andreas 2014).

Several farm owners I spoke with were highly supportive of the Farm Workers Forum as a non-conflict oriented and "independent" way for farm workers to find their voice; none of these same farm owners thought that trade unions, community groups, or non-governmental organisations played a constructive role in the agricultural sector. As one farm owner in Robertson explained, "We [farm owners] have been notified about a Farm Worker Forum coming out of Paarl; we would be supportive as long as it does not get hijacked by union and NGOs; farm workers need to find a voice but it needs to be done in a constructive way" (Interview with De Wet 2014). If we assume that this Forum is more a creation of the employers and their allies, the interesting follow-up question is what impact might the creation of this organisation might have had on the ability to translate the energy and action of the protest in to more legitimate worker and community based organisations.

Overall, we see that the outcome of the protest has been at-best, a very modest expansion of formal organisation among farm workers and their allies; and, in some cases, whatever expansion took place during the protests seems to have been short lived. In either case, none of the expansion of formal organisation came close to reflecting the scale of participation in the protests. At worst, formal organisations may have come out of the protest smaller than when they went in and with more farm workers having had some experience and then disillusionment with these organisations. It is important to note that, for the purposes of this study, when we ask the question of "has the protest been translated into organisation" we are primarily focused on the question of more formal organisation rather than informal networks and collaboration. There is some possibility that the protest strengthened or expanded these informal networks and organisation, leading to greater opportunities for collective action in the future; there is also some possibility that the protest action-- and the interaction of more formal organisations-- frayed this informal organisation and shrunk these networks making future collaboration less likely. In either case, the answers to most of those questions are beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, translating the energy and action of the protest into formal organisation cannot simply be measured by increasing levels of membership in these organisations, although I would argue that this is one critical measurement. In addition to increased numbers of participants (which is essential to increasing power for social movement organisations) the energy of the protest could lead to more active and meaningful participation by existing members of these formal organisations. In this way, translating the protest into organisation speaks not only to expanding the breadth of the organisation but the depth of commitment of its current members. And while this will again, not be the primary indicator in our attempt to answer this question, we will turn to it when we explore the impact of the protests on expanding leadership, commitment, and building power. Embedded underneath these queries is the question of whether formal organisation is necessary or even helpful for the end goal of shifting power and improving conditions for farm workers.

Returning to the more straightforward question of whether the protest has been turned into an expansion of new participation in formal organisations, thereby strengthening the organisations, the evidence seems to suggest that generally it has not. As a former trade union leader who now works to build collaboration between all the agricultural trade unions in the Western Cape explains, "I think that the seed has been planted and the strike was an eye opener to farm workers and farm dwellers to see that they do have power. The problem is that it did not translate into significant organisation. In fact, it has weakened organisations and that is currently showing itself in the way that farmers are retaliating [against farm workers], even though the farmer recognized that this could happen at any moment" (Interview with Diedritch 2014). In other words, the failure of the protest to translate into more formal organisation may have important consequences for the ability to further transform the industry and create a more equal

balance of power between farm owners and farming communities. We must now turn to the question of "why" this history-making uprising and strike did not lead to expanded organisation.

Why Not—the Farm Owner Backlash

One of the most obvious and potentially straight-forward answers to why the protests did not lead to greater organisation can be found in the backlash from farm owners against farm workers following the strike and protests; many workers and organisers mentioned the harsh reactions of farm owners against farm workers who were involved in the uprising or who joined trade unions during this period. For example, one farmer worker who helped lead the strike on his farm as well as organise the other workers there to join the trade union CSAAWU was dismissed and the farmer has since been trying to evict him and his family from their on-farm house; in the meantime, the farm owner has painted and put in water heaters in all the on-farm houses but refused to do the same for him and another of his co-workers, who were both strike leaders (Interview with Paulsen 2013). This was not an isolated incident, several of the workers who were interviewed who were leaders of the protest had been dismissed since the strike; the small trade union CSAAWU claimed to be dealing with over one hundred terminations related to the strike action (Interview with Swartz 2013). In addition to targeted terminations and evictions, farm owners have refused to re-employ seasonal workers who were involved in the protest. In places like De Doorns and Citrusdal, farm owners have been travelling to neighbouring towns to find new groups of seasonal workers rather than hiring workers from the traditional settlement communities nearby. As one leader of the protest explains, "Since the strike they are now bussing people in from other places and not taking the Citrusdal workers. Even for the fruit, they are not taking local people to work at local places—not from Riverview [the settlement community in Citrusdal where many seasonal workers live]. They are bussing in coloured people from other areas" (Interview with Brink 2013). This fact was verified by farm owners themselves; as previously noted, the wife of a farm owner from De Doorns admitted that many farmers are now using their transport to pick up workers from Worcester rather than re-hiring the normal seasonal workers from Stofland, the settlement located near the town (Interview with Susan 2014). Several workers in De Doorns reported that there have been much higher levels of unemployment in their community the season after the strike; two of the workers interviewed were both strike leaders and seasonal workers who had not been rehired by the farm owners they had previously worked for (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Prins 2013). If this kind of retaliation was not brutal enough, farm owners were also coordinating across different farms to "black list" leaders of the strike from getting new jobs once they were dismissed; as a wife of a farm worker who was dismissed for partaking in the strike explains, "When my husband was looking for new work, the farmer will stop him; when he was trying to work on another farm, the farmer called the farm and told the farmer that he must not hire my husband. He [the farmer] was saying things like 'he is a union man' and he should not give him work and that 'his children must die from hunger'" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

In addition to targeted dismissals and evictions and a refusal to re-hire certain groups of seasonal workers, many farm owners also began a program of increased deductions, charging farm workers for items that they had previously provided for free or at low cost as part of their employment. Many farm owners implemented this new system of deductions after the sectoral determination requiring them to increase the minimum wage from sixty-nine rand per day to one hundred and five rand per day was issued. Many farm workers reported now having to pay rent for their houses, increased costs for electricity, deductions for transport, costs for water, and other fees; workers and organisers reported that even with the increase in the minimum wage, many farm workers—particularly those living on farms—have not seen much of an increase in their take-home pay when these new deductions were subtracted (Interview with Michaels 2014; Mehlo 2013). Farm owners confirmed the implementation of these new deductions; as one farm owner near Robertson explains, "We never charged for housing and provided electricity at sixty percent rate of the cost and now they [farm workers] have to buy their buy their own electricity and pay some level of rent—about four percent [of their pay]" (Interview with De Wet 2014). In addition to these deductions, this backlash included reports of some farm owners moving to a "piece rate" system where farm workers would be held to a certain standard of production and their pay rates linked to this production. One farm owner explains, "If there are five people working next to each other, just because all five came to my truck in Stofland, then I have to pay 105 rand to all of them. But two of these people have done a certain amount but the other three only have done one-half of the others. . . some of these people are new comers and they know nothing about table grape work but now by law I must pay them the moment they get off the truck 105 rand. I don't want those workers and that is why I changed the system after the strike to be piece rate and so that if you have not done good you don't get paid and if they cannot meet the minimum then they must not come back on Monday" (Interview with Knill 2014). This shift to piece work creates greater pressure on farm workers in terms of levels of production and one organiser reports that farm owners, since the protest, have taken a more aggressive attitude toward productivity; he explains, "People are working under more pressure, with farm owners saying 'if you don't want to work to this new level you must leave the farm.' You can see that some of the farm owners are requiring piece work and using even more labour brokers and seasonal workers" (Interview with Michaels 2014).

Finally, as mentioned previously, farm owners, have had some role in supporting—if not orchestrating—a new "alternative" to trade unions or NGOs, the Farm Workers Forum. This Forum, which is meant to serve as a counter weight to discourage farm workers from joining other organisations, is part of a more sophisticated backlash against the kind of confrontational collective action that took place during the strike. As one unionised farm worker explains, "There is a new thing—the Hex River Farm Workers Forum—which is telling workers not to join unions but to join the Forum. It is led by a manager and one of the other workers on the farm but this is a scam. . . they are establishing the Forum as a way around unions" (Interview with FAWU members on 1st Farm 2014). Through mobilisations and marches as well

as designating “representatives” on many farms, farm owners have been helping to provide the appearance of less risky alternatives and to give the sense that they recognize the concerns of farm workers while not supporting the tactics of protest or confrontation. This approach has also created further divisions among the workers about the best course of action going forward (Interview with Jacobs 2013).

When putting all of these elements into a package, we see that the farm owner backlash to the protest included mostly “salt” but some “sugar” as well; through targeted dismissals and evictions along with new deductions and increased insecurity of piece work, farm owners have multiplied the sense of fear and futility, while at the same time providing safer alternatives like the Farm Workers Forum meant to recognise farm workers voices and concerns. When taken together, this backlash has the impact of discouraging further collective action and organisation building; operating in this context, legitimate farm worker organisations had a very difficult time uniting new members and pro-actively focusing on translating the energy of the protest into more structured organisation.

This backlash also means that groups like trade unions are forced to spend much of their time playing defence, working to protect their current members from unfair dismissals and evictions at the expense of trying to engage and develop new members and leaders from the protest. Not only does this defensive work drain resources and time, it also, depending on how trade unions decide to react to these threats, turns the focus of trade unions from more collective issues to individualised grievances that are reliant on a slow, professionalised legal process. Leaders of the trade unions CSAAWU, FAWU, and BAWUSA all mentioned the strain that defending larger numbers of dismissals and evictions were having on their scarce time and resources (Interviews with Swartz 2013; Ndongeni 2013; Pieterse 2013). At the same time, the outcomes of these legal processes and the availability of the unions to represent people had an impact on perceptions and trust of the organisations, thereby impacting their ability to grow. In other words, the primary response to this backlash chosen by most of the trade unions—to rely heavily on protections of the law and the legal process for individual workers—had implications for their ability to translate collective action into organisation; while we will explore these implications later in the chapter, we must also qualify that, while this legalistic approach was a dominant response from many of the trade unions, it was not the only response from most of them.

Regardless of the organisational approach to dealing with the farm owner backlash, there is no question that seeing strike leaders lose their jobs during or after the protest obviously had a chilling effect on efforts at organisational recruitment. The material backlash of pay check deductions—in a way stealing the victory of the dramatically increased minimum wage—built on feelings of futility that struggle and engagement may be pointless. As one farm worker sums up the impact of this backlash, “The union is weaker because some of the members are signing out because people are afraid after the dismissals. And new people don’t want to join. And now everything is the same because our wage goes up but then

the farm owner takes most of it with charges for housing, electricity, and other things. Everything is the same and everyone is scared. And some people still don't have jobs since the strike" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

Why Not—Challenges of Organisational Approach and Identity

While the farm owner backlash created many hurdles to translating the energy and action of the protest into organisation, we must also examine the organisational approaches and roles that some of the primary organisations of farm workers played during and after the protest. Given the limited breadth and depth of this study, we will only able to take a more cursory look at some of the more prominent trade unions, focusing on how their interaction with the protest and protestors might have created impediments or missed opportunities to build organisation out of the collective action of the uprising.

One of the first challenges of translating the energy and participation of the protests into formal organisation revolves around the interaction of expectations, outcomes, and democratic participation. Through the course of the protests, whether by design or more organically, the expectations of the protestors increased, driven at first by victories like at Keurboschkloof Farm and then by the clear articulation of the demand for a dramatic wage increase and the spread of the protest across the region; all of these things provided hope to farm workers that "another life was possible". As we have seen, particularly in De Doorns, trade unions were on the scene of the protests relatively early, generally at the request of leaders of the farm workers who were looking to these unions for guidance and leadership. Leaders like Tony Ehrenreich from COSATU and Nosey Pieterse from BAWUSA, while not having organised or launched the protests, quickly established themselves as the spokespeople of the protestors and were the major players who drove negotiations with the government and farm owners, at least to the degree that farm owners were willing to engage; during this drawn out "negotiations" we begin to hear complaints from strike committee members in De Doorns and from workers in towns outside of De Doorns that there was little input outside this small group of leaders on decisions like when to call the strike off or settlement discussions (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Dube 2014; Ndongeni 2013). Finally, we see an outcome, while quite a large increase in the minimum wage, that is less than protestors were demanding and, particularly given the farm owner backlash, not perceived by many to be as transformative as the high expectations that drove people into the streets.

In other words, the raising of expectations coupled with a settlement short of those expectations without the direct engagement and mandating from workers led to disillusionment with the leadership and organisations seen to be managing the process; high levels of disillusionment make it very difficult to engage workers for the long haul and build more lasting organisation. The very ambitious and clear demand of R150 per day served as a key to raising expectations of workers—fuelling the indignity that comes with comparing the world as it is, with the world as it ought to be and providing not only outrage

but a level of hope that brought workers into the streets at great risk to themselves and their community. While high expectations are a critical link to creating action, settlement and resolution of this type of conflict requires managing these same expectations, particularly if the outcome is less than a total victory. This management of expectations can only be successful—and avoid disillusionment—if workers are engaged in the process at every step, both making decisions and engaging with the reality of negotiations. As one of the De Doorns strike committee members, explains, "The unions signed for the 105 but were supposed to come back and ask the people whether we should accept it or not . . . the problem is that the unions did not involve members and did not consult. When it was just farm workers we were doing that by having two meetings with people every day, reporting to the group and making decisions at the meetings. There was constant communication . . . but during the strike people joined unions and this was the biggest mistake we made. When we joined the unions than they started to control everyone and fight between unions and we would just hear on the TV that the strike was called off or that they wanted us to settle for less than what we wanted" (Interview with Yanda 2013). This same farm worker, who was elected as a vice president of the one of the unions during the strike, went on to resign his membership in that union shortly after the conclusion of the protest.

In addition, most of the organisations involved in the strike were unable or unwilling to develop new grassroots structures capable of more effectively incorporating the voice of those engaged in the protest; the Farm Worker Coalition was one attempt at creating a new structure meant to both coordinate between organisations as well as maintain the direct voice of farm workers in collaboration and decision making; unfortunately, reports seem to suggest that this Coalition had a difficult time convincing full participation from the broad range of stakeholders and avoiding the conflict that came with different approaches to engaging farm workers and the protest (Interview with Wesso 2013). And while De Doorns farm workers initially created a "strike committee" structure that played a key role in coordinating the early protests, this committee played a less important role as more established trade unions and their structures took over.

The question then arises as to why some trade unions and their leadership—particularly prominent organisational leaders from COSATU and BAWUSA—did not seek more active worker mandates and engagement to both help manage expectations and promote greater levels of worker leadership needed for organisational development. While the interviews for this study did not ask that specific question, we can speculate that this kind of deliberative, democratic engagement must have been made more difficult by the pace and intensity of events, unreliable negotiating partners, lack of clear, formal structures and communication pathways, and a multitude of farm worker organisations claiming to both represent the voice of farm workers while also engaging in contestation for membership and status. So while the outcome of the protest in terms of wage increases was quite significant, the extremely high expectations

coupled with a lack of more participatory mandating and engagement led to high levels of disillusionment with these trade unions as the best organisational vehicles for farm workers.

Another challenge that some trade unions had with translating the energy and participation of the protest into greater organisation was the sometimes conflicting analysis of their role in the uprising—active "supporters" of the protest to help amplify and engage greater participation or "mediators" intent on creating the space and processes to resolve the conflict or "protectors" of farm workers seeking to control the protests to ensure that people do not go hungry or get injured; of course these roles are not mutually exclusive of each other, but they do have implications for the kinds of leadership development and organisational engagement that might emerge from the strike. It is important to note at this point, that this analysis, and the one in the above paragraphs, does not apply to all of the trade unions equally who were engaged in the protest; each of the major trade unions has their own characteristics and approaches, but for simplicity purposes this report will talk more generally about some of the organisational challenges before we move to a slightly more specific review of the key organisations.

