



**‘Women of Steel’: Articulations of empowerment and livelihood practices in the
Dwars River Valley, Western Cape.**

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Thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Anthropology at the
Stellenbosch University

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March 2009



DECLARATION

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OPSOMMING

Die bestaanswyses van vroue word nie slegs in die uitleef daarvan waargeneem nie, maar is dikwels ook 'n fokus van gespreksvoering. Die uitgangspunt van hierdie tesis is dat vroue se bestaanswyses metodies, kompleks en kontekstueel is. Dit word begrond deur uiteenlopende prosesse, strukture, diskoerse, en alledaagse gebruike wat plaaslik gedefinieer word en globaal gebonde is. Hierdie tesis ondersoek vroue se artikulering van bemagtiging en agentskap wat sentraal tot hul gemeenskap en entrepreneurskap aktiwiteite staan. Vroue se sosiale handelinge en reaksies tot struikelblokke en transformasie wat hulle in die vallei in die gesig gestaar het, is beduidend van 'n plek van worsteling.

Hierdie etnografie word toegelig deur plaaslike vroue se perspektiewe en artikulering van bemagtiging en fokus op hoe hulle hul bestaanswyse *beoefen* het: hoe vroue bestaanswyse taktieke gemanipuleer, onderhandel en ook uitgevoer het as reaksie op plaaslike, nasionale en globale beperkinge. Hierdie studie vertel hoe vroue in 'n landelike vallei van die Wynlande in die Wes-Kaap (Suid-Afrika) praat oor hoe hul 'bemagtig' voel, ten spyte van beperkinge. Hulle voer aan dat hul produktiewe oomblikke vertoon en gebruik maak van geleenthede om bo beperkinge uit te styg. Hulle voel dat mans oor die algemeen passief in hul reaksie op krisis is. Vroue se verhale van bemagtiging in die Dwars Rivier Vallei roep beelde op van 'vroue van staal' en 'oomblikke' van agentskap. Dit het bygedra tot die herskepping van plaaslike gender rolle en die hervestiging van idees oor 'gepaste' werk vir vroue.

Sleutelwoorde: vroue; bestaanswyses, gender, ontwikkeling, praktyk, vertellings, respekterbaarheid, vroue se entrepreneurskap, agentskap, prestasie.

ABSTRACT

Women's livelihoods are not only experienced differently, but are articulated in different ways. This dissertation begins from the understanding that women's livelihoods are processual, complex and contextual. They are embedded in multifarious processes, structures, discourses and everyday practices, which are locally defined and globally linked. This thesis interrogates women's articulations of empowerment and agency that were central to their community and entrepreneurial activities. Women's social actions and responses to constraints and transformation they encountered in the valley were sites of struggle.

Informed by local women's perspectives and articulations of empowerment, this ethnography focuses on how women *practiced* their livelihoods: how they manoeuvred, negotiated and performed their livelihood tactics in response to local, national and global constraints. The study narrates how women in a rural valley in the Winelands of the Western Cape (South Africa) spoke of how they felt 'empowered' despite constraints. They claimed that they exhibited productive moments and harnessed opportunities to rise above constraints. They felt that in general men in their communities were passive in their response to crisis in the valley. Women's narratives of empowerment in the Dwars River Valley invoked ideas of 'women of steel' and 'moments' of agency. These helped to re-fashion local gender orders and rehabilitate notions of 'appropriate' women's work.

Keywords: women, livelihoods, empowerment, gender, development, practice, narrative, respectability, women's entrepreneurship, agency, performance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement goes to the National Research Foundation (NRF) for providing financial assistance for this research project.

Also, I would like to especially thank my promoter Kees van der Waal for his support during the phases of this research project. His dedication to and knowledge of the complexities and development issues in the DRV is exemplary and his faith in my research abilities unwavering. I would too like to express many thanks to Bernard Dubbeld for his ideas. Included in such dedication and support is my dear friend Linda Nichols. Linda took me under her wing from the very beginning of the project and introduced me to many people in the valley. Another local in the valley, Quintin Fortuin, was an overflowing well of information. Elroy Cyster, Wade Thijs, Jeronemay and Martin were especially helpful in allowing me access to historical and development information in the valley.

And then there are the ladies in Kylemore, Pniel (and Johannesdal) and Lanquedoc without whom this story of livelihoods would not exist. Special thanks to my friends Siena, Charlene, Flo, Aunti Nosie, Aunti Eva, Wilma, Aunti Ona, Hazel, Denise, Elisabeth, Daleen, Veronica, Rhonda, Wilma, Debbie, Aunti Dini and all the other women who crossed my path during my walkabouts in the communities of the valley, and whom I interviewed. To my dear Stellenbosch friends: B, Heather, Shirley, Louise, Kate, Neil, Keith, Arno, Francois, Alet, Greg, Lauren and Chris, I salute your efforts in reminding me what being a student is all about whilst forever showing your faith in my abilities and being there for me when things got tough. To my colleagues at the HSRC for opening up many doors, giving me access to support, both technically and emotionally – I thank you all. And to my family, many thanks for your encouragement and support through the study years. Look – I made it!

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Anglo American
AAF	Anglo American Farms
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BIF	Boschendal Interim Forum
BSDI	Boschendal Sustainable Development Initiative
BTT	Boschendal Treasury Trust
CPA	Communal Property Association
CWDM	Cape Winelands District Municipality
DFID	Department for International Development
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DRCA	Dwars River Community Association
DRV	Dwars River Valley
ESTA	Extension of Security of Tenure Act
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
LED	Local Economic Development
LHA	Lanquedoc Housing Association
LHP	Lanquedoc Housing Project
PBO	Public Benefit Organisation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RFF	Rhodes Fruit Farms
RFG	Rhodes Fruit Group
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SM	Stellenbosch Municipality

In *Jane Eyre*, Brönte wrote:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making pudding and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (Brönte 1982:112).

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Introduction

Ons vroue in die gemeenskap is sterker as mans – ons is 'vroue van staal'; ons is 'dorp supporters' en is bemagtig om dinge te sê en doen in dié plek. Die mans sit die hele dag op die sypaaie en kyk hoe die karre op en af ry – nee, ons is die broodwenners nou – ons vrouens vat enige werk, want ons weet die kinders wag by die huis.

We women in the community are stronger than men – we are 'women of steel'; we are 'community-supporters' and we are empowered to say and do things in this place. The men sit the whole day on the pavements watching the cars drive up and down – no, we are now the breadwinners – we women take any work because we know that the children are waiting at home.

Hannah was a woman in her early 40s who had been living in the DRV (Dwars River Valley) her whole life. When she spoke to me one afternoon at the community clinic in the village of Kylemore, fairly early in my fieldwork, I sensed a strong tone in her voice as she spoke about the work and important roles she and her fellow women performed in the community. While acknowledging their roles as wives and mothers, I found that many women in the communities I chose to visit in the valley claimed they felt empowered in the sense that they were entrepreneurs or important players in welfare, social work, community mobilisation and local ward councils in their communities. They claimed they were the ones 'policing' the youth to make sure they did not get into trouble or get influenced by the *inkommers* (people associated with negative outside influences that had recently made their mark in the valley – especially the influence of Tik on the youth). Many women called themselves *dorp supporters* (community supporters) and in saying so they articulated a moral or social superiority in their social actions and practices.

Through my conversations with many women in these communities, I learnt that many women were the primary breadwinners of their households in that they asserted responsibility for bringing in the money. Taking up this responsibility made them feel they had a degree of financial authority in their households. Through much of my reading on women and their often-subordinated places in societies, I sensed a different situation in the DRV communities to the often-portrayed notion of women as 'powerless victims.' Many women in these communities did not perceive themselves as powerless; they often had productive moments or 'moments of agency' that allowed them to assert claims of strength and resilience.

This thesis is about women living in three communities in a semi-rural fruit and wine farming valley in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. It investigates how and why some women in the valley's communities claimed they were strong and resilient in the face of transitions and constraints. It also seeks to

understand the implications of these idioms and representations. What emerged through my analysis was that women's everyday practices and tactics allowed them to deal with certain adversities.