All the unions that were interviewed for this study—except Sikula Sonke who initially opposed strike action (Wesso 2013)—came out strongly in support of the farm workers work stoppage and their demands for increased wages and improved living conditions. And while most unions also saw this as an opportunity to engage in greater recruitment, there was also an underlying urgency expressed by some unions to bring rapid resolution to the uprising and channel the anger and frustration not into further large scale collective action but into more structural processes of negotiations. As one staff leader of FAWU explains, "Our role was mostly to get meetings with government in all the areas [of the protest] and the organisation of the employers; we were trying to create the space of negotiations. We achieved that environment—with the Department of Labour and the employers and other organisations. Our job was to establish a forum" (Interview with Ndongeni 2013). Some in these same unions expressed a fear that the demands of the workers were too ambitious and unattainable; these leaders were not seeking to manage expectations through democratic processes but rather to lower expectations with the hope of being able to reach settlement more quickly. As one national leader of FAWU explains, "What did we do? We tried to neutralise them [striking farm workers], make them understand that is [the demand for R150 per day] is unreachable. We were trapped in negotiating for the ordinary. . . workers were always telling us . . .this is peanuts to us but we were saying 'no, the way of organising is you can't demand this much'" (Interview with Mbana in Fine 2014). In these ways, some unions almost saw their role as mediating the dispute and finding rapid resolution between the workers and the farm owners and government rather than using the opportunity of the protest for the broad empowerment and leadership development—critical for longer term organisation building—that can often only take place in the midst of ongoing and sometimes conflictual collective action.

Along this same vein, the act of calling the strike off and on at different points throughout the protests, particularly without clear mandates from the workers, seems to have created infighting and some level of disillusionment with unions, particularly the leadership of COSATU. Many of the leaders of the strike in De Doorns and elsewhere indicated that these important decisions were made without their input (Interviews with Prins 2013; Philander 2013); assumingly some of the reason for this lack of in-depth consultation, as mentioned previously, stems from the rapid explosion and spread of the protest coupled with the multitude of groups and organisations involved, making the development of clear structures for decision making difficult. At the same time, there was clearly an effort by COSATU to control and manage the protest.

According to leaders of COSATU and BAWUSA, the rationale for calling off the protests at certain points was to avoid the conflict that might come from further escalation, assumingly speaking to concerns about violence, conflict with the police, and damage to property. In addition, the protests were called off at certain points for fear that farm workers were going hungry and needed to generate some income for basic survival (Interviews with Ehrenreich 2013; Pieterse 2013). Some of these decisions obviously had a strategic component; leaders like Ehrenreich were concerned about demonstrating unity and avoiding a situation where, as the strike dragged on, farm workers might, out of desperation, slowly start returning to work, thereby undermining the negotiating power and pressure that had been built up by the scale of the work stoppage. At the same time, there is a hint of paternalism in this approach to making these important decisions without clear mandates from the strike participants; the instinct to try to protect the workers from some of the most difficult consequences of their collective action removes a level of agency, the right to risk, and a level of learning from the workers themselves. This is not to suggest that leadership and guidance were not warranted, but rather that without proper engagement, decisions from "above" undermined the protestors agency and created a divide between the organisations and protestors; this fed the perception that workers were not "of" these organisations but rather the unions were outside third parties seeking to aide and, in some cases, control the workers. And we saw again groups like COSATU viewing their role as managing conflict rather than escalating participation, particularly when other players like government had failed to effectively intervene. As Ehrenreich explains when describing COSATU's role in the strike and his efforts to call off the strike, "Government has not demonstrated the requisite political will in a really volatile situation to bring an end to the crisis and set a new tone in the industry. . . The situation on the farms got more out of hand and we, as COSATU, were playing the role of trying to calm things down. . . COSATU effectively, in consultation with other organisations, called off the workers' strike, because of an unravelling situation. But COSATU may have lost some credibility to play a role in future militant action—and there will be no bulwark against exploding tensions and agricultural land going up in flames" (Interview in New Agenda 2013).

We also see in Ehrenreich's explanation the distinction between the "workers' strike" and the main trade union federation, as if they have separate purposes or sometimes conflicting interests; of course, in this situation, the strike was not mainly a function of organising by trade unions—at least at its epicentre in De Doorns—so this distinction makes sense. The challenge then for some trade unions was exactly because this was a different kind of protest. Unlike protests that trade unions might have organised previously where "if you want to go on strike you [trade union organisers] first mobilise the workers and meet and meet and meet" (Interview with Ndongeni 2013) this protest was much more explosive, unstructured, and worker driven. More traditional union-led strikes are often about finding settlement in a situation where unions have established leadership, structure, and organisation; this protest, on the other hand, required seizing the energy generated by collective action to build that leadership, structure, and organisation that was either under-developed or did not exist. Yet in their intervention, some trade unions took an approach to management of the protest was more akin to what you might find in a union-driven, centrally coordinated, more top-down leadership model; this approach created resentment among some worker leaders as well as smaller organisations who have their own approaches and decision making processes. In some ways, COSATU in particular seemed to take on a responsibility for the protests that was as much about finding resolution and seeking calm as it was about driving further participation and organisation building.

Finally, the question emerges as to what were the implications for organisation building and the role of trade unions in large scale collective action if the main trade union federation saw itself as the "bulwark against exploding tensions" in the agricultural sector. Even COSATU admitted that trying to play that role—particularly by calling off the strike at different points—cost it, and probably other trade unions, credibility among the more militant worker leaders and smaller farm worker organisations; if trade unions and others were to successfully build greater organisation out of these protests, having the engagement and support of worker leaders and smaller farm worker organisations was critical.

While the scope of this study did not allow for a truly in-depth look at the organisational approaches of the trade unions involved in the protest, a cursory review shows that each of the major unions had slightly different strategic and operational orientation to building power, leadership, and organisation. While each of these basic approaches to organising has its advantages and shortcomings, all of the unions had challenges seizing the opportunity to translate the energy of the "movement moment" into greatly expanded and empowered organisation. The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), while increasing the number of organisers doing recruitment in the area during the protest, took a very traditional, farm by farm approach to organising during and after the protests. Both before and after the protest, their approach was centred on the idea that power is generated primarily through collective bargaining agreements between individual farm owners and the union, with a resulting greater organising focus on permanent and on-farm labour. In this approach, relationships with the farm owners are central to

maintaining organisation and servicing of members; individual protections, education, and enforcement of rights are the primary recruitment vehicles and work of the union (Interviews with Ndongeni 2013; Louw 2014). When compared with the characteristics of the protest and protestors, we can see why this strategic orientation and organisational approach might have missed out on the energy of the protest to grow the union; unlike these organising approaches, the protest involved larger numbers of seasonal workers, was based off-farm in the settlement communities, and was focused on community wide protest and unrest, speaking to issues at the workplace and beyond. And while FAWU had some success with increased recruitment during the protest—partly driven by public advice broadcast by an ANC Minister that farm workers must join unions if they hoped to negotiate for wage increases (Interview with Yanda 2013)—the union was then faced with increasing resignations as farm owners launched their backlash and the union was unable to provide the level of individual service promised during the recruitment drives. As a leader of FAWU explains, "It is like we are putting water in the leaking bucket. You recruit and sign up members and because of poor service—they demand service, service, and service—if we don't give it to them we lose them. And because subscriptions are very low we don't have enough organisers and it is hard to meet all their needs because the farmers can be very brutal" (Interview with Ndongeni 2013). Since the strike, reports are that FAWU has begun to explore slightly different strategies and approaches to organising, including targeting "fair trade" farms where resistance to trade unions by farm owners may be lower based on the conditions of their "fair trade" certification; in addition, the Union has hired an organiser whose exclusive focus is on farm worker organising as opposed to having responsibility for other non-farm worker recruitment (Interview with Jacobs 2014). Yet FAWU leaders interviewed for this study continue to believe that the primary organising strategy is a farm by farm approach; not only does this seem to be unresponsive to the changing nature of the workforce, but, as Du Toit explains, "Farm unions trying to organise farm by farm pit a small group of vulnerable workers against a strong employer" (2014) making the likelihood of success on a larger scale an uphill battle. Facing this unequal balance and an inability to provide a high enough level of "service" has, according to some leaders, led to a loss of credibility and trust amongst farm workers in regards to FAWU (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013). In either case, this more traditional and incremental approach seems to have been a mismatch with the large scale, collective action of the protests; the opportunity for a more exponential organising growth—and sustaining that growth—would seem to have required recognizing the shifting and unique make-up of the protestors and protest and developing a structure and approach that speaks more broadly than individual workers and individual work places.

Turning to more closely examine the BAWSI Agricultural Union of South Africa (BAWUSA) we see similar challenges around increased recruitment and resignations; like FAWU, workers report that BAWUSA engaged in some level of successful recruitment during the protest but then faced large numbers of resignations and some disillusionment, particularly as the farm owners engaged in retaliation against farm workers after the protests. As one organiser from Women on Farms who worked with closely with

farm workers explains, “The trade unions benefited out of the strike and sign up people. BAWUSA was signing up some farm workers during the strike and using the strike committee to sign people up, but now farm works are complaining and complaining and booing and asking ‘where are you now, where are you now that we need you’” (Interview with Jacobs 2013). Yet BAWUSA seems to have had a somewhat different approach to the uprising, which, unlike FAWU, put a heavy emphasis on charismatic leadership in the form of the President of BAWUSA Nosey Pieterse; this leadership and organising approach focused heavily on mobilizing broad, community based anger and on direct action. According to workers, particularly in De Doorns, Pieterse was at the forefront of many of the direct actions and one of the few union leaders to actively encourage escalation of the protests. As one strike leader from De Doorns who was involved in early negotiations with farm owners explains, “The negotiations did not go anywhere but we didn’t know how to tell the people; Nosey just came out and was straight with people that the farmers did not want to listen to us. . . after that people started burning and blocking the roads even more” (Interview with Witbooi 2013). Unlike some of the other unions, BAWUSA under Pieterse’s leadership spoke directly to the energy of the protests and, after establishing himself as a key leader and spokesperson, he directly led some of the more confrontational actions, including being shot repeatedly by rubber bullets during the confrontations with the police. Yet the difficultly of translating this charismatic leadership and energy oriented action into expanded and sustained organisation lies in the challenge of creating effective structure and empowering worker leadership beyond those at the top; BAWUSA did not seem to be able find that balance over the longer term. Pieterse made sure to put himself at the centre of most activities—whether it was constantly being the spokesperson for the protest in the media or having the Union’s conference room decorated with dozens of pictures and newspaper articles featuring himself in different struggles, Pieterse was effective at promoting himself, potentially at the expense of developing the broader leadership required to turn participation in the strike into organisation. In addition, BAWUSA might have held a sort of scepticism in the often slower process of establishing more formal structures because they could be deadening to the real builder of change—action. As Pieterse explains, “What you must never do is take the energy [of the protest] and capture or imprison it and that is what can end up happening with structure; we don’t need too much structure but have to have action and a clear direction of where we want to end up; we are on the battlefield and now we need to coordinate our activities” (Interview 2013). BAWUSA can be seen following through on this approach over a year after the protest; the Union was responsible for leading-- independent of other unions and allies-- a series of strikes on a group of farms almost a year after the protest and also calling for another region wide strike on the one year anniversary of start of the major protests. According to other trade union leaders, this relentless focus on action without proper structures and strategies is damaging the sense of confidence among the workers that is critical for organisation; as one trade union leaders explains, “Currently our momentum is being undermined by the strikes that BAWUSA is doing because they felt like they need to engage in action but they don’t have enough power and the strikes are unprotected so it is destroying a

sense of worker confidence and organisation" (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013). In these ways, BAWUSA's approach to organising seizes the moment but undercuts the structure and leadership development necessary for longer term organisation building.

If we turn now to the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU), we see an organisational approach that is focused on both building a broad social base among farming communities while investing heavily in leadership development among farm workers themselves. This would seem to speak more directly to the nature of the protests in that the approach is focused beyond the workplace, engaging a broader range of the community and a broader range of concerns. The heavy investment in leadership development would also suggest that the union was prepared to empower and expand participation; indeed, of all the unions interviewed, CSSAWU members were, with some exceptions, the most likely to suggest that the union had grown, engaged new leaders, and that growth had not been quickly reversed by resignations after the protest ended. As one organiser explains, "The numbers did increase and more leaders were coming to the forefront who were born out of the strike; we were working with the communities and also working with the farm workers and trying to put this together and come up with a common agenda . . . some of the youth took over the marches and told us we can step aside; that gives me the spirit to go on because having new people involved is really the critical piece" (Interview with Michaels 2014).

At the same time, from the interviews completed with CSSAWU membership and leadership, the majority of CSSAWU members are still on-farm and more permanent workers, while the reach of the union more deeply into the seasonal and migrant workforces was less developed. And the disciplined focus on leadership development—which CSAAWU organisers admitted was often a slow, step-by-step process—may have led them to miss the more radical and transformative opportunities of the moment. As a key leader in CSSAWU explains, "Sometimes it takes very long to deal with immediate expectations of the workers. Because of this, we must build a stronger ideological understanding of the struggle. We must be close and participate and we must build organisation. I know that conditions are bad and people want to change quickly. In agriculture it is not possible to change things quickly and I tell that to workers" (Interview with Swartz 2013). The question then emerges about whether the unexpected "movement moment" of the protest presented an opportunity for leadership and organisational expansion through a different means, on a different trajectory, and on a different scale than was the practice of the union-- did the disciplined approach of the union narrow their opportunities to seize the moment and quickly expand the breadth, depth, and type of membership that might be facilitated by this large scale outburst of collective action. In other words, was it was feasible that, at this moment of uprising, farm workers could "change things quickly" and CSSAWU was held back by its own understandings and expectations of what was probable rather than what was possible?

Coming out of the strike, we see CSAAWU engaging in a series of creative initiatives to expand participation in the union; yet these new initiatives still hold true to the spirit of their general approach to leadership development and member engagement in an in-depth but incremental way. Less than a year after the strike CSSAWU launched their Bicycle Campaign to provide as many bikes as possible to union stewards so that they have transportation to be able to connect with workers on farms around the region; in addition, CSSAWU launched an SMS hotline for farm workers to be able to call in and report labour or other abuses on the farms. In addition, CSSAWU continued expanding their outreach work through the building of Farm Worker Forums (differentiated from the employer aligned Farm Workers Forum mentioned earlier) in towns around the region, bringing together farm workers and community members to build organisation and efforts at change. As mentioned previously, these initiatives are allowing the organisation to slowly expand and build on some of the additional leadership that was identified during the uprising; at the same time, the farm owner backlash is taking heavy toll on the union in terms of time, resources, and activism.

Finally, when looking at Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), we see that the federation played an important and sometimes controversial role in the uprising but is not designed or structured to translate the energy and participation of the protest into organisation. COSATU leadership saw their role as conferring a sense of legitimacy to the action, helping to raise its profile, and bringing COSATU's national political clout to bear; the responsibility for organisation and membership, according to COSATU, lies with the local trade unions and other entities on the ground. At the same time, there was some suggestion from COSATU that formal organisation or membership is not critical to building power and making change; as a leader of COSATU explains, "Farmers have learned that actual membership numbers do not really matter. . . what scared them is that workers can rise up so quickly and have organisation without membership. The decisive action in the Western Cape showed what is possible" (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013). The challenge with this approach of seizing the moment without organisation can be seen in the outcome since the protests, where farm owners through their own campaign are able to claim back much of the increase in the minimum wage while dismissing, evicting, and refusing to re-hire many of the activists in the protest. In this way, COSATU's approach to the coordination and mobilisation from above may make it more difficult to translate the protest into organisation and hold on to any gains that are achieved through action.

Following the strike, COSATU initiated a Section 77 Notice of Possible Protest Action—including the possibility of a nation-wide farm workers strike—to the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC); this would allow, after a mediation process involving labour, government, and employers, for further work stoppages to be protected, meaning that workers who participated could not legally be dismissed. This is obviously an effort to escalate the level of participation in collective action and to put pressure on the government and employers to take more significant action to transform the

agricultural sector (Ehrenreich 2013). The challenge is that while COSATU is driving this process, there seems to be little mobilisation or organisation around this approach among organisations of farm workers on the ground; very few organisers, leaders, and members of other trade unions mentioned this initiative during interviews and when they did, it was mostly in passing and when prompted. There is certainly a legitimate debate to be had about whether it is important or not to translate the energy and participation of the protest into organisation; but if one assumes that organisation is important, then COSATU was effective at helping to shape and, in some cases, amplify the level of participation but did not act effectively to help transition that participation into organisation.

When looking at the different trade union structures that were involved in the protest, we see a range of challenges that each one faced in finding the right balance between action and organisation, between capturing and amplifying the energy of the moment with leadership development and establishing effective structure, and between providing leadership from above with empowering workers on the ground to make their own decisions. Added to these challenges were the debates about strategy; while there was a range of ideas shared by unions about how farm workers and their allies might build the power to win change—from further strikes, to boycotts, to dividing good farm owners from bad farm owners, to bringing international ethical production standards to bear, to using union investment funds to pressure super markets to pay more for products —there was no effective organisational structure that seemed to allow for a master tactic or coordinated approach to emerge across organisations (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013; Swartz 2013; Dietrich 2014; Andrews 2013; Jacobs 2014; Ndongeni 2013). At least in part from these challenges, the emergence of more formal organisation out of the protest was, except for on a small scale and in specific locations, mostly thwarted.

While each trade union faced its own challenges in seizing the moment of the protest to build organisation, a more collective challenge also emerged in how most unions defined themselves to workers in their organising efforts. When asked to define the role of their union, most organisers responded by explaining that they were there to provide service to the members and protect them in the case of unfair treatment; this was a definition of the union as a fee-for-service model of service delivery, where professional staff provide solutions for individual workers (Interview with Louw 2014; Pieterse 2013; Jacobs 2014). This approach to organising, particularly among farm workers and in the face of an intense employer backlash, created several challenges for unions trying to build organisation out of the protest.

Firstly, this approach individualised the challenges and individualised the choices to join the union; this approach was a mismatch when held up against the experience of the protest, where problems were collectivised and the choice to participate was also a collective decision and collectively enforced. In addition, this approach was bound to lead, as previously discussed, to a level of disillusionment with unions, as they were unable to keep up with the number of cases and incidents when faced with an

orchestrated back lash of dismissals, evictions, and other issues by farm owners; and because this model of organising also forces the workers to rely on the support of an outside professional organiser, it can be disempowering to workers, who are unable to act on their own in the face of immediate problems. As a leader of the trade union federation explains, "Union membership numbers rose during the protest, but are now declining because union are not able to deliver the services they promised workers, especially facing the huge push back from farmers" (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013).

And even in situations where union staff were able to take up the grievances of workers, they would turn to the somewhat slow, bureaucratic and individualised process of using the CCMA and other legal mechanisms to try to protect workers and win reinstatement. As mentioned previously, unions spent tremendous time and resources focused on these individual cases , both detracting from their ability to engage in further recruitment or leadership development and taking the struggle away from the "fields" or "settlements" and into the "courtrooms". This is not to suggest that supporting and protecting these workers was not critical and/or that winning these cases doesn't helps build confidence among the broader work force, but rather it focuses the energy of the moment away from the more direct action, confrontation and collective activity that characterized the uprising. This approach also suggests a completely different source of power and strategy than the one that facilitated mass collective action—namely that workers have power by operating within the legal system rather than using their collective strength to operate on the outer edges of it.

The most important question may be how did this specific approach to organising impact the less formal structures of organisation—particularly in De Doorns-- that had made the protest possible in the first place; rather than facilitating the translation of that informal organisation-- which had been so successful in some places-- into more formal and lasting structures, the union's organising approach convinced workers to replace it with a disempowering and ultimately unsuccessful alternative. As one activist who participated in a panel of stakeholders from the agricultural sector convened to better understand the protests explains, "The approach of the trade unions literally destroyed the organic nature [of the protest]; they brought in a hierarchical structure . . . and a focus on the outside organiser and work place based structure—the person who organises now gets paid to bring people into the union—this was a professionalization and reliance on outsiders . . . the trade union was to come in and dominate but they [workers] could immediately see the difference in unions coming in and taking over . . . the workers wanted help but the kind of help they needed was not the kind that trade unions provided" (Interview with Kleinbooi 2013).

If we step outside the mechanics of these organising approaches, we also see that the trade unions had challenges aligning the identity of their organisations with the changing identity of the work force. As we have discussed in earlier chapters, the make-up of the work force itself was becoming more seasonal with higher numbers of migrant workers; this meant, at least partially, that the work force was also made

up of greater numbers of black, African workers and workers who may have spent some time being exposed to life and work outside of the rural areas. Given the more urban and black, African tradition of the trade union movement more generally in South Africa, these changes should have created not only the greater willingness and likelihood of collective action taking place but also a greater likelihood that this uprising could be translated into forms of organisation more familiar to this changing workforce-- like trade unions. At the same time, none of the trade unions interviewed identified special programs or approaches in their function, mechanics, or organising to speak to the different needs of these seasonal workers or immigrant workers, like the larger numbers of Zimbabweans now working in the rural areas. In fact most of the trade unions went out of their way to emphasise that they treat all workers the same without any distinction or, more importantly, without recognition; as a leader of FAWU explains, "Seasonal and permanent workers are the same thing . . . our constitution treats all workers the same and we don't make any distinction in our recruitment or approaches" (Interview with Ndongeni 2013). The challenge is that to build lasting organisation among this changing workforce requires recognition of these different identities and an adaptation of the form, structure, and values of the organisation to speak to and be "of" these workers. As Janice Fine, an academic and former organiser who examined some of these dynamics on the Western Cape explains, to build the kind of union presence and organisation that can really shift conditions for farm workers requires that ". . . the union would have to take seriously the different identities and interests within the workforce, to develop an agenda that spoke to these different needs and to facilitate the kind of relationship-building and democratic deliberation that durable solidarity requires" (2014).

The issue of how farm workers perceive themselves also has implications for the ability to institutionalise their resistance and collective action; the nature of the protest itself—whether it was an expression of anger around working conditions on the farms or a broader expression of primarily black anger at lack of services and political voice—has important implications for if and what kind of organisation might emerge after the protests. As Du Toit explains, "What remains afterwards [after the protest] is partially determined by the type of protest; it is much harder to institutionalise this thing when only part of your identity is farm worker and where you have many other jobs or identities. If you are a full time, year round autoworker than joining the union makes complete sense. If you are a farm worker for four months of the year and have another identity and even another town, it may not make sense to institutionalise worker organisation" (2014). This dynamic is of particular importance given that the protest action was initiated and led in many towns by seasonal farm workers; besides the logistical challenges of building organisation among a more temporary work force, workers themselves may not see the sense in investing their time, effort, or resources in a more formal and lasting organisation when they exist in a situation and identity that are, in some ways, more transient and fluid. More specifically, most of the trade unions engaged in the protest spoke primarily to work place conditions and concerns, with some additional focus on living conditions on farms; this may have created an organisational mismatch with the

broader participation, focus, and outcry of the protestors themselves. Some would argue that the protest had a more community uprising quality that spoke not just to conditions on farms but to the broader challenges of conditions and lack of a voice for the rural poor and settlement communities. Which struggle organisers might be trying to institutionalise may be a key determinant in what kind and form of organisation might have had any chance of success in emerging out of the energy and participation of the protest; trade unions, the primary membership organisations that engaged in the protest and tried to create organisation out of it, may have been proven, as currently designed and oriented, to be the wrong fit.

The question then emerges as to what kind of organisation might have had a better chance of emerging out of the protests; what kind of organisation could more effectively provide the kind of structure, strategy and organisation that broadened participation rather than narrowed it? In other words, what kind of organisation might have more closely reflected the content, character and identity of the protest and protestors in such a way as to empower and enable from below without the need to control from above? Ronald Wesso, an organiser with the Surplus People's Project who was involved in the protests, points to the organisational structure of what he calls the "farm worker committees"—the more informal structures that emerged particularly in De Doorns to help launch the protest—as important innovations in organisation among the changing agricultural workforce. These structures were set apart from trade unions or NGO structures in a number of ways. They were locally based which allowed for meeting and communication without the need for transport. The "members" of these structures included seasonal workers, migrant workers, and even the unemployed. These groups did not get outside funding or rely on employers to deduct subscriptions; while this meant they had significantly less resources than some outside groups, they were also able to appeal to community members directly for contributions and have direct control over these resources. The groups had open organisational structures meaning that the broader community in the informal settlements could participate in meetings and help shape the actions and activities. Along with this was a relative lack of formal hierarchy which allowed for the more "natural" leaders to emerge while developing a broader sense of shared responsibility. There were no paid staff, which meant that decision-making and action were all dependent on participants taking some level of responsibility and building accountability to each other; the lack of paid staff also helped avoid the professionalization of the struggle and reliance or dependency on outsiders. Finally, these groups were not formally registered as non-profit organisations or trade unions, meaning that they were excluded from the legal approaches and processes that are meant to channel conflict and action into negotiations and consultations (Wesso 2013).

If we compare these more informal structures to the more formal structures of the trade unions that intervened in the protest, we see that the approaches and structures of the two organisational models are almost opposites of each other. These more informal structures organically reflect the changing make-up

of the workforce and the growth of settlement communities as the centre of farm worker and rural community life; they also reflect the need—simply out of necessity—to empower participants around collective issues and avoid the reliance on sometimes disempowering legal and consultative processes in favour of direct action. Maybe most importantly, these approaches recognize more explicitly—again out of simple necessity—that the power of farm workers and their allies comes from their ability to disrupt both production and the basic functioning of the rural communities on a large scale and in collective ways, rather than on a farm by farm basis which pits less powerful, small groups against an entire system and history rigged against them. As Wesso explains, "The organisational structure [of the farm worker committees] allowed for the unmediated and therefore unmuted expression of the desires and views of the most exploited and angry sections of the workers. This was why the farm worker committees were so successful in initiating, spreading, and sustaining the strike. There was no waiting on organisers, no obeying office bearers, no negotiations, and no following of official rules and procedures. The structure of farm worker committees facilitated the direct expression of rebellion of seasonal and later also permanent workers. . ." (2013).

The question then emerges as to why these more informal structures did not seem to emerge from the protests as the primary and on-going vehicles for farm worker empowerment and participation. It is worth noting that this question is most relevant for the area of De Doorns as opposed to other places where the protest spread; as described in an earlier chapter, many of these other towns launched their protests via small but more formal core of activists involved in trade unions or community based organisations. Very likely, the most important reason these structures did not emerge on any scale out of the protest is because better resourced and experienced organisations intervened and workers were encourage to channel their participation through those more formal structures; as has been pointed out previously, workers both wanted more "experienced" outside help and everyone from national government ministers to farm owners to local elected officials encouraged workers to turn to and join trade unions if they wanted to achieve their demands (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Prins 2013; Hannekom 2013; Paulsen 2013). Beyond this, there are open questions about the ability of these kinds of more informal organisational structures to achieve the broad and regional coordination necessary to sustain large scale collective action; the local nature of these structures which makes them so relevant and effective in engaging broad elements of their local community may pose challenges for coordination across the Western Cape. As referenced earlier, we see that the development of the Farm Worker Coalition during the strike was one attempt at trying to maintain local control while promoting greater collaboration and coordination; while this Coalition did mostly maintain participation from farm worker committees, there were also challenges of infighting among the various groups that made coordination sometimes challenging (Wesso 2013).

In addition, there is the question about the sustainability of these more informal groups and their ability to draw on different kinds of resources needed for different moments; with their primary weapon being direct action, disruption, and mutual support, how would these groups have collaborated to bring other resources necessary to not only win but hold on to, monitor, and implement these gains. This is not to say that these groups could not have developed those skills or resources but rather, as described in their current form, these would be areas for development after the moment of mass collective action has passed. Unfortunately, we do not have evidence about whether this development and evolution was possible because these informal structures were mostly "replaced" by more formal organisations, which then faced their own challenges in adaptation and sustainability.

Finally, as Wesso points out, these farm worker committees were not in a position to be co-opted by the negotiations because their informal nature and lack of registration located them outside of this paradigm and process. And this could clearly be a strength in that their grassroots organising approach, mass collective action tactics, and community based structures are, in many ways, outside the experience of their opposition (farm owners) yet inside the experience of many of their constituents, particularly the changing groups that make up the agricultural workforce (Alinsky 1971). But being located outside of these processes and paradigms, also makes finding resolution challenging, even if the opposition is willing and interested in settlement. We see that in De Doorns, the challenge of "who" to negotiate with (along with, of course, the willingness of the farm owners to negotiate with certain parties) created some levels of confusion and even conflict within the more informal strike committee; the question is still outstanding about whether, if more formal organisations had not taken over the negotiations process, farm owners and strike committee members would have been forced to figure out how to interact and find resolution more directly (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Witbooi 2013).

In either case, underlying the debate about organisational structures is the question of the amount of formal organisation that is necessary in the agriculture sector for winning improvements. Wesso believes that some organisers tend to exaggerate the level of formal organisation necessary for change, citing the protest as an example of tens of thousands being mobilized for action with very little formal organisation; he believes that, in some ways, the lack of tightly controlled membership based structures allows for groups to engage a broader array of issues and constituencies when the energy and urgency emerge (Interview with Wesso 2013). Tony Ehrenreich, the Western Cape Provincial Secretary of COSATU and a leader of the action, also believes that the protest demonstrates that formal, organisational membership is not a critical measure of power. At the same time, he highlights the idea that more formal, membership based organisations may play an important role outside of mobilising and enabling action. As he explains, "The reality shows that membership based organisations are not necessary to win big. Yet they are desirable because this is not just about action, but about playing a bigger role in longer term transformation" (Interview with Ehrenreich 2013). The reaction of the farm owners after the protest and

increase in the minimum—refusing to rehire protestors, increasing deductions from workers' pay, dismissing and evicting strike leaders—all suggest that implementing and sustaining any gains requires some kind of sustained and ongoing engagement beyond the direct action of the protest. Whether that is best achieved through more formal membership based organisation or informal organisation focused on further action is an open question that we will return to in a later chapter.

New Opportunities—Confidence, Shifting Narratives, and Leadership

While the question of if and what type of organisation is best suited to carry the struggle of farm workers forward remains unresolved, the evidence seems to be clear that the outcome of the protest did not result in the development of significantly larger levels—higher numbers of participants—in formal organisation. We must then ask whether the protest produced other, maybe less measurable and obvious, outcomes around leadership, activism, opportunity and power. Firstly, many of the interviewees seem to suggest that the protest created a greater level of "confidence" among farm workers; the act of seeing and participating in an unprecedented display of overt, confrontational, and collective action allowed farm workers to gain a new confidence in themselves to confront the injustice they face. As one organiser explains, "There is no doubt in my mind that the strike gave us confidence; it showed the workers that farmers are not invincible, the system is not invincible, and gave confidence to the workers" (Interview with Swartz 2013). Given the history of paternalism and dominance in the farming community in the Western Cape, establishing this new level of confidence was seen by some organisers as a key breakthrough in allowing for the possibility of further action and organisation down the road. When considering his role in managing the strike, Tony Ehrenreich from COSATU explains, "The strike had to be managed in a manner that gave workers confidence in their power. This was the first action of this nature in the agricultural sector" (Interview in New Agenda 2013). And while some interviewees reported that the farm owner backlash and infighting has undermined some of this confidence, there seems to be some general consensus that the protest demonstrated that it is possible for farm workers to engage in collective action and make progress; as one farm worker explains, "We learned that if we didn't stand up we would never have won the one-hundred and five rand per day; we saw the importance of standing together and that we can do it, even if it had never really been done before" (Interview with Sambo 2014). Confidence or a sense of hopefulness and possibility is an important prerequisite for mobilizing further non-violent action and building organisation.