The implication of women's expressions and various idioms of empowerment in the valley is that in adopting the term empowerment and giving it their own definitions, some women were able to politically mark and balance out their place in the valley and make sense of the world around them. As they portrayed men as often failing to meet their social and financial commitments to their households and communities, women said their social actions and utterances evoked moments of agency, social leadership and success (although the success of these moments was relative to the different circumstances of women). Men's failure in these communities was defined not only by their lack of employment, but moreover the manner in which men dealt with their unemployment. Women said men were passive in their reactions to the issue of poverty and unemployment and other community problems in their communities. I heard some women say that men "drank their days away" and made no effort to find alternative work:

What's the most hurting for me is to watch men go to the shebeens while others are trying to keep their heads above water. Men in Kylemore are unlike black African men in the rest of the DRV. The black men will go into town (Stellenbosch) with their placards saying they are painters or builders or whatever – these men, they will stand all day in town waiting for contract work and walk around to the houses asking for jobs. The *bruin* (coloured) men here in Kylemore sit and wait for things to fall in their laps. The women go find domestic work, but the men are lazy and wait for handouts.

In my interpretations of women's utterances, I discovered that women were viewing crisis and constraints in the valley as productive moments, not as pathological.

Women were reconstructing local gender hierarchies and placing moral ideas about themselves in positive lights. They ranked themselves as being, in many respects, morally superior to men. Gender expectations that men were meant to be resilient and strong, bring in the money, show their support for church activities, play a central role in disciplining the children, and look after the interests of the community were not being lived up to (some women alleged). Women harnessed skills training opportunities and entered empowering spaces in attempts to develop and skill themselves. For these reasons, many women articulated that they were respectable members of their community.

In this study, women's empowerment refers to the process, or rather, to the practices that enabled women to challenge constraints and take advantage of opportunities in the prevailing power-infused relations of the valley. Though there are many assumptions embodied in a term like empowerment, empowerment was used and manipulated in the valley context as an idiom for past suffering, new-found strengths, and accommodations or subversions of gender expectations. Through various subversions of reigning discourses, their utterances of strength enabled entrepreneurial women in the valley to legitimate certain livelihood and

community practices and gender arrangements that were not previously considered the norm in the DRV. Their utterances of empowerment also reflected women trying to distance themselves from constraints and disempowering situations in the valley. There were degrees or levels of how women could convincingly claim their strength in the valley in light of unemployment and women abuse.

Aim

My research, which compares women's perspectives in different communities in a specific local context, seeks to locate and understand the local discourses of empowered women and inert men articulated in the field. The characterisation 'women of steel' as a locally configured and articulated discourse of empowerment was generally accepted by many women in the valley. These assertions implied certain assumptions about women and their practices. While some women's assertions implied that they were not passive, I wanted to unpack the reality of their utterances and determine whether their claims to empowerment could be justified according to their situations, or whether they sometimes manifested as romantic declarations in other constraining contexts.

This thesis seeks to interrogate women's articulations of empowerment, looking to see whether or not women were passive actors in the valley. I wanted to find out what broader processes structured women's practices and what actions allowed them to rise above constraints in the valley and claim certain ideas about themselves. The study identified how women's lives were structured by their material and ideological realities: how conditions of unemployment and poverty, class and respectability and history shaped different understandings, constructions and practices of livelihoods and entrepreneurship. It also suggests that while women's articulations were local, they were tied to national and global references of empowerment and entrepreneurship. The study aims to highlight the ways that some women negotiated, contested, resisted and accepted these conditions and ideas.

Motivation

When I started this ethnography, I had a vague, embryonic conception of what my research would entail. I initially thought of looking at tourism development in the valley, an interest that would expand on my Honours thesis on township tourism in an African township in Stellenbosch. However, while the tourism development potential of the valley was there, some of my initial observations and interviews revealed that bureaucratic support for tourism development at the time in the DRV was low. Although many proposals and promises had been put down on paper, it seemed that tourism might have limited potential as a research topic. This is not to say there was nothing to research; the perceived lack of municipal capacity and the lack of stakeholder commitment to tourism development by residents in the valley could have been my research topic from the start. But what emerged from initial visits were women's emotional reactions to this lack of tourism development, and by default, lack of entrepreneurial development. In the light of changing

circumstances in employment in the valley and other societal transformations, women felt that entrepreneurial and social development were significant priorities for their communities' development. Talking with women who ran the homestays, which had become forgotten products of a local tourism-based initiative, I sensed undertones of a consciousness of empowerment despite their businesses being unsuccessful.

I noticed that these women had their own meanings of success in their practices of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurs claimed independence and responsibility, and an overall sense of worth, just from having started a business or 'doing' their entrepreneurship, whether thriving or not. I followed their claims. Their articulations led me to visit other social and entrepreneurial activities outside the homestays to examine the flow of women's language of empowerment and various social practices. Overall, my correspondence revealed that there were few individuals, researchers, municipal officers or institutions concerning themselves with women and entrepreneurship in the valley, notwithstanding social and community development.