Along with this increased confidence, the protest allowed workers to highlight their living and working conditions for the world to see, taking these concerns and putting them into the national discussion. This was a meaningful achievement not just because it drew more attention and urgency to tackling these issues from groups like government, but also because it helped legitimize farm worker demands and bring them to the forefront within the workers' own communities. Legitimizing these demands for change allows for a greater level of urgency around the need for further action and participation. As one

organiser explains about how this process has impacted her own union, "The union is in a stronger position because we have brought our demands alive through action and not just talk. And we have put more of our blood into those demands" (Interview with Luckett 2013). There is also a political significance to this achievement in that it opens up more space for honest discussion and intervention by decision makers; no longer can key agents of power very easily write an alternative narrative about the conditions and sentiments of farm workers and the rural poor in the Western Cape. As a leading academic who has studied the agricultural sector of the Western Cape for years explains, "The political significance [of the protest] is that it gave the lie to the opposition's narrative that the Western Cape exists in tranquil deference to the rural order of old. There is the notion among Western Cape elite whites that black anger is urban. This protest exposes the deep resentment and political anger. It only took a spark and then it flared up" (Interview with Du Toit 2014). In these ways, there is some suggestion that while organisational strength may not have made dramatic increases, there is the possibility that the uprising began to shift power and create public urgency around farm worker conditions through exposing the injustices and causing disruption to the existing narrative.

The protests also had the effect of focusing the underlying anger of the rural communities in a unifying away—at least among the rural poor. We have seen in the past that the underlying anger and resentment among the rural poor can find voice in many different forms; sometimes the anger can get turned inward, causing conflict between the rural poor as we saw with the xenophobic attacks that took place in De Doorns in 2009. The most recent farm worker protests helped to shape the focus of this anger, creating a narrative not about divisive conflict between the poor but about common sources of poverty and inequality brought on by unequal distribution of wealth between farm owners and farm workers. This transformed understanding and focus would seem to create greater opportunities for organisation and organising across the different "groupings" in the rural communities. Returning to one farm worker's explanation from an earlier chapter we see that during the protest many workers felt that "the people were all united—Zim, Lesotho, coloured, Xhosa speaking. Everyone was united and willing to die for the project. I was willing to give my neighbour something that he doesn't have. The strike brought back all the struggle culture of the 1980s. . . we were all united against the farmers and they must pay us more" (Interview with Yanda 2013). Unfortunately, we must note that after the strike and protest, some of the divisions among workers re-emerged, at least in some places. More specifically, the perception that immigrants—Zimbabweans in particular-- undermined the work stoppage by working during the strike and then undercutting the wage demands of the other workers gained traction amongst some workers. In a potentially scary sign, one group of South African workers who were interviewed suggested they were planning to target these Zimbabweans like they did in 2009 (Interview with FAWU members at 1st Farm 2014). Yet this dynamic did not appear in any interviews outside of De Doorns, with most other workers indicating their excitement that they witnessed so much unity across different groupings during the protests.

In addition to improving worker confidence, creating urgency and legitimacy around conditions of farm workers, and helping to shift the narrative on the Western Cape, the protest developed more work place and community based leadership. Workers who were interviewed for this study all described the intense amount of work that went into mobilising and organising their co-workers and community allies for the protests; most of them had never been involved in a protest on this scale and with this level of conflict and intensity. From learning how to write and develop demands, to coordinating protest action, to dealing with the police, to strategizing and reporting back, workers were filled with stories about the mechanics of making the protest work and motivating co-workers (Interviews with Dube 2013; Philander 2013, Mehlo 2013; CSSAWU activist members 2014; FAWU members at 2nd Farm 2014). Because of the scale of the protests and the explosive nature of their emergence and spread, farm workers themselves—as opposed to professional organisers—had to take real and often independent leadership; as one female farm worker explains, "I am now much more prepared, have more experience, and have more information . . . next time we as women are prepared and are going to lead the strike" (Interview with Prins 2013). Ronald Wesso from Surplus People's Project, who has done research and interviews with farm workers after the strike, confirms this notion of expanded leadership, even if organisations are not significantly larger. As he explains, "I think that there is more leadership and some people are much stronger and more confident in their ability. SPP [Surplus People's Project] has been working in this area a long time and we have never seen this before—this has changed the notion of what is possible and developed more leaders" (Interview 2013).

The question of whether the protest has significantly altered relationships and power dynamics on the farms is still an open question. Tony Ehrenreich from COSATU seems to suggest the protest "forever changed the industrial relations environment on the farms" (Interview in New Agenda 2013) but it is hard to know exactly what he means when he says that. Many farm workers who were interviewed seemed to suggest that on an individual basis, the strike has not shifted their relationship with the farm owner in a positive direction or led to any sort of mutual respect or cooperation, even if it has made the farm owners more wary of what farm workers are capable of. As one farm worker explains, "The farmers are more scared of us which is good but there hasn't been any real change in how they treat us" (Interview with Draghoender 2013). As another worker explains, "It is still very difficult to work under this farm owner and there is no relationship between worker and farmer. When you see this man [farm owner] you get angry because everything you fight for is still the same. He is still the baas [boss] . . . the farmers do not treat us differently so in that way nothing has changed" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

In this way, the nature of the protest and how it was conducted may not have been effective at confronting the power of the farm owners themselves; so while the confrontation and conflict in the settlements and streets forced the government to act, the protestors never confronted the farm owners directly through face to face negotiations or shifted the power dynamic that exists day-to-day on the

farms. And, as previously discussed, the power dynamics that exist on the farm are one of the key impediments to building any kind of work place based organisation. This failure or inability to confront the farm owners directly was one of the big disappointments of the protest as articulated by some of the organisers. As one organiser explains, "One feature of the strike that we have to change is the fact that farmers were not forced to appear as the people that farm workers should be negotiating with. . . because we have to change the power relations, not only on the street but right there on the farms. When you can sit opposite the boss this is more transformative, but they did not really appear as it was mostly the Minister or Labour and their lawyers with the policy and the public face of the strike was the police. This is why there is so much backlash and inability to deal with issues by the farm workers themselves" (Interview with Andrews 2013). By relying on the government to force action through the sectoral determination process, farm workers never got the chance to bargain as equals with farm owners and reach agreement based on shared consent. This lack of transformation was further driven home to this same organiser and leader when she witnessed a meeting between farm owners and shop stewards facilitated by the CCMA several months after the protest; as the farm owners were arriving for the meeting she saw that farm workers were forced to ride in the back of the bakkies, in some cases with the dogs, even if there was an empty seat in the front cab. To her, this was a vivid display of how, even with the strike, the fundamentals of the relationship between farm owners and farm workers have mostly not been transformed; as Du Toit makes clear when discussing these power relationships on the farm, "Burning tires in the street is a very different calculation [for a farm worker] than taking direct action against the farm owner" (Interview 2014). This dynamic appears to be the case even after this unprecedented strike and protest.

Finally, when asking workers if the protest was a "victory" or not, interviewees responded with a wide range of answers from very positive to very negative about the consequences of the protest; in many cases, there was even conflict on this question within a single individual herself. Many interviewees were clear that they would never have achieved the increase in the minimum wage without the work of the protest. At the same time, the backlash by farm owners led many to say that they were not particularly better off materially. Yet, only a few of the farm workers interviewed said the strike was a mistake and most indicated a certain pride at participating in something that most people thought was undoable in the agricultural sector. We can get a sense of the conflicted nature and interpretation of the outcomes from a sampling of worker responses to the question of whether they thought the strike was a victory. As one worker explained, "For me it was a victory. It was the first time in history that farm workers stand up for our rights. Even though we didn't win the one-fifty [rand per day] we won one hundred and five [rand per day] . . . the farmers are now more afraid and saw our power and what we can do" (Interview with Appollis 2014). Or as another farm worker explains in linking the protest to future generations, "For me the strike was a victory. I am not ashamed. We won a fifty percent increase. My children must grow up and if they decide to work on the farm than maybe by then because of our fight the salary will be three

hundred rand per day" (Interview with Paulsen). On the flip side, there were some workers and organisers who felt like the protest was a failure. As one community organiser who was a farm worker himself and lives in De Doorns explains, "The strike was a failure. We won the one-hundred and five [rand per day] but the conditions on the farms are worse. The farmers have managed to overpower the workers and right now if you are a seasonal worker you are afraid to say anything because you are nothing. . . if you talk you lose your job. I think the farmers are more united than the workers" (Interview with Marowmo 2014). Or as another farm worker near Robertson explains, "The things that we strike for are still not better. . . there is nothing, no togetherness. The water the farmer gives us is dirty and stinks and the farmers do not look at us any differently. Nothing has changed. Farmers are more difficult than ever" (Interview with Erumas 2014).

While the above quotes reflect an either positive or negative view of the protest, the more common response was conflicted, weighing the material gains and losses as well as the shifting of power and perceptions between farm workers and farm owners. As one worker explains, "It was a victory because there is a difference in our salaries but we still want the one-fifty [rand per day]. . . the farmer's attitude has not changed and they have taken some things away from people. And now the farmer sets high targets [for production] and you cannot even go to the toilet or can't even eat but have to meet the target if you want to get paid. . .and there is no unity among farm workers after the strike" (Interview with FAWU members 1st Farm 2014). Or as a seasonal worker from De Doorns explains, "The strike was both good and bad—the strike was good because we stood up and they had to listen to us but bad things came out after the strike. That is why I am sitting around now because they do not want to hire me. Evictions have increased. . . farmers are fighting back in their own ways" (Interview with Prins 2013).

In addition, for places where coordinating units were at the centre of mobilisation, positive or negative interpretations of the outcome had important implications for translating the energy and participation of the protest into expanded organisation. As one leader of the Citrusdal Farm Workers and Farm Dwellers Forum—the organisation which led the mobilization in Citrusdal—explains, "More people are connected to the Farm Worker Forum after the strike, but their experience with the strike might have also pushed them farther away. People thought that the strike would change things overnight but some things have not changed or gotten worse—like now there are deductions for rent or transport or the farmer no longer lets you use his water for your own vegetables. Some of them [farm workers] don't think that we are the organisation that can bring the revolution and are drifting away. It might be that our Farm Worker Forum is getting smaller" (Interview with Brink 2013). Alternatively, positive interpretations of the outcomes create new opportunities for organisation building; as one farm worker and member of CSAAWU from the Robertson area explains, "The union has grown stronger and more people want to join. Workers saw that we won the one-o-five and made the farmer see what we are capable of doing when we stand together. If there is another strike people will join and on my farm people see that we proved our point to

the bosses" (Interview with Shirleen 2014). In other words, the success of future organisation building depends somewhat on how farm workers interpret the outcomes—both materially and in terms of balance of power-- of collective action.

In conclusion, it appears as if the energy and participation of the protest has not translated into new or significantly expanded organisation. When trying to understand why this might be the case, we saw first and foremost an intense employer backlash against farm workers; farm owners have succeeded in increasing the levels of fear through targeted dismissals and evictions and refusing to re-hire activist seasonal workers while at the same time stealing any sense of victory from the increased minimum wage by imposing greater deductions from pay checks, and, in some places, moving to a more rigid, performance based piece rate system. At the same time, the many of the organisations most likely to organise farm workers—particularly trade unions-- took a somewhat ineffective approach to interaction and organisation during the protest, building a sense of disillusionment and cynicism about their ability to be effective, address collective and individual issues, and be "of" the workers they were helping to organise. The instinct of many of the unions to "mediate", "protect", and "control" rather than engage, empower, and support farm workers meant that they faced great challenges in mixing the energy of the movement moment with the right structures and strategies of organisation building. In addition, these trade unions may have faced an "identity mismatch" where the changing needs of a changing workforce may not have been aligned with the services, functions, and identities of the union as an organisation. And while the protest has mostly not be translated into organisation, there is some sense of possibility based on increased confidence of workers, newly developed leadership, and a much more prominent place in the national discussion for the conditions facing farm workers. The ongoing outcomes and interpretations of the uprising of late 2012 and early 2013 will play some role—along with the willingness, capacity, and creativity of farm worker organisations to transform themselves or create space for new approaches—in determining whether these seeds of possibility might be converted into a more significant transformation of power relationships and material conditions in the Western Cape.

Chapter 6

Theoretical Tools to Help Us Engage Our Three Questions

When answering our three questions of "why now", "how did the protest spread", and "has the protest and participation turned into organisation" the findings can turn to a set of theoretical tools and debates that may help us better understand this uprising. The previous three chapters make the overarching argument that the transformation of the fruit and wine farming communities of the Western Cape, driven by both global and local forces, has created greater insecurity for many workers while at the same time providing new opportunities for organising and collective action. Yet the emergence of this collective action may take on its own form and character, relying on a set of stories, structures, and strategies that are less easily translated into the existing and more traditional social movement organisations of the region; as Campbell explains, ". . . contemporary transformations in capitalist production shape and make possible *certain forms* of struggle" (citing Hardt and Negri 2001).

In this chapter, the report will explore competing theoretical approaches about how and why these forms of collective action emerge, notions of "spontaneous" collective action, and the types of power exercised by participants in these movement moments. By exploring these issues one can then better understand what could possibly emerge out of the farm worker protests, and, as importantly, what role, if any, organisation and leadership might play in strengthening and sustaining these attempts at transformation from below.

Movement Theory

Social movements are defined by collective action. More specifically, social movements engage in forms of collective action that use non-institutional channels to press for a set of demands; these demands, and the action that develops to express them, help to formulate a group or social category (Jelin in Ballard et al. 2005). In other words, social movements—"politically and/or socially directed collectives"—are made up of individuals acting collectively to challenge those who hold power (Ballard et al. 2005). This description would suggest that for the poor to change a social, political, or economic system requires a shift in power that can only be achieved through the collective mobilization of resources that are not possessed by any individual of the group.

Following on the above notion, and the idea that the powerful are not likely to concede their power easily, the farm worker protest falls into the arena of collective action that is contentious in nature. "Contentious" collective action occurs when ". . . actors make collective claims on other actors, claims which, if realized, would affect the actors' interest. . ." (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 1996).

There are different core theories which seek to understand how social movements and collective action emerge and function. Classical collective-behaviour theory presents the notion that social movements are relatively spontaneous and unstructured; actors are portrayed as irrational, driven by high levels of strain, and operating outside the normal constraints of routine life. This theory de-emphasizes the role of organizations or structure, except in so far as organizations emerge during the course of the movement (Morris in Killian 1984).

Along these same lines, breakdown theory posits that collective action emerges when the mechanisms of social control lose their restraining power. In this framework, participants in collective action must be liberated from the moral and physical boundaries which have been deployed by the broader society (Useem 1998). Unlike many other theories of collective action, breakdown theory suggests that participants might have weak networks and diffuse collective identity often caused by the breakdown in societal structures or institutions of stability. Breakdown theorists stress the distinction between "routine" collective action and "non-routine" collective action; the former consists of peaceful protest, rallies, or political mobilization while the latter involves rebellion, riots, or collective violence. Breakdown theory attempts to explain incidents of non-routine collective action (Useem 1998).

Breakdown theory would seem to be a useful theoretical tool for understanding the farm worker protests; as we have discussed in the chapter exploring why the protests happened when they did, we see one of the key mechanisms of social control—the paternalistic social construction defined by "an 'organic' conception as the farm as a family, with the farmer occupying a central position of unchallengeable authority" and which "smothers any possibility of resistance" (Du Toit 1993)—breaking down. More accurately, we see a constant re-negotiation of this social construction with some elements of a sort of "neo-paternalism" emerging, where power relations on farms are characterised by both the old construction of farm owner dominance mediated by other sources of power like regulation, legislation, and the transformation of production driven by international standards (Du Toit & Ewert 2005). In a more recent study of this shifting social construction on Western Cape farms, Walters explains, "I observed remnants of the traditional paternalistic relationships on the farms, and I also witnessed how this relationship has changed. This change could be related to farms now becoming more business-oriented within an international market, and becoming compliant to both national and international requirements for export" (2012). Of course, the most important re-negotiation or breakdown of this social construction has been driven by the transformation to a more seasonal and off-farm workforce; in addition, this shift breaks down the physical boundaries or isolation that was a second key mechanism of social control when most workers lived on-farm. In these ways, workers and their dependents in the broader community have been slowly liberated from the major impediments to overtly and collectively expressing their anger and frustration at living and working conditions.

In addition, the re-negotiation of paternalistic construction and slow shift away from the dominance of on-farm labour, in a strange way, served to remove one of the few institutions of social stability, namely the social support provided to on-farm labour by the farm owner. As Du Toit explains, "This [paternalistic] relationship brought some advantages for workers: it institutionalised the farmers' obligations, and probably lessened the degree of naked exploitation and brutality that existed. But it also brought dependence and vulnerability" (1993). Under the more traditional paternalistic system, the obligations between farm owner and farm worker extended beyond wage payments into the broader social relations of the community; as the paternalistic paradigm shifts, these obligations are breaking down. Post 1994, the new South African government aimed to fill this gap with social supports and regulation aimed at empowering workers. Yet the emergence of service delivery protests in some areas—particularly in De Doorns—would seem to reinforce the notion that the government was unable to fill this gap or, more accurately, provide social stability in the context of increased expectations and transformation in the broader society. Interestingly, it was these same service delivery protests that, at least partially, allowed for a set of protest tactics or repertoires to emerge among rural communities that were collective and confrontational in nature, while targeting the state as the key actor for change; in other words, the lack of impeding social constructions and institutions of stability not only allowed collective action to emerge and amplified grievances but also helped shape the type of collection action.

As one farm owner summarized this breakdown "Seasonality caused this 'disaster'—all those new people sitting up there in those settlements—which just keep getting bigger and bigger-- with nothing to do for much of the year" (Interview with De Wet 2014); for him the expansion of "seasonality" and "settlements" and "new people" was a visible demonstration of the breakdown of the old order—the re-negotiation of the relationship between farm workers and farm owners, the shifting spatial arrangement of rural communities, and the changing make-up of the work force. In this way, the transformation of the agricultural sector and its production processes, creates a new "sociology of instability" (Du Toit & Ewert citing Campbell and Lawrence 2002) which both loosens the social constructions that limit the possibilities of collective and confrontational action while creating, in some ways, an intensification of the grievances and precarity driven by poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

While some of the key mechanisms of social control are shifting in the Western Cape, breakdown theory seems to suggest simply an organic unleashing of underlying anger no longer held back by the fences of social control; this theoretical approach is helpful for understanding some of the pathologies underlying the eruption of the protests, but misses the intentionality, organisation, and networks that were critical elements to the protest's emergence and spread. As we saw when describing the spread of the protest, strong social networks along with an emerging collective identity among farm workers and rural communities were critical for broadening participation, allowing the protest to gain a scale that could not be easily dismissed by those in power and the public. We also saw from participants in the protests not

just an unleashing of anger, but a more strategic analysis of their sources of power at that moment, particularly given the upcoming harvest and export orientation of their products. As one farm worker explains her thinking during the strike, "We have the power to win now because national television is here and overseas people will not want to buy the grapes. The farmers think we are so dumb that we don't know one and two but we are picking the grapes and without us they have no way to produce anything. And now is coming to harvest time so this is why we think now is the time. . . we know these grapes will go overseas and that is how they will make their big profit, though they tell us every year they didn't make profit" (Interview with Witbooi 2013). In other words, breakdown theory allows us to focus on a falling apart of the limiting social constructions of paternalism and isolation while not fully explaining the coming together of the structures and strategies that underlie this episode of collective action.

More generally, classical collective behaviour theories like breakdown theory have come under criticism for appearing to reduce participants to simply victims of social forces or social breakdown; as articulated above, classical collective behaviour theory is accused of dismissing motives of participants in favour of analyzing social conditions that produce certain social pathologies (Gamson & Schmeidler 1984). Alternatively, resource mobilization theory posits a "rational calculation approach" where actors weigh their chances of success to achieve certain ends through the use of collective action (Wood & Jackson in Killian 1984). Resource mobilization theory highlights the role of organizations, social networks, and rational actors in leading to collective action in order to achieve a set of political goals (Gamson & Schmeidler 1984; Killian 1984; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 1996). While the type of organization necessary for collective action is not specified in resource mobilization theory, there is an emphasis on the need for common identity, unifying structure, and pathways for communication (Gamson & Schmeidler 1984); because resources must be aggregated for the less powerful to engage in conflict with the more powerful, some level of organization is required (McCarthy & Zald in Gamson & Schmeidler 1984).

Resource mobilization theorists have broken down their analysis of collective action further into the concepts of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 1996; Voss & Williams 2011; Useem 1998). The concept of political opportunity means that the likelihood of collective action protest is linked to an analysis by protesting groups of their ability to gain access to power and modify the current offending system (Eisinger in McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 1996). Mobilizing structures are the formal and informal collective vehicles through which people come together and engage in collective action; these organizations or networks allow for the aggregation of resources and the coordination that is necessary for individuals to act in concert. Finally, framing is the vehicle through which shared beliefs or norms are generated and used to legitimize protest activity; a set of shared values mobilizes the conviction and understanding necessary to act on opportunity and translate organization into a mobilizing vehicle (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 1996).

This more "political process model of social movements" (Voss and Williams 2012) provides us with an additional set of tools to understand the farm worker protests; clearly there were elements of rational calculation in both the eruption and expansion of the protest. The effect of the first successful strike on Keurboschkloof Farm, which participants of the larger protest reflected as a source of hope, strategy, and tactics, clearly shows farm workers making a political calculation about their opportunities to drive change through collective action; this calculation was more broadly expressed by protest participants following the eruption of protests in De Doorns, who consistently reflected that they felt like the uprising in De Doorns required them to seize the opportunity to join in and drive change (Interviews with Sambo 2014; Erumas 2014; Mehlo 2013).

In addition, we clearly see both formal and informal mobilising structures playing a critical role in making the protest possible. Expanded informal networks developed through life in the settlement communities and through the more transitory nature of work experienced by larger number of seasonal or temporary workers and aided by technology; this built up social capital, what Putnam describes as ". . . features of social organisation such as network, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1995). In the situation of the farm worker protest, these networks were put to use sharing information, coordinating action, and extending the protest; as many participants reflected, the protests demonstrated higher levels of unity across groupings of farm workers—migrants and locals, coloured and black—who might have previously operated in different social circles (Interviews with Yanda 2013; Dube 2014). We also see these informal networks and organisation being put to use in the early functioning of the protests in De Doorns, where large scale community engagement, coordination, and democratic decision making were made possible through the relationships and collaboration of these mobilising structures. We should note that these networks were complicated in nature, not only in their methods of emergence and composition, but also, at different points, in their conflicting roles within these communities. Prior to the farm worker protests of late 2012 and early 2013, informal social networks, constituted slightly differently and with different understandings and explanations for their grievances acted as mobilising structures to coordinate and execute xenophobic attacks. Other studies have reflected this sometimes contradictory role that social networks play in building or dividing the rural poor (Neves & Du Toit 2103; Du Toit 2004); in either case, clearly these informal networks were critical mobilising structures during the protest.

Formal organisations also played a critical role as mobilising structures, but, as highlighted in our earlier analysis of some of these organisations, their ultimate impact on the spread, amplification, and sustenance of the protest was conflicted. Protest organisers, participants, and soon-to-be-participants clearly turned to pre-existing organisations for help in coordinating action, marshalling additional resources, and developing strategy; as one protest leader explains "As we were trying to build strike committees in all the little towns, we would turn to whatever structures were already there and they would

coordinate and lead. We accepted those structures, even if they were not our structure" (Interview with Pieterse 2013). We also saw during the protest the creation of a more broadly unifying mobilizing structure in the form of the Farm Worker Coalition, which sought to bring together organisations and groups of farm workers and their allies; this structure clearly had some success in coordination—for example orchestrating a large, coordinated protest bringing together organisations and participants from around the region into a unified march in the town of Paarl—but also ran into challenges in terms of participation, commitment, and infighting (Wesso 2013). As described earlier in this report, many of these pre-existing organisations served as effective "coordinating units", helping to direct, spread, and sustain action; as Killian explains, informal social networks are suited to aggregate resources and facilitate broad communication, but more formal organisations may be more effective at directing strategy and action, particularly over a longer period of time (1984). Unfortunately, the leadership approach and role that some of these organisations took in the mobilisation—characterised by a more top-down, centralised, mediating approach—did not serve well for the kind of leadership development, empowerment, and democratic participation needed by protest participants to sustain a broader movement and transformation. At the same time, many of these organisations were still able to serve as crucial mobilising structures during the height of the protests.

Finally, resource mobilisation theory focuses on the need for framing, or the use of narrative that allows protest participants to form a shared identity and set of norms; this new collective identity can make high risk activism attractive, which is particularly important in accounting for mobilisation before the consolidation of movement organisations (Polletta 1998). In the farm worker protest, we see how stories developed around specific events—first the Keurboschkloof strike, then the De Doorns protest, than the broader uprising across the Western Cape—that forged and reinforced a common set of grievances, a collective understanding of shared struggle against a common enemy, and a sense of hopefulness and agency. These stories were the discursive way that participants translated their underlying values into action (Ganz 2010).

While resource mobilisation and its component parts help us gain a deeper understanding of the political processes of mobilisation underlying the farm workers protests, what receives less focus in this theoretical approach is the mechanics underlying a "new collective capacity to act" (Voss & Williams 2012). Here we must distinguish between *mobilising*, which is primarily about moving pre-existing structures and networks into collective action around specific issues from *organising*, which is about building the individual and institutional leadership capacity to act; of course, in the practice of building social movements, organising and mobilising often overlap and contribute to each other. But, the distinction is important because organising generally happens over a longer period of time and through more sustained engagement while mobilisation is more time limited and focused around a series of spikes or specific events; in addition, organising is more about building power while mobilising is often

about exercising power. This distinction suggests that the concept of *mobilising* structures described in resource mobilisation theory focuses primarily on the more immediate tools of bringing action and protest to life while focusing less on the other critical and more incremental elements of capacity building of individuals and organisations to provide leadership and empowerment. In some instances, the organisations and individuals who help create this capacity to act may not even be the key mobilising structures for the protest action itself.

In the case of the farm worker protest, we see several organisations—Women on Farms, for example—that played this organising role by building leadership among rural women—leadership that emerged to play important roles as protest mobilisers. These organisations, rather than being primarily mobilising structures, played more of an "influencer" role, defined as people or organisations which are not primarily involved in instigating this specific collective action but whose activities—often leading up the action—may impact eventual participants or the broader context in such a way as to facilitate participation (IIE Study 1973). In many ways, this type of organising work over many years helped make this moment of mobilisation possible, even if organisers were not involved in planning the collective action itself.

Strictly applying the resource mobilisation approach of social movement theory to the farm worker protests would also suggest that there must have been more of an intentional calculation and consensus by participants—a collective analysis of political opportunity—before deciding to engage in collective action. While breakdown theory may go too far in suggesting that protest participants are simply a result of changing social constraints, resource mobilisation theory could be seen to tip the scales too far in the other direction by suggesting that participants made a very rational calculation of their chances of winning change to the existing system before deciding to launch their protest. Clearly, given the influence of the Keurboschkloof strike victory on the interest of De Doorns workers in launching a broader strike, there was some analysis that an opportunity for change existed; yet the spread of the strike from De Doorns to other towns in the Western Cape was inspired not by victory but by scenes of conflict, confrontation, and police repression which could just as easily—or maybe even more likely—suggested a lack of political opportunity. In addition, we can see from interviews with protest participants that there were differing views on the strategy of the protest in terms of how it would achieve its desired ends; some protest participants suggested that the opportunity lay with pressuring the government through disruption while other participants focused on using their structural power to halt production at a sensitive time of year (Interviews with Erumas 2014; Prins 2013; Philander 2013). These differing approaches to the overarching strategy of the protests suggest that the decision to protest was not simply a collective and calculated analysis of strengths and weaknesses but that the protests had a much more momentum-oriented eruption, where protestors found reasons for hope irrespective of any common strategic decision on the best opportunity to win change.

In addition, the rapid spread of the protests—beyond what was possible through the capacity of more traditional organising approaches—suggests that there was an underlying sociological shift among farm workers that made participation in this kind of overt and confrontational action seem more possible, even if the outcome of such a protest was not any more certain. As one farm worker explains, "It was my first time being involved in this kind of action but I decided that I must not be afraid even if I know the consequences. All these years I struggle for nothing and something inside encouraged me, the anger at the whites and thinking about his dominance over our forefathers. Even if we may not win, we must not be quiet anymore" (Interview with Paulsen 2013).

Finally, when comparing the more classical collective-behaviour approach of breakdown theory to the more rational-actor approach of resource mobilisation theory, theorists admit that there is overlap between these competing views even if emphasis and explanation differ; for example, resource mobilization theorists would acknowledge that changes in the institutional order are critical for explaining the emergence of collective action protest, even if they would focus on the political or mobilization opportunities rather than the altered psychological state of potential protest participants (Gamson & Schmeidler 1984). When seeking to explain the farm worker protests, we can similarly say that the breakdown of the social construction of paternalism might be construed as a political opportunity, while the mobilising structures of the informal networks of the settlement communities might be construed as a breakdown of the spatial isolation that impedes sharing of grievances and collective action. In this way, both of these social movement theories help us better understand and map the farm worker uprising in the Western Cape.

"Spontaneous" Collective Action

While the ongoing shifts in paternalism and spatial isolation combined with a set of organising and mobilising resources to facilitate collective action, many participants who were interviewed for this study still characterised the emergence, pace, and scale of the protest as unexpected and spontaneous (Interviews with Ehrenreich 2013; Ndongeni 2013; Pieterse 2013). Theorists have defined spontaneous collective action in varying ways. One notion is that spontaneity is defined by a lack of connection to pre-established understandings or tradition; spontaneous action is characterized as emotional, impulsive and sometimes irrational behaviour (Blumer in Killian 1984). Spontaneous action can also be defined as completely unplanned or unpremeditated. Conversely, some theorists claim that while some action may appear unplanned or impulsive, it is always informed by traditions and organization in such a way as to link strategies and outcomes (Tarrow 1993).

As mentioned in a previous chapter, spontaneous collective action can also be viewed as a phenomenon that allows for both pre-planning with clear goals and on-the-spot decision making where consequences are unanticipated (Killian 1984). In her study of the civil rights movement in the United States, Francesca

Polletta found that spontaneity denoted not lack of planning but "independence from adult leadership, urgency, local initiative, and action by moral imperative rather than bureaucratic planning" (1998). In this definition, spontaneous collection action would seem to be defined not by a complete lack of planning or absence of leadership but rather by some level of independence from dominant organizations and an emerging activist identity driven by an urgent moral need.

When exploring spontaneity in collective action, it is informative to look at a study of the Durban Strikes of 1973, where thousands of workers without formal union organization walked off the job. As the authors point out, a mass protest action like a strike cannot be purely "spontaneous"-- i.e. completely unplanned or uncoordinated-- in that it requires at its outset a conscious level of coordinated action; strikes do not happen by thousands of people coincidentally refusing to report to work on the same day. Spontaneous action then "occurs when a group of people subject to the same set of pressures and influences suddenly react in common to those pressures" (IIE Study 1973). The distinction then between spontaneous and planned action is the way in which the action spreads and the short timeline between the idea and the action itself; spontaneous action gains an exponential scale beyond the incremental planning of the action organizers or leaders. Reflecting the earlier debate on movement theory, the authors believe that some level of pre-existing organization is a pre-requisite for spontaneous action but understand that it "may be difficult to distinguish where organization ends and spontaneity begins" (IIE Study 1973).