My interest in conducting a study of women's empowerment and entrepreneurial practices in the DRV was motivated by a growing awareness within the valley's communities that socioeconomic and tourism development had the potential to drive the social and economic marketability of the area. Renewed marketability could rejuvenate the valley and held the potential to promote sustainable social and economic growth. Local approaches to development, such as housing, LED (local economic development), the Boschendal Sustainable Development Initiative (BSDI) and infrastructure betterment reflected global ideas of development such as 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'sustainability.' The women I interviewed - most of whom had low educational qualifications and important responsibilities in their households and their families - were seeking opportunities and were involved in local, national and global processes to improve their livelihood situations, but many times had to seek informal ways of achieving this. These development processes often failed to live up to women's expectations, and such failures were setbacks for women faced with crafting their own and their families' livelihoods.

While numerous studies have focused on women and their economic participation in agricultural production in Southern Africa (see Afshar 1991), few theorists have adapted specific gender perspectives and theories to the livelihood realities, complexities and particularities of regional conditions that shape livelihood and entrepreneurial practices in Southern Africa (see for exceptions Pratt 2006; Akeroyd 1991). In Lipton, de Klerk and Lipton's (1996) volume on rural livelihoods in the Western Cape, strong attention was given to the significance of agriculture in rural livelihoods. The volume included papers that reflected doubts about the capabilities of South African agriculture to generate increased livelihoods. However, the authors failed to

discuss the possibility of people working around agriculture to include multiple income-generating activities and informal sources of livelihood-making. By over-stressing limitations, the volume overlooked the agency people can possess to negotiate or *practice* their livelihoods to their benefits.

Research questions

How convincing were women's claims to empowerment in the DRV setting? In light of constraints, can their claims be justified? Or were many of them romantic ideas that women articulated to distance themselves from constraints? What assumptions are implied in their use of empowerment and how are these different to dominant uses of the term? What are the implications of women's utterances and social practices in the DRV in the ways that they re-configure gender norms?

Theory

Women's everyday articulations and practices evoked many interpretations and meanings. They tried to demonstrate moments of agency. To interpret the research questions I needed to frame my analysis around women's language. The women in the valley who were interviewed gave stories and statements that constructed narratives of women who were 'women of steel'. The theories and ethnographies used in my thesis helped develop multifaceted interpretations of these narratives, even where these interpretations conflict with one another. Ethnography as a method delves deeper into social phenomena and understands local ideas and constructions and consumptions of global terms like empowerment.

In order to signify how women in the valley chose to speak about their livelihoods and the intricate processes shaping them, Bourdieu's (1991) metaphor of 'linguistic capital' will be reworked into a theoretical agenda of practice. Linguistic capital, or what I would rather refer to as *linguistic power*, has strong links with voice and subjectivity. The concept should be seen as encompassing the power women wielded to negotiate in how they spoke of their livelihood strategies and how their articulations of empowerment challenged or adapted to existing power relations.

This study challenges the lack of attention to and qualitative research geared towards the livelihood and entrepreneurial practices of coloured women in the Western Cape. The frameworks of entrepreneurship, empowerment and livelihoods are too economic in nature to capture women's negotiations and power relations. While there have been female writers abroad and on the continent doing research about Africa, there is still a need for more qualitative, micro-level studies that examine the heterogeneity of livelihood practices, the diversity of contexts and local-level opportunities, and negotiations found in regional and local

contexts in South Africa. Moreover, development authors writing about South Africa have largely failed to underline constructions of empowerment and entrepreneurship that are produced in certain developmental and policy contexts and by certain people. Those who have managed to produce such inquiries tend to get trapped into mainstream gender discourses which often ignored women's visibility, activity, and constructed representations from a women's perspective. There is a need for resident researchers to become aware of the need to analyze specificities and to pursue gender-sensitive research that is oriented on a women's perspective and gives precedence to relations of power and contestation (Salo 2003, Cornwell 2004). This research project seeks to contribute to understanding the ways women practice, negotiate, resist or deny various livelihood strategies and so allow more open debates on women's subjectivity, empowerment, agency and development. It remains important that "the debate on empowerment be widened to balance different cases, and contextualised to illustrate specificities" (Afshar 1998:2).