The farm worker protests clearly involved planning, coordination and collaboration; from small groups on the farms, to larger groups in the settlements, to regional networks, farm workers were communicating and strategizing on a daily basis, even if the timeline from planning to action tended to be very short. As we have seen, some of the action was informed by previous experiences and traditions, even if not coordinated through formal organisations—for example the blocking of the N1 highway that had been done previously during service delivery protests; at the same time, the confrontational, overt, and collective nature of the protests was outside the individual experience of many of the participants. Most importantly, the farm worker protests came from "below" in a more explicit way, allowing for their spread at a pace and scale much larger than was possible through more bureaucratic planning or even the work of the organisers. This also meant that, at least initially, there was not an overwhelming dominance of any set schemas in how protests and organisation might function. When defining and thinking about spontaneity in this light—distinguished from other types of protest primarily by its ability to rapidly spread to scale beyond the planning of organisers – we see that the farm worker protests, much like the Durban strikes, had a spontaneous nature.

The spontaneity of the protests had implications for how it would be interpreted by those in power, how it would be executed, and the roles and development of its participants. Like the unanticipated mass strikes in Durban in 1973, the farm worker strike had added force because it was unexpected (Friedman 1987); from the added media attention paid to the novelty of this mass uprising among poor farming

communities to the compulsion of government to intervene with an unprecedentedly large increase in the sectoral determination, it was clear that the protest had added weight because of its unexpected scale and spontaneous nature. The lack of more obvious formal planning and coordination also allowed a different kind of public narrative to be generated—with headlines like "Leaderless farm strike is 'organic'"(Mail and Guardian, Nov 16, 2012)— about the causes and concerns of the protest, focusing a light on the poverty and working conditions facing the workers unmediated by third party organisations; this was aided, at least very early on in the protests, by a lack of official spokespeople beyond the participants of the strike themselves. Finally, the increased risk and unpredictability associated with the protest, operating outside of more traditional and 'legal' channels spoke, to the urgency of workers' concerns—action by moral imperative; this approach, as we have seen from interviews with workers who witnessed the protests in De Doorns and then decided to take to the streets themselves, inspired risk taking and action in others.

Unlike a more traditional work stoppage that often involves carefully premeditated and calculated planning, dominance of established trade unions, and a deliberate escalation of pressure leading up the strike itself, the farm worker protest can more aptly be compared to a "wildcat" strike. In his study of a wildcat strike, Alvin Gouldner characterizes all strikes as including a cessation of work, a refusal to "obey", and an open expression of aggression; strikes fall into the category of a "wildcat" when they further include a spontaneous nature with less formal planning and organization, happen outside the institutional or traditional labour relations process, have a time sensitive precipitating event, and most often involve a set of leaders outside established lines of authority (1954). More than a traditional strike or bureaucratically planned action, wildcat strikes and spontaneous actions create power and urgency where more traditional leadership may have its hands tied, develop new leaders who may be more representative than the people in formal positions of authority, and allow for a broader set of issues to be addressed outside the constraints of more established structures. At the same time, wildcat strikes and more spontaneous action can lead to division among workers, be non-strategic, and undermine the credibility of leadership and organisation. When looking at some of the outcomes of the farm worker protests, we see many of these same outcomes—new leadership emerging and an increased level of urgency around conditions for the rural poor while at the same time, new levels of division among workers and a greater loss of credibility for some existing organisations.

The spontaneous nature of the protest also created challenges for the democratic decision-making that was critical for empowering workers and developing the capacity and leadership to act in the future; these difficulties were driven by the pace and scale of the protests as well as the inability of those in leadership—particularly among established organisations—to figure out how to develop consultative approaches outside of their existing structures. The most obvious examples of these challenges emerged in the lack of consultation between leaders and protest participants in the negotiations process

and the decision by leaders of COSATU to call the strike off several times without seeking a mandate from those involved. This interchange between leadership and democratic decision-making is critical, even in more spontaneous collective actions; as Lane and Roberts explain while describing an industrial strike, "Mass opinion is involved in a continuous and reciprocal process of interplay with the policies and actions of leadership groups. In a strike the rank and file can never become mere puppets" (in Maree 1974). In other words, the spontaneous nature of the farm worker protests did not mean that the interaction of leadership, democracy, organisation, and participation were not essential elements to grapple with, even if they were, at times, challenging to achieve in this context.

Finally, the spontaneous nature of the protest, combining some leadership from existing organisations with a much larger mass of first time participants, impacted the repertoires of contention that were available and developed through the protest itself. Repertoires of contention are where culture and mobilization intersect; "repertoires" are forms of resistance based on "learned routines" and within the experience and cultural traditions of the collective actors (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 1996). As Tilly further explains, "The repertoire is therefore not only what people *do* when they make a claim; it is what they *know how to do* and what society has come to expect them to choose to do. . ." (in Tarrow 1993). According to Chun, most groups have a limited set of collective action repertories and when innovation does occur, it happens either within the existing repertoire or on the edges rather than breaking completely new ground. She goes on to argue that with formal organizations—like trade unions—cultural schema and resource allocation can serve as mutually constraining limits on repertoire innovation (2013).

In the farm worker protests, we see some of these dynamics at work, where the experience of service delivery protests, including confrontational marches, blocking roads, and broad engagement across the community, are familiar tactics that suggest familiar sources of disruptive power. In addition, we see other tactics emerging at the edges of these repertoires, such as burning vineyards and destroying farm owner property. At the same time, we saw that most trade unions approached their engagement in a way that was consistent with their traditional approach to organising, from traditional recruitment strategies to incremental leadership building to promoting a charismatic leader; while these groups may have temporarily increased their resources committed to these communities, their schemas for how to build power and engage in struggle remained stagnant even in the new context and possibilities of this unique, large-scale uprising among farm workers.

Yet, new repertoires can emerge over time and in themselves create new meanings and forms of resistance. Tarrow argues that while "moments of madness"—the sudden onset of collective action—may contain more volatile and experimental forms of resistance, it is the much broader and longer-term "protest cycle" that allows new repertoires to be tested and refined to the point of being incorporated into future repertoires (1993). Additionally, as Chun articulates, new repertoires can emerge when groups are forced into a new context; when relationships with the powerful are in flux or roles are being redefined,

the ensuing struggle *can* be a source of new schema and shifting repertoires. In this same vein, when a constituency is forced to redefine its own identity or incorporate participants with different identities, mobilization and culture can combine in new ways (2013).

In this case, it is important to note that the strike and protest itself was, for most participants, an experimentation with a new repertoire of contention; while farm workers have traditionally had individual and covert forms of resistance, collective and overt repertoires have not been prominent under the smothering context of paternalism. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Du Toit explains, "Farm workers can draw on significant traditions of resistance but these are very unlike the overt, adversarial, confrontational discourse of factory unionism. Rather, they rely on the "weapons of the weak", operating within the framework of the paternalistic moral universe itself, relying on individual appeals, consensual negotiations, and the avoidance of the appearance of open conflict" (2005). The emergence of a new form of resistance in the protests of late 2012 and early 2013 suggest that the re-negotiation of the paternalistic discourse along with the changing nature and make-up of the workforce has created a new context, where new relationships with the powerful are being re-defined and new identities and new participants are merging and emerging. The outstanding question is will this experimentation be transformed over time into a truly new set of repertoires that can be repeated and mobilised in further efforts of resistance. At this point it is probably too early to tell, although interpretations of the outcome of this overt and confrontational collective action would seem to be a key determinant in whether farm workers might adopt this approach in the future. From our study, we see that farm workers interpretations of the protest have a mixed character, with most workers who were interviewed expressing some pride in having engaged in this kind of protest while at the same time expressing mixed emotions about its outcome for their material conditions and strength of their organisations.

Power

Understanding the repertoires of contention that were used or emerged during the protest suggests that we must also explore questions of power that underlie the efforts at change embodied in the farm worker protest. Erik Olin Wright describes two broad categories of worker power-- structural and associational. Structural power is related to the position of workers in either the labour market or the production process; in either case, workers' ability to withhold their labour either individually or collectively allows them to make demands on employers. Associational power refers to the ability of workers to organize collectively, using their strength in numbers to, for example, impact public policy (Olin-Wright 2000; Lambert, Webster & Bezuidenhout 2012). The changing nature of the global economy and the changing nature of work—particularly to a more "flexible" employment relationship—are perceived, in most cases, to have weakened these sources of power. From our study, we see that the influx of migrant workers and the more transitory nature of seasonal employment has created a readily available pool of excess labour which would seem to weaken particularly the structural power of farm workers; we see this

weakening demonstrated somewhat during and definitely after the protest, when farm owners turned to other readily available pools of labour rather than rehiring local workers who participated in the strikes.

At the same time, the changing demands of production in the more globalised market-- particularly demands for higher quality, tighter production windows, and increased supplier requirements around ethical production (driven by a new politics of consumption)-- might seem to increase the structural power of workers. For example, in a study of workers' bargaining power in export grape production in Brazil, Ben Selwyn demonstrated how the re-organization of production—driven by interconnectedness of the global economy-- actually increased the structural power of workers by creating a demand for more permanent and higher skilled workforce (Selwyn 2007). It is unclear from our study whether these changing production standards have had the same impact on the structural power of farm workers in the fruit and wine sectors on the Western Cape. One recent study seems to suggest that the changing nature of production and the workforce is creating greater precarity and less structural power for the larger group of seasonal workers while creating more security and structural power for a small group of higher skilled, on-farm labour (Walters 2012).

Workers and organisers who were interviewed do seem to recognise the *potential* for increased structural and even associational power in the changing nature of a more globalised production; workers mentioned the impact that the media coverage of the protest might have on the willingness of overseas consumers to purchase South African fruit and wine, while also pointing out that the timing of the strike was specifically designed for the beginning of the more intensive harvest season, an effort to maximise their structural power within the very time sensitive production process (Interviews with Witbooi 2013; Andrews 2013; Dube 2013). Yet, it is not clear from this study whether increased skill requirements for the production process create enough labour market power for a great enough number of workers to truly exploit this expanding source of power; at the same time, while some workers understand that increasing production demands and narrow production windows may provide them with increased structural power, without higher levels of more formal organisation this potential seems hard to exploit consistently over time. Of course, the strike at the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013 sought to do just that, but, by most reports, production was not disrupted enough—partly due to the duration of the strike and partly due to farmers using replacement labour-- to impact exports or profits (Interviews with De Wet 2014; Knills 2104).

It is worth noting that the changing nature or "flexibilsation" of work can also create more solidarity or associational power by increasing the shared grievances brought on by the greater precarity for workers associated with these employment relationships. The temporary nature of these employment relationships and the very real threat by employers not to rehire union activists also makes it, in most instances, more challenging to build lasting institutions like unions that would serve to channel work place issues into formal collective bargaining and grievance procedures, where workers would be "represented"

by professionalised union staff (Campbell 2013). In these ways, the changing nature of work can sometimes facilitate more self organised and collective action oriented approaches to resistance; with an increasing sense of associational power—a solidarity and outrage fuelled by the recognition of shared grievances—and a lack of alternative mediating institutions, workers are apt to engage in a form of "solidarity unionism", where workers take the lead on building collective participation, regardless of formal membership in unions or organisations (Campbell citing Lynd and Gross 2013).

This is a useful analysis when we think about the rise of seasonal employment relationships on farms in the Western Cape and the resultant levels of precarity among workers; the rise of this more temporary employment relationship creates a shared set of grievances, particularly around wage rates given that, unlike on-farm labour, the off-farm seasonal worker survives primarily on her wages (Interview with Domingo 2014). As we have seen, unions have failed to organise these workers, meaning these workers are shut out of more institutional and mediated processes for addressing their grievances. In other words, the changing nature of work could actually be seen to increase opportunities for accessing associational power among farm workers and giving rise to certain forms of resistance, namely an unmediated, worker driven collective action that existed outside of the legal and institutional processes normally associated with labour management concerns. This, in many ways, reflects the kind of organising and action we saw in the farm worker protests and gives us hints on why the protest may have been initiated and led by seasonal workers as well as taken the form—collective, worker driven, outside normal channels—that it did.

In addition to associational and structural power, theorists have also pointed to additional forms of power. Logistical power is the ability to disrupt the flow of goods in, for example, the just-on-time global supply chain. Symbolic or moral power is the ability to engage in "classification" struggles and a rights-based discourse that helps shift power in the arena of public contention (Lambert, Webster & Bezuidenhout 2012; Chun 2013). Power and strikes can also be understood using the broader concept of "disruptive potential"; as Perrone explains, "the effectiveness of the strike thus depends not simply on the pressures immediately brought to bear on the employer by the striking workers, but on the extent to which other key actors in the society—the state, other capitalists, the media, political parties, the public, consumers—apply pressure because of systemic disruption" (1984). Olin-Wright goes on to describe this concept as "positional power," differentiated from other sources of power in that it is not only about stopping the flow of goods but rather using workers' associational power to disrupt elements of the larger society. In this way strikes may be powerful through their social disruption even if they are less effective at impacting production (Olin Wright 1984).

In many ways, farm worker protestors combined several elements of these different forms of power. By blocking the roads, protestors specifically articulated their intention to stop the ability of employers to move their goods. These blockades were also intended to disrupt the normal functioning of the broader

society, creating pressure on government to act while garnering major media attention; in particularly, blocking the N1 highway, the major thoroughfare that runs from Cape Town in the south to Zimbabwe in the north, was intended to disrupt the movement of the whole range of people and goods along this critical transportation artery. Farm workers in De Doorns and beyond took pride in their success at effectively shutting down, for limited periods, the normal functioning of whole towns (Interviews with Yanda 2013; CSSAWU activist members 2014; Mehlo 2013). In many ways, this heavy reliance on disruptive power meant that the protests and actions took place more on the streets and less on the farms; the collective action and confrontations were more with police than with farm owners themselves. (This is, of course, not to suggest that there were not some incidents of conflict and protest centred on farms.)

While the reliance on these types of power were effective at getting government to act, there might have be a "power mismatch" in the protests because many of the underlying power relationships are still defined between farm owner and farm worker *on* the farms; the power of the protest and protestors was primarily on the "streets". In other words, the use of disruptive power was less effective at changing many of the underlying power relationships defined by work and life on the farms. As evidence of this, we see that most farm owners never truly felt compelled to act or aggressively seek resolution of the protest, beyond hiring private security to protect their property. In addition, in the aftermath of the strike, many worker interviewees suggest that the underlying relationship with the farm owner has not changed (Interviews with Erumas 2014; Shirleen 2014; FAWU members 1st Farm 2014). Farm workers, through this specific form of collective action, were challenged to confront the other faces of power and domination that exist in these agricultural communities; in some ways, the protest and outrage was still "outside the gate" and not "on the farm".

This raises important questions regarding where is the point of struggle, where are conditions and relations defined, and what kind of power can workers mobilise that gets to these places. When thinking about the sociology of trade unionism, these facts also point out that the nature of the protest and type of power exercised, along with the more transitory employment relationships, made it difficult for farm workers to convert temporary mobilisation into the more permanent organisation which traditionally comes through work-place based recognition by the employer and the shared consent of a collective agreement (Kuzwayo & Webster 1978); and while the more traditional trade union approach of converting temporary mobilisation into more permanent organisation and power may or may not be the most appropriate or effective format for farm workers, the lack of "recognition" and "shared consent" by farm owners means that farm workers must rely either on on-going mobilisation and higher levels of conflict or outside parties—like government—for enforcement and further engagement with farm owners.

Movements and Organisations

By exploring these forms of power, we start to ask underlying questions about the nature of movement moments and their relationship to organisation building. How is power best built, exercised, and sustained in such a way as to lead to real transformation of the living and working conditions of farm workers and their communities; more specifically, can disruptive, structural, or other forms of power exerted in short spurts and unconnected to more formal organisation lead to lasting and significant change?

Long time organizer and educator Miles Horton differentiates between organizational periods—with limited objectives, no rapid spread of action, and large number of paid organizers and bureaucracy—versus social movement periods (1998). Lenin's famous work "What Is to Be Done?" takes this point a step further in suggesting that major change comes from spontaneous outbursts but that revolutionaries must still carry out systemic organizing work to be able to seize the moment (in Killian 1984). Finally, Trotsky underscores the importance of organizations while at the same time indicating the essential power that comes from mass uprising. He explains, "Without guiding organizations, the energy of the masses would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston-box. But nevertheless what moves things is not the piston or the box, but the steam" (in Gamson and Schmeidler 1984).

While there seems to be some agreement among theorists that movement moments are critical for social progress, Pivan and Cloward argue that building organization, particularly out of moments of uprising, is both ineffective and counter-productive; looking back to the debate between movement theorists, they argue that protest emerges in response to major changes in the institutional order rather than efforts by organizers or leaders. Clarifying even further, they argue that organization building seeks to dampen the only vehicle that disempowered people have to make progress—disruption and protest. As they explain, ". . . by endeavouring to do what they cannot do [build lasting, membership based organizations of poor people], organizers fail to do what they can do. During those brief periods in which people are roused to indignation, when they are prepared to defy the authorities to whom they ordinarily defer. . . those who call themselves leaders do not usually escalate the momentum of people's protests. . . . All too often when workers erupted in strikes, organizers collected dues cards . . . organization-building activities tended to draw people away from the streets and into the meeting rooms" (in Gamson and Schmeidler 1984).

As we have seen, the organisations—primarily trade unions—involved in the farm worker protests mostly failed to translate this uprising into significantly greater participation and membership in their organisations. And from several of the unions we see this tendency to use the moment of the uprising to focus on organisation building and recruitment, and, instead of escalating the protest, to see their major role as mediation and creating space for resolution (Interviews with Ndongeni 2013; Ehrenreich 2013).

The attempts by some of these leaders to channel the outrage of the protest into a "negotiations" process—particularly calling the strike off in a "tactical withdrawal" at several points—created confusion, infighting, and some level of futility. Finally, the more transitory nature of the workforce caused by increasing use of seasonal labour—along with the well known impediments of lack of resources, farm owner resistance, and worker vulnerability—might seem to confirm Piven and Cloward's theory that attempts to build organisation among these workers is both futile and detracts from the real drivers of change—moments of disruption. Tony Ehrenreich, a leader of COSATU in the Western Cape, seems to suggest that the protests have proved that formal organisation and membership are desirable but not critical to the further uprising necessary for change; he explains that, "The reality shows that membership based organisations were not necessary to win big. They are desirable because this is not just about action but about playing a bigger role but we needed to have action to have shown them [farm owners] that membership is not the critical determinant" (Interview 2013).

Yet the material outcomes of the strike, particularly taking into account the results of the farm owner backlash of new wage deductions and targeted dismissals, raises questions about whether action and disruption alone are enough to not only win but to implement those winnings and hold them into the future. This challenge of implementing, for example, improved legislated protection or state regulatory action may be particularly acute for farm workers; as Du Toit explains, "The state is far away and lacks the ability to enforce its own laws. Farm workers find that insisting on their rights can be a dangerous strategy and know that maintaining patronage relationships may be as important" (2005). As significantly, the initial outcomes of this study suggest that the transformation beyond a dramatic increase in the minimum wage (not that the importance of that accomplishment should be underestimated) do not seem to have altered the underlying power relationships that govern day to day life in the rural communities. Of course, it is too early to draw broad and sweeping conclusions about the longer term impact of the uprising and some interviewees suggested that things will be different now that farm owners know what farm workers are capable of; as importantly, several interviewees suggested that large numbers of farm workers are different after the strike, gaining a new found confidence to stand up for themselves and engage in further collective action (Interviews with Swartz 2013; Ehrenreich 2013; Jacobs 2013). The question then is whether this new found confidence can be drawn on as a new source of power to continue driving change through further action and disruption, particularly without more formal and structured organisation.

Implicit in this analysis is an understanding of movements and organisations functioning in different ways. Movements tend to be leadership hungry, lack large scale formal resources like money, and are focused on change; organisations, on the other hand, often have limited leadership positions, possess some measure of traditional resources, and are about continuity. As hinted at earlier, the authors of a study about the Durban strikes of 1973 suggest that trade unions are usually forced to confront this challenge

of "how to convert temporary movement to permanent organisation" without simply becoming instruments of social control. According to their analysis, the bonds that unite a movement are built around common goals while the bonds of organisations rely on rewards and penalties; in this way, "on the strength of its sanctions, rather than on the appeal of its objectives, the unity and power of an organisation depends" (citing Flanders in Kuzwayo & Webster 1978). This analysis would suggest that making the transition from movement to organisation-- while protecting vibrancy, creativity, broad participation, and risk taking-- is a real challenge.

At the same time, many theorists have countered Piven and Cloward's argument that efforts at building formal organisation undermine game-changing action and are futile, suggesting instead that the *type* of organization that is built during and out of moments of mass uprising determines whether organization serves to amplify protest and build engagement over the longer term; they argue that organizations can and are needed to aggregate resources, particularly of poor people, to help avoid dependence on elites. And, as pointed out above, these theorists argue that without organization, gains won through moments of disruption and insurrection will be recaptured by elites once the moment has subsided. In this way, these theorists counter that not only are insurgency and organization compatible, but essential, if disempowered people are going to shift power and hold onto gains (Majka 1980; Gamson & Schmeidler 1984).

If we focus then on the type of organisation, Friedman explains that organizations built out of and as part of social movements must allow participants both to exercise voice within the organization and to win concrete gains; important gains must be judged not by their impact on changing the overall system but whether they required a shift in power. Looking at the emergence of the South African trade union movement in the 1970s and 1980s, he argues that "it was by channelling collective action initiated at the grass roots into permanent transfers of power that the union movement grew. As labour militancy increased, industrial action was not organized by unions—but it was unions who stepped in to ensure that gains were turned into organization" (2012). In addition to a sense of power and democratic participation, the organisations that emerge out of moments of uprising must both reflect and are limited by the nature of the protest itself as well as the identities of protest participants.

When looking at the farm worker protest, we see the challenges organisations had in providing real voice for protest participants, developing approaches that shifted power rather than simply making limited material gains, and accurately reflecting the nature of the protest and the identity of the participants. We have previously discussed the lack of effective mandating or democratic participation during key moments of the protest as well as the inability of the achievements of the strike to show concrete shifts in the underlying power arrangements. In addition, the protest was characterised by high levels of engagement by seasonal and off-farm workers, risk oriented extra-legal tactics and action, a high wage demand coupled with an expression of issues beyond the workplace, broad participation of the rural poor

in the community, and a reliance on indigenous organisers and resources. Conversely some, not all, of the organisations that hoped to build membership out of the protests reflected the exact opposite of the character and identity of the protest and protestors—permanent, local on-farm labour, risk averse organisations with a focus on established laws and institutions, low expectations of what is possible with a narrow focus on work place issues, a focus on membership limited to workers, and a reliance on professionalised organisers and external resources. In addition, the nature of the protest was, in many ways, not only an economic struggle but a "'struggle for recognition'—that is symbolic and cultural struggles aimed at revaluing the identities and worth of devalued groups in society" (Fraser in Chun 2013); much like the more spontaneous Durban strikes of 1973, farm workers used a much higher wage demand to signal a broader rejection of the current society and a first step toward imagining a different world. While some of the organisations involved in the protest tried to adapt their approaches to this changing workforce and more aspirational struggle, most sought to intervene in a more traditional and bureaucratic way, encouraging protestors to fit themselves into their existing organisation and approaches rather than creating the space for new approaches to emerge. In other words, these organisations faced the challenge of balancing both the "continuity and emergence" necessary for effective social movement organisations to develop; rather than co-opt and control, these organisations might have had more success if they could have focused on providing a "supportive organisational context" (McAdam 1996), while creating space for both informal networks and emerging organisational forms to provide the novelty and creativity necessary for a vital and more durable social movement.

Back to the Future

It is interesting to take a step "back to the future" to briefly look at the Durban strikes of 1973, which, like the farm workers protests of late 2012 and early 2013 were unanticipated, organised without much formal organisation, and rapidly spread to reach a large scale. Unlike the farm worker protests (at least so far), the Durban strikes were successfully turned into large scale organisation for some brief period, while serving as the basis for the re-birth of the African trade union movement in South Africa. The parallels to why the Durban strike erupted are interestingly similar to the farm worker protests. Like the successful strike on Keurboschkloof Farm which inspired farm workers across many farms in De Doorns to act, the broader Durban strikes were sparked by a successful strike at Coronation Brick and Tile works. Like the farm worker protest, the public marches and high levels of media coverage were critical to spreading the strike and alerting other workers. In addition, Durban workers had developed greater informal networks partially by sharing common traditions and language (Zulu) but also by the spatial arrangements which had workers concentrated in company compounds and townships (Friedman 1987); while farm workers did not necessarily broadly share common traditions or language, the expansion of the settlement communities provided this same spatial dimension to developing the informal networks necessary for collective action.

Durban workers were also aided by support from government officials of KwaZulu (the Zulu homeland in Natal), while farm workers enjoyed support from several officials in the ANC government and some local ANC councillors closer to home. Some of the Durban workers were also less vulnerable because they were not affected by the "pass laws" in the same way as other workers; this meant that if workers lost their jobs, they would not also be forced to leave the area. Again we see the parallel between this and the reduced vulnerability of the rising numbers of off-farm labour, as losing their job did not mean also losing their housing, like it does for most on-farm labour. In addition, some Durban workers had engagement with a sympathetic registered union, which familiarised them with the ideas of wage demands and collective strength (Friedman 1987). Maybe most importantly, in both the farm worker protest and the Durban strikes, workers had no real institutional vehicle under which to process their grievances, which led them to a specific kind of protest out of necessity; both of these protests emerged through self-organisation, with a more organic, bottom up approach that involved overt, direct, and collective action as its main source of power and vehicle for change. And in both protests there was an "unexpectedness"—a breaking of the widely accepted story of what was possible within the hegemonic institutions of social control—that gave the protests an added sense of power and possibility.

Unlike the farm worker protests, a year after the Durban strikes approximately forty thousand workers had joined unions; this number would fall again relatively rapidly due to a number of reasons, not least of which was government repression and a shift in the economy which undermined workers' power. Yet the Durban strikes are still viewed as the rebirth of the South Africa labour movement because they gave workers a new sense of confidence and power, and, as Harriet Bolton explains, they "taught workers that they sky wouldn't fall on their heads if they struck" (in Friedman 1987). There is some sense from our study that the farm worker protests may have provided farm workers and the rural poor elements of that same sense of confidence, power, and possibility, even if the farm owner backlash has been designed to steal those accomplishments away.

Yet the Durban strikes are noticeably different in that new, formal organisations sprung up that would be the pre-cursors to what would become a very large and powerful trade union movement, even if facing some set-backs along the way. Much of the organisation among workers at the time of the Durban strikes started first as advice bureaus, benefit funds, community based or identity based worker organisations, and works committees; these were the "springboards" which would provide the building blocks for unions down the road. Most importantly, many of these efforts at organisation committed themselves to a democratic, grassroots unionism, with structures to ensure workers took part in decision-making (Friedman 1987). Unlike the farm worker protests, where most of the existing organisations had a well established set of schemas and approaches that sought to absorb the energy of the protests, the organisations surrounding and emerging out of the Durban strikes seemed to have been more focused on providing a supportive organisational context and amplifying the agency of the workers. This

approach may have created more space for organic emergence, even if the first explosion of membership growth proved to be short lived.

Finally, in exploring these two struggles we are provoked to ask questions about class consciousness and its emergence as a fundamental shift within workers that would allow them or even provoke them to demand further action and organisation. Class can be defined as individuals who occupy similar positions in the social system of production and distribution of costs and benefits (Giddens in Fisher 1978); class consciousness then is an awareness by individuals of these structural relationships and the notion of shared interests with other individuals in the same position. Fisher explains that there are "levels" of class consciousness; "revolutionary class consciousness"—the type most likely to produce collective action—requires awareness of 1) membership in a class 2) conflict of that class with another class 3) the conflict as derived from the structure of society and 4) the conflict finding resolution only through surfacing the fight required to create a new social structure. More specifically, Fisher goes on to explain that class consciousness requires an individual awareness of objective depravity in material condition, a perceived community of interest with other individuals facing this depravity, understanding this situation in structural rather than individual terms, and some perception of the power to change the situation (1978). Critical to articulation or formation of class consciousness is the ability to perceive channels of action, thereby creating the opportunity of moving from individual powerlessness to group formation. This transformation on a large scale is unlikely to occur through theoretical understanding but rather through conditions which illuminate and actually lead to collective action. In other words, even workers who do not "articulate" class consciousness likely have existing, but incomplete, elements of this class consciousness schema; its transformation into a more complete expression requires a certain demonstration of possibilities.

Turning again to the Durban strikes, Fisher argues that it was not simply that workers suddenly became conscious of their exploitation but rather, the occurrence of several public yet small scale strikes, coupled with factory-based, informal organizational networks, led the much larger group of workers to become aware of their own strength and possibilities. These actions surfaced or maybe solidified an underlying class consciousness that was then expressed through collective action and a wage demand so large as to signify a much broader rejection of the overall system underlying their conditions. She also argues that workers' consciousness did not include a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of exploitation or of an alternative vision of society; this meant that the "level" of class consciousness of worker leaders in Durban may have fallen short of being revolutionary in nature (1978). There seem to be clear parallels between this and the farm worker protests, where the images of the workers struggling in De Doorns awoke a sort of class consciousness or awareness of workers' own strength and possibilities, as well as their collective struggle against white farm owners. Yet, like the Durban strikers, it is unclear that without the engagement of more formal organisation and political education, this consciousness could

encompass an understanding of the mechanisms of exploitation and alternative visions of society. Without this more complete revolutionary consciousness, farm workers may be more reluctant to take the risks of translating their action into organisation or engaging in ongoing protests; without ongoing development of this consciousness, farm workers will be challenged to be the authors of their own transformation. As one organiser explained, "We had a meeting [of rural women from the farming communities] in this hall and we asked them 'What are your dreams for yourself and your family?' Surprisingly not one of the women had a dream, not a one of them had a dream for their future or what they wanted for their families. They could not dream because of the situation . . . sometimes I think that we will are not going to ever break the cycle" (Interview with Jansen 2013).

In conclusion, the farm worker protests and strikes in the Western Cape resulted from both an ongoing re-negotiation of the paternalistic social control and an emerging liberation from the physical arrangements of isolation; these two trends are being driven by the changing regulatory structure and production demands that are altering the structure and make-up of the workforce. The breakdown of these mechanisms of social control helped facilitate and unshackle a set of formal and informal mobilising structures that combined with a powerful worker-driven narrative or framing to expand the protest across the region. In many ways, this rapid spread was a uniquely defining characteristic of the protest, giving it a bottom-up, spontaneous nature. The nature of the protest, along with the traditions and repertoires of the protestors, helped determine the types of power that were most available and most used. The primary reliance on disruptive power, with the point of protest being in the streets rather than on the farms, raised questions about whether the farm worker protests alone could be effective at altering the underlying power dynamics within the rural communities. At the same time, the effectiveness of the protest in forcing government to act raises the debate about how best poor communities might drive change; in other words, is formal organisation necessary or does it detract from their real source of power, mass disruption? More specifically, the debate should be about what type of organisation might most appropriately reflect and build on the energy, identity, and power of the protest and protestors; in the case of the farm worker protest, none of the existing organisations seemed to be able to dramatically amplify participation or turn the mass participation into mass membership organisations. The question then is whether the protest created a shift within the workers themselves—a confidence or an emerging revolutionary class consciousness—generating hope for building further disruption, power, and organisation. While it is obviously too early to tell, those who want change in the rural communities must not lose their agency, looking for opportunities to amplify further disruption, while, in the meantime, seeking to build creative and democratic organisational structures reflective of the changing workforce and situation among the rural poor of the Western Cape. The final chapter will focus on that agency by briefly touching on further areas of research and exploring potential principles for building organisation.