Limitations of the study make it difficult to generalize to the broader population of women in South Africa. This speaks to the challenge of producing more comparative ethnographies of women's livelihood practices not only in South Africa, but also around the globe. Also, the study limits findings to a population with its own local history, culture and experiences of development. An upside of such limitation is that this study can generate different and more contextualised understandings of women's everyday practices and context-specific constructions of gender and entrepreneurship.

Context

In the context of present day South Africa women in poor and divided populations like the DRV live with the consequences of poverty like domestic violence, women and child abuse, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and gender violence. Such difficulties are exacerbated for single women and vast numbers under-educated and unemployed youth. Particular employment constraints also affected people in the DRV. Along with the consequences of land reform processes in the valley, unemployment was a result of casualisation in the agricultural labour pools and reflected the marginalisation of many South Africans living away from urban areas of economic growth. High levels of unemployment affected men and women in the valley; however, they reacted and responded to these conditions of unemployment and difficult circumstances differently and had different coping mechanisms and levels of resilience.

Methods

Observations in the field and interviews are central to any ethnographic study. Ethnography is described as a "family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and richly writing up the encounter, respecting...the irreducibility of human experience: understanding the representation of

experience, presenting and explaining the culture in which this experience is located, but also acknowledging that experience is entrained in the flow of history” (O’Reilly 2005:2). Taking an ethnographic perspective, and considering culture, “we must consider [different] people’s values, ideas and beliefs, their identity and feelings: how they view the world and their place in it, and what is meaningful to them” (Tucker 1996:4). Through studying women’s activities and their linguistic practices, I wanted to know if women felt empowered, what empowerment meant in their terms, and why women claimed empowerment. To capture the metaphors and social signs of women’s practices, a theory of practice buttressed narrative as a central ethnographic methodology in this study.

Narrative is a methodological tool that is used in this study to document the ways in which women speak about their lives and important roles in their communities. Narrative is described as a socially symbolic act that expounds the subjective life worlds of people and which conveys contextual complexities (Jameson 2001). Thus, narrative is a political vehicle through which women in the valley articulated notions of empowerment, agency and development and challenged power relations. As Hymes puts it, “notions of language never seem given as findings of a neutral science...but always seem partly relative to persons, purposes and predilections” (Hymes 1979:307). Language is then an intimate process - which is relative to the person negotiating it, the contexts and *raison d’êtres* in which it is spoken, and shaped by politically and socially constructed mindsets.

Through considering women’s discursive practice of speaking about their lives and livelihoods, globally used concepts such as empowerment came to be theoretically located and understood within the local situation. This further revealed how female positions in the valley were socially constructed and politically performed. This study considers how empowerment was manifested in women’s lives; how women perceived themselves as powerful in relation to others.

Chapter outline

The ‘Introduction,’ which is Chapter One, introduces the main objectives of the study and gives a broad overview of the context and methods used to understand and interrogate the research questions and subsequent ethnographic enquiries. Women’s practices in the DRV were not only lived, but are spoken about too. This thesis interrogates women’s articulations of empowerment, agency and community development that were central to their everyday practices and entrepreneurial activities.

Chapter 2 critiques synchronic frameworks that have conceptualised terms like empowerment, gender, entrepreneurship and livelihoods. While I claim that these conventional development frameworks are important starting points for understanding how these terms have been defined and used to analyse social

phenomena, it was hard for me to prepare an intellectual argument based on these approaches. What I conclude at the end of this critique is that these approaches and conceptual tools were not accessible to me in understanding what was going on in the valley. I allude to the benefits of using a theory of practice to understand and interpret my findings. Foregrounding the link between structure and agency, the theory promises to provide room for a better understanding of women's socially constructed expressions of empowerment and multi-layered forms of social actions.

Chapter Three is titled 'The Research Process' and discusses how this study made use of anthropological research strategies. I explain the important contribution of ethnography to in-depth understandings of women's worlds and practices. I argue that a feminist narrative methodology provides the best tools for capturing women's subjective perspectives of their lives and their articulations of empowerment.

Chapter Four is titled 'Conditions of Freedom and Constraint: Transformation in the Dwars River Valley'. To ground the analysis, this chapter presents the context and ideological conditions and power structures that shaped many DRV women's lives 'from above'. The slave and mission history, apartheid histories and development futures of the valley are introduced as significant stages around which the practices of women were, are and will be formed.

Chapter Five is named 'Supporting the Dorp – being a respectable woman' and presents a discussion of the different communities. The chapter more importantly reveals women's claims to a common thread of social responsibility. The chapter pays attention to the separate villages and the social stratification between and within them. It identifies women's needs and priorities and how they were responding to conditions.

Through narratives based on interviews with women entrepreneurs, Chapter Six, 'Performing Gender and Entrepreneurship in the Dwars River Valley,' focuses on women's roles, attitudes, and perceptions towards their entrepreneurial participation in the valley. It delineates the localized motivations of women who were becoming or already considered themselves to be entrepreneurs within their communities. The chapter demonstrates how women's entrepreneurial activities were embedded in and performed according to and in contestation of diverse social identities and how women reinterpreted conventional notions of women's work.

In Chapter Seven, 'Sites of Struggle: Interpreting women's words and practices' I make sense of women's articulations as political practices. I conceptualise the notions of gender, empowerment and livelihoods in relation to the theoretical concept of practice. Language is argued as the most powerful discursive tool many women used to lay claims to empowerment and articulate idioms and metaphors that helped them to

destabilize local gender orders and ideas about responsible citizens in the valley. The chapter argues that a theory of practice gives livelihoods a more dynamic character, instead of situating livelihoods within a synchronic framework.

Chapter Eight, my Conclusion seeks to answer the ultimate question: Can the women I met and spoke with be considered 'women of steel'? It surfaced that 'women of steel' was a widely accepted idiom for many women in the valley. However, the expression had various configurations and was used to interpret what women were doing in the valley and how they exhibited agency in responding to constraints that they felt men could not successfully respond to. 'Women of steel' constituted an ideology that was legitimated around re-fashioned gender orders and claimed against certain 'gender-appropriate' or acceptable entrepreneurial pursuits women were engaging in.

Conclusion

I do not question whether women's livelihood practices were successful, but rather *how* women's livelihood practicing and entrepreneurship functioned and played out in the DRV? The thesis demonstrates women's struggles against various forms of cultural articulations and contextual constraints to portray themselves and redeem themselves as 'women of steel'. Empowerment as an articulation of changing gender orders was culturally, socially and critically analysed. This ethnography targets the gap in South African development research to signify the economic and social realities of women, and how women go about constructing, negotiating and resisting these realities. This can lead to a better understanding of development, empowerment complexities and issues around women, and especially an under-represented category in development literature, namely the coloured women residing in the DRV.

CHAPTER 2: CRITIQUING CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES OF EMPOWERMENT, GENDER, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LIVELIHOODS

Introduction

This study sets out to understand how women's livelihoods and everyday practices were to some degree encapsulated in discourses and related to broader structural processes which are often hidden from local contexts (Ferguson 1990). In this chapter, I signpost broader conventional development discourses around gender and empowerment, entrepreneurship and livelihoods. While these constructs were referred to regularly in the literature, what materialized is that through my fieldwork and ethnographic interpretations, their theoretical strengths proved somewhat weak in making sense of the complexities and relationships I uncovered in the field. This critique of the more synchronic frameworks of livelihoods, gender, entrepreneurship and empowerment reveals how a theory of practice became better suited to using and re-conceptualising these concepts in my thesis. Practice theory that encompassed 'agency' and 'performance' helped to unlock the door to more diachronic exploration of women's empowerment articulations.. This chapter critiques hegemonic, state-pronounced conceptualizations of empowerment and how gender *as a practice* is neglected within empowerment and entrepreneurial discourses.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a fully-loaded term that goes as a taken-for-granted good. Referred to as the 'process where people become capacitated', its alignment with terms like development and agency becomes problematic when it ignores the power structuring forces that empower or disempower people, or which individuals can manipulate to capacitate themselves. By defining empowerment as a process that gives power to people, such conventional views undermine the power people already have or manifest to overcome their circumstances. Empowerment does not need a measurable outcome, but rather a relative and subjective signifier of an individual's agency to shape his or her destiny.

Empowerment is a phrase common to development policy and practice.. It conjures up warm fuzzy feelings of increased participation in development processes and entitlement for those 'poor' and 'disadvantaged' people who suffered under historically unjust conditions. In South Africa, the word is used in big business deals and employment policies, and is associated technically with the economic empowerment of women and black people. However, the blanket of empowerment rhetoric is full of holes, and especially fails to warm up the pockets and esteem of those who have been 'added on' to the empowerment train.

Understandings in state pronouncements that empowerment is a collective determination of people

participating from the bottom-up is a constricted vision that disallows the subjective and individual strength of women and black people to be recognized.

More often than not, mainstream gender theories tend to put women forward as victims, those who need to be 'empowered' or helped or are unconscious of their strengths. Within modern development-speak, the 'third world', the 'poor', and the 'previously disadvantaged' (which include women) become target groups, those who are subject to the current development objective of including people who have been 'left out' of the development process. Placed in the emerging category of the 'disempowered', 'disadvantaged' and 'targeted', these groups ought to become both 'empowered' and 'beneficiaries' through 'participatory development'¹ (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 106).

Participatory development is claimed to encompass public participation in all decision-making processes and participation in the implementation of development policies and projects. Within this discourse, the notion of empowerment seems to imply recognition of the need for changes in the distribution of power, calling for two-way decision-making processes and to put a people-centred approach to all levels of development (Davids, Theron and Maphunye 2005). However, within formalised views like empowerment and participation, there are ideas, notions, idioms and informal discourses of empowerment that arise 'from below' but often remain ignored and which may be in contrast to visions of empowerment 'from above'. These informal and locally constructed terms of empowerment are embedded in local conditions and ideologies, and are meaningful to the people using them. By underscoring these articulations of empowerment, and by hearing women's voices, the other levels of empowerment can be revealed.

Where it is often implied that empowerment can be *done to* people, or *given to* groups via programmes and development interventions, the definition which is often taken is that empowerment is a *process* by which peoples, organizations or groups who are powerless become aware of their situations and actively try to change their own situations (Goddard 2000; Afshar 1998; Marilee 1995; Friedmann 1992). Becoming conscious of one's marginalized situation is thought to be the first step in realising better circumstances. This popular concept of empowerment is in part drawn from the ideas of Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1970). He claimed that empowerment is "based on the need to stimulate and support people's abilities to understand, question and resist the structural reasons for their poverty through learning, organization and action" (Freire quoted in Gardner and Lewis 1996:116). The rubric of empowerment, that is, how empowerment should be attained, is seen to have evolved concurrently with this bottom-up approach. Some of the wider forces prompting such shifts in development thinking included "the desire for

¹ Particularly, empowerment is associated with women, gender, health, education and development, especially in Africa (see Cheater 1999).

democracy in the developing world and varied pressures for greater accountability in public actions” (Elliot 1994:126).

In challenging this thinking, Van Driel asks what it is that one wants to achieve with empowerment (van Driel 2004:42)? Within the development world, empowerment and its surrounding discourses have been used to imply:

good governance, legitimacy and creativity for a flourishing private sector; transformation of economies to promote self-reliant, human-centred development; promotion of community self-help with emphasis on the process rather than on the completion of particular projects; participation to enable people to understand the reality of their social, political, economic, ecological and cultural environments and to take steps to improve their situations (James 1999: 19).

Regarding ‘self-mobilization,’ the term empowerment and all its trappings is harnessed to refer to the process of individuals and communities (and typically the ‘poor’ and ‘marginalised’) becoming agents of their own development by increasing the political, social or economic strength or capabilities of individuals or groups. This ambitious process implies that empowerment is done to a person; that the ‘powerless’ *are included* by those who have more power; that people might acquire empowerment via stronger hands.

McWhirther further points out the powerlessness of people inherent in empowerment rhetoric:

Empowerment is the process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others and support the empowerment of others in their community (Davids et al. 2005:21).

While such rhetoric relates how outsiders cannot impose the process of empowerment, one needs to consider the ways in which empowerment interventions *can* be imposed on people, and that the practice of empowerment often has unintended consequences.

As discussed by Edgar Pieterse, empowerment is the latest catchphrase that remains un-criticised and fully-loaded with “technical prescripts” and political assumptions that are manipulated in various ways to advantage some and not others. He argues that it often serves to “reproduce the structural disempowerment of the poor” – particularly in South Africa (Pieterse 2008:69). In his chapter, Pieterse criticizes state-driven empowerment as a *passive delivery* and an instrumentalist and narrow approach to participation (Pieterse 2008:70).

In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid has left the country with deep crevices of structural inequality and poverty. This characterizes the marginal or unbalanced participation of certain ‘categories’ of people in economic growth in the country. This is coupled with an overall low growth in the economy. Subsequently,

empowerment as a buzzword in South Africa became embedded in a core legislative product, specifically focused on BBBEE (Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment) (Act 53 of 2003). The legislation is about 'improvement' and promoting 'equitable growth'. Located at the heart of progress and development in South Africa, the notion was harnessed to foreshadow specific, quantifiable, and lasting change - the restoration of human dignity and a commitment to non-racialism. In the South African context, BBBEE is the correcting of historical imbalances, and humanizing the system that has systematically shut out the majority from sustainable participation in the economy (van Schalkwyk 2003). This is where Pieterse (2008) foreshadows the major weakness of BBEEE implementation in South Africa.

The economic impetus of the strategy was to stratify the economy into a first and second economy. By doing so, government hoped to strengthen the more advanced and skilled sector of the first economy to become more globally competitive and accelerate growth in this sector. With BEE scorecards in place, it was understood that through securing a fast growing and BEE compliant first economy, the second, 'informal', economy could become integrated with the first through various upliftment acts and programmes. The policy blanket of this intervention includes the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998), Enterprise Development and the BBEEE Act. These acts accumulate much empowerment rhetoric in South Africa. What remains is that the benefits of growth in the first economy have pushed the second economy further toward the margins. With the scores of unemployed youth and the struggling momentum of the second economy, economic empowerment seems to be merriment for the small black elite whose scorecards act as their ticket to actual growth.

The contemporary rhetoric of BBEEE and the refocused Local Economic Development (LED) pronouncements in South Africa (RSA 2000) frame many development policy outlines and skills training programmes geared towards disadvantaged communities, youth and women. However, the crisis of unemployment among these target groups remains a harsh reality. It can be said that South Africa's empowerment appendage has done little to satisfy the needs of the marginalized populations and has instead fostered an increasing black middle and upper class (Gqubule 2006). Empowerment, like development, is a term usually articulated 'from above' that ignores the complexities and power relations that may make participatory processes difficult to achieve.

The term encompasses many articulations that cannot be taken at face value. The assumed homogeneity of target populations also disrupts collective or equal participation of people with different levels of marginalisation. Pieterse (2008) criticizes state-driven institutional frameworks and development operations and services into which the poor must insert themselves if they want access to resources. He argues that them being assumed to be agents of their own development undermines their empowerment even further.

The poor and marginalised often face barriers of lack of information or the lack of local service delivery to allow them more leverage to participate meaningfully in their own upliftment (Pieterse 2008:71). That is not to say, ironically, that they require the welfarist approach of many funding bodies such as the National Development Agency in South Africa that gives them access to financial support.. Pieterse laments these bodies' corruption and insufficient structural support to provide small, micro and medium enterprises with mechanisms that allow citizens to make wise decisions on how to use their funding in ways that could lead to self-assurance and development. In reality, funding bodies often fail to produce transformative outcomes through their financial contributions, thus hindering skills development and consequently obstructing many citizens' full participation in the formal and informal economies in South Africa (Pieterse 2008:71).

Although women are not the primary targets of the BBBEE Act, they are beneficiaries of the provisions laid out in the act. Former President Nelson Mandela said in his inaugural speech (April 1994):

It is vitally important that all structures of government should fully understand [that] freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression, unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered in all spheres of life as equals...

Such a popular assessment of women's empowerment supports romantic ideas of life-enhancing processes, entitlement and redefining power relations. This highlights how ideas of empowerment and upliftment are often professed without successful implementation or practice of these ideals. In participatory development, empowerment projects, and democratic constitutions, intentions of development and empowerment do not always pan out as expected.

The power relations and struggles inherent in achieving ideals often skew the outcomes of well-intended programs to ameliorate disempowerment. Often, the presumption that people acquire the empowerment process consciously undermines the complexities of the power relations implied in empowerment and overlooks the rich and important processes of meaning that reshape those relations. It is particularly the processes of meanings being constructed and negotiated by those previously marginalised 'from below' that needs to be understood. Furthermore, by positing women as powerless and oppressed, much empowerment rhetoric denies their abilities or agency to change their own situation