Chapter 7

Moving Forward and Further Research

The underlying question of this report is can there be a real and continuing "transformation from below" of the agricultural sector in the Western Cape. Before the occurrence of the uprising of late 2012 and early 2013, many long time observers of the rural communities of this region were sceptical that social movements had much chance of influencing major change in the rural areas (Ntsebeza 2013). Yet the strike and protests force a reconsideration of the possibilities of how change might happen and, if one believes these moments of disruption are a critical component of driving change, can farm workers, organisers, and organisations adapt themselves in such a way as to promote and sustain these moments. Of course, this study cannot hope to provide conclusive answers to these questions but, if one assumes that organisers and organisations can facilitate agency over time—even if this agency is not determinative *on its own* in the occurrence of further large scale collective action—we must ask what kind of organising approaches might have the best chance of success at both engaging larger numbers of farm workers and building leadership and struggle from below.

Emerging out of the farm worker strike and protests of late 2012 and early 2013, local experts and leaders convened as a panel to engage with as many of the stakeholders as possible in the agricultural sector to explore what might be necessary reforms and a path forward; labelled the FARE panel (The Future of Agriculture and the Rural Economy in the Western Cape), the panel recommended working toward a common vision that included: the organisation of farm workers, changing the paternalistic relations on farms, negotiating forums engaging all stakeholders, recognizing the diversity of the rural economy, ensuring access to basic human rights, and reaching a more equitable spread of farm ownership (FARE Panel Report 2013). Yet underlying these important recommendations of what might be done, is the question of how to achieve these ends in the current context of such unequal power. What the farm worker protests suggest is that these changes are unlikely to happen without some levels of disruption and conflict; farm owners and even the current government are unlikely to make major concessions without significant outbursts of collective resistance. This means firstly, that organisations must not be afraid of these outbursts, even if they exist outside the institutional conflict management structures; organisations must find ways to embrace them as the critical drivers of change, rather than seeking to direct them into more legalistic channels. For some organisations this may be a cultural shift that requires relinquishing some level of control, while still providing material support.

The evidence from this study of the farm worker strikes and protests also suggests a broader set of organisational approaches or principles that might be considered to make these outbursts more possible and sustainable; the list of these potential approaches is not particularly new or revolutionary in nature

but speaks to the challenge for some of the current organisations of drawing on their existing schema while creating space for the emergence of new leadership, expanded participation, and alternative forms of organisation.

These approaches include:

Taking a community based organising approach rather than simply an employer-based, farm-by-farm approach. This would speak to the importance of settlement communities as centres of activity and relationships, where the logistics and possibilities for organising face fewer impediments. This study seems to suggest that a spatial dimension or locale is key to building organisation, even if it suggests a different kind of approach and challenge to dealing with work place issues.

Building organisation that speaks specifically to the new workforce, particularly seasonal and migrant workers. This could mean exploring different models of membership, particularly given that seasonal workers may be unemployed or working at alternative jobs during large parts of the year; this might also mean exploring a different set of services, facilitated through organisation, that addresses the different needs of these workers. Most importantly, organisations must be able to speak to both a workplace identity as well as the other and sometimes more permanent identities of this changing workforce; by drawing on the traditions, networks, and cultural repertoires of these workers, new resources, forms of struggle, and approaches to organisation might emerge. As Du Toit proposed back in 2005, "The focus of organisation needs to shift beyond the ranks of permanent, full-time, on-farm and mostly male workers, and greater priority has to be placed on organising the African and female workers who are so much more predominant in the seasonal and externalised labour force. Not only are these workers more vulnerable, but their priorities differ significantly and in gendered ways from those of permanent workers . . . it will be hard to organise these workers effectively if an artificial divide is made between their specifically farm-labour-related problems and all the other serious difficulties with rural service delivery and infrastructure provision that dwellers in rural informal settlements experience" (2005).

Organising and organisations that speak to a broad set of issues and build a social base beyond farm workers. As Du Toit points out above, artificially separating the work place issues faced by farm workers from the broader issues facing the rural poor narrows the relationship of farm workers and their communities to their social movement organisations. One question for trade unions is, is this approach best done within the trade union or in partnership with community based organisations, like we saw with the alliance between the trade union CSSAWU, the community based organisation Mawubuye, and the non-governmental organisation TCOE. This broader organisational approach also suggests adopting tactics and leadership development activities that allow broad participation—a "horizontal expansion"--rather than being limited to a select and designated number of worker leaders. This would allow for organisations to be "of" the community rather than simply allied with the community; this also means that

participants must be given meaningful and consequential roles in activities, which in some ways, can reduce centralised control and increase risk. We saw some elements of this horizontal expansion emerge in the participation of the unemployed, youth, and other community members in the farm worker protests. As Du Toit again explains, ". . .farm worker organisation, if it ever takes root on South Africa's farmed landscape, will much more closely resemble a broad based 'rural social movement' than a classical trade union" (2002).

Influencing organisations can be important in building leadership outside of moments of game-changing action. Providing a supportive organisational context that is focused on building capacity and leadership outside of the more immediate and direct action—stage setting—provides both confidence and connections amongst the rural poor; in many ways, non-governmental organisations—for example the role Women on Farms played in developing some of the leadership that then went on to play a critical role in the strike—may be best positioned to do this based on their access to outside funds and, because they are often not membership based, fewer worries about contestation with other organisations.

An orientation toward collective problems and collective action rather than individual problems and legalistic action. If it wasn't clear before, the farm owner backlash and the challenges that organisations have had in supporting workers during this time proves some of the limits of using the law and institutional processes to resolve conflict in situations of such unequal power; this is not to say that legal tools do not provide important sources of power but to suggest that generally employers hold the advantages of both time and resources in these processes. As one farm worker explained, "There are a lot of laws that protect rich people and makes the farmer think 'Let them [farm workers] protest and let them not even work once in a while and we [farm owners] will use the laws but they [farm workers] will eventually get hungry and have to come back to us'; if the laws were not there, the farmers would have a harder time" (Interview with Brink 2013). More importantly, the focus on individual problems detracts from a larger movement narrative about the purpose of a trade union or organisation, reducing its aspirational nature to a more reactive and defensive "job insurance" program. This organising approach is also disempowering to members, making them reliant on outside and "professional" services that undermine their ability to act independently on a more routine basis. This understanding creates a situation where, ". . . both [union] staff and members had developed and defended symbiotic understanding of their roles as business agents and consumers of services. . . this cultural dimension suggest both that members can grow as habituated to oligarchy as leaders, and that changing organisational culture is an important key to radical transformation" (Sherman & Voss 2000). During the course of this study, many workers and organisers who were interviewed still reflected this idea of the union as an outside entity meant to provide job protection services to workers in reaction to violation of their rights, rather than a collective vehicle for workers to exercise their voice around the much bigger issues that motivated the broader mass action; it would seem that a more aspirational mission and

narrative that understands the primary source of power coming from the disruptive ability of collective action would be critical for building agency, leadership, and broad participation. In other words, some trade unions might shift their organising approach from one that promises and takes control to one that challenges and gives control to workers.

Organisations finding common purpose across the region. Given that approximately ninety-five percent of farm workers in the Western Cape do not belong to trade unions and are likely not affiliated with other social movement organisations, it is interesting to note that there is still contestation between some of these organisations, particularly before and after the protests. And while there were clearly efforts at coordination which were successful during the protests, a higher level of relationship building and common purpose could be critical for creating opportunities for further mass action; as Ehreinreich from COSATU explains, "The prospects for success are greatly enhanced when we collaborate with other progressive organisations. This requires transparency and openness" (Interview in New Agenda 2013).

A strategic analysis, understanding, and approach to the changing agricultural sector. While this report has been focused on the organising and power built around mass collective action, organisations hoping to continue to drive and sustain change from below might explore other sources of power, alliances, or approaches based on a deep understanding of the global value chain and the needs and vulnerabilities of the respective actors in that chain. Many possible ideas emerged from workers and organisers throughout the protest—ideas about using the media to appeal to consumers in key export markets or directly pressuring supermarket chains to pay more for products—but these strategies do not seem, as of yet, to have taken shape in concrete campaigns. These kinds of approaches will be key to building and using the disruptive power of collective action; as Du Toit explains, ". . . any effective contestation will also need to consider what we might call a *vertical* expansion, engaging with the full panoply of questions raised by agro-food restructuring *all the way up and down the commodity chain*" (2002). The challenge for this kind of approach is that it might suggest alternative alliances—for example farm owners partnering with farm worker organisations to pressure global buyers—that are politically hard to imagine given the deeply entrenched discourse of the region; in some ways, various strategic choices may be "closed" off because the political and racialised lenses through which groups see their roles are set and un-mutable (Interview with Du Toit 2014).

In addition to the relatively concrete directions and explorations proposed above, the farm worker protests suggest that organisations who hope to empower farm workers and the rural poor must be able to support organic struggles without seeking to control them; while this approach would suggest higher levels of risk, it would also allow new repertoires of contention and new leadership to emerge. This approach would also suggest that organisations must shift away from seeking to resolve conflict or protect workers, instead seeking to amplify the voices within the struggle and provide tools for participants to make their own decisions. Secondly, organisations must be aware and able to navigate,

over time, between the energy of movement moments and the more incremental periods of leadership development; of course, key to this is recognising the difference between the two and not being afraid to "switch gears" when moments present themselves. Thirdly, we learn from the protests that even in the heat of large scale uprising, democratic processes matter; as we saw from the protests, lack of clear democratic processes and mandating undermines leadership accountability, ruptures important organisational feedback loops, and undermines the critical agency necessary for leadership development. Fourthly, the protests suggest that large scale, collective action does create some types of agency and skill development out of simple necessity; at the same time, action or mobilisation does not *automatically* develop this agency or leadership in ways that would allow for its greater participation over the longer term. While we know that most organisations have not greatly expanded their membership coming out of the protest, further research might explore whether the protests led to significantly increased agency and leadership skills among existing members and/or workers outside of formal organisations.

These lessons or approaches again highlight the complicated interactions of leadership, participation, democracy, organisation, and collective action. Yet maybe the most challenging aspect of rural transformation still resides in the nuts and bolts of how organisations can speak to the power struggle *on the farm*. In many ways, even a strong organisation of farm workers would face a disaggregation of its power in day to day workings of the farm, where individual farm owners still hold a decision making authority over smaller groups of workers mostly far removed from regulatory agencies or threats of mass collective action. This feeds a second organisational challenge of how to deal with the immediate expectations and needs of workers on the farm while at the same time building the longer term struggle needed to shift power. The protests and their outcomes do not seem to point to any easy answers or approaches to tackle these challenges; simply replicating the type and approach of disruptive, collective action does not seem to speak—at least as clearly as one might have hoped—to these deeper and longer term power imbalances. Without any clear answers, we might suggest only that it is critical for established organisations to try to create the space for "organisational experimentation" and more "learning by doing" in terms of farm worker resistance.

Further Research

This study has clearly been limited in its depth and breadth, only beginning to scratch the surface of understanding why the farm worker protests emerged when they did, how the protest spread, and have they been turned into organisation. More in depth research is clearly needed on all three of these questions; it would be particularly interesting to search for answers to these questions more broadly across the Western Cape, seeking a greater understanding of how workers and communities learned about, engaged, and emerged from the protest in the differing contexts of farming communities around the region.

In addition, an exploration of the protests and possibilities for further organisation could benefit from a much deeper understanding of seasonal and migrant workers and their relationship to permanent workers; how do these groups perceive each other, interact with each other, build social networks, and perceive the farm worker and social movement organisations that do exist. Further research could provide a much deeper understanding of this changing workforce and whether, as many interviewees indicated, there really is a "different kind of worker"—with alternative levels of education, experiences, and understanding—who is transforming the agricultural workforce beyond simply the shifting structure of employment relationships; in conjunction with this, further research is clearly needed on the on-going re-negotiation of the paternalistic social construction and how this is breaking down, shifting, and/or finding new forms or outlets.

Maybe most importantly, further research should be pursued around the outcomes of the protest, particularly on leadership, action, and organisation. This study is clearly incomplete in trying to answer questions about why organisations have not grown in the midst of this upheaval of participation, why workers were willing to engage in the risky activity of unprotected strikes but still express fear when joining a trade union, and if new capacity and opportunity for organisation were built beyond the more superficial measure of expanded membership. In particular, further research might dig more deeply into the interaction between informal and formal organisation to determine how and if there might be new and emerging forms of organisation, struggle, and power coming from the experience of the protests. Finally, in the interest of shifting power and transformation in the rural sector, further research should be done to more deeply understand the global supply chain and its ongoing impact on possible points of struggle and the changing production process.

Contradictions and Future Protests

The farm worker uprising of late 2012 and early 2013 was an episode of mass, collective defiance in a region and an industry where most observers thought this kind of protest was unthinkable or undoable. The eruption of the protest, its rapid spread, and its outcome are full of contradictions—vulnerability and risk-taking, courage and fear, pride and failure, beauty and brutality. In the protests we see the expansion of a seasonal workforce racked with vulnerability and poverty, and, in some cases, used as replacement labour during the strike; at the same time, it was these seasonal workers who, in many cases, initiated the strike, rebelled against their working conditions, and took the risk of leading these actions. In the protests we also see farm workers—permanent and seasonal—who, most for the very first time, had the courage to engage in an unprotected strike as well as battle the police, in some cases losing their lives in an effort to disrupt the normal workings of an unfair system. At the same time, these same workers have over and over again cited fear as the explanation for why so few workers are in trade unions or have engaged in any sort of overt and confrontational forms of resistance on the farms.

In the outcome of the protests, we see workers taking great pride and hope in their display of action and courage, feeling that the strike proved to the farm owners what they were capable of; at the same time, these same workers express a sense of frustration, failure, and futility that conditions for farm workers have not gotten better or have worsened after the strike. Finally, when travelling around the Western Cape, one cannot help but be struck by the incredible beauty of the mountains and lush valleys, filled with row after row of citrus trees and grape vines that seem to go on forever. At the same time, this beauty is built on a brutality and dominance by white farm owners over coloured and African workers and their communities, an inequality of power and wealth that is shocking to behold; the land that has held this beauty and fertility for so many years also has a painfully dark underside of oppression, exploitation, and racism that carries through to this day.

In conclusion, the story of the farm worker uprising of late 2012 and early 2013 on the Western Cape is one where the ongoing re-negotiation of spatial and social constructions of power and relationships combined with a spark of agency and organisation to spread across the region, creating the potential for a new narrative and even a new future to be written. Recognising that the moment of this uprising was not predicted or orchestrated, the question remains as to whether this movement moment can be translated—through leadership, empowerment, and further action—into ongoing transformation. As Piven and Cloward explain, "One can never predict with certainty when the 'heaving and rumblings of the social foundations' will force up large-scale defiance. But if organisers and leaders want to help those movements emerge, they must always proceed as if protest were possible. They may fail. The time may not be right. But then, they may sometimes succeed" (1977). The hope is that these unprecedented protests created greater confidence and agency for farm workers and their organisations while raising up their story of unfairness and injustice, even if the protests have yet to drive clear shifts in the power balance between farm workers and farm owners; it is only through continuing as if further protests are possible that farm workers may uncover new paths to the dignity, equality, and respect they deserve.

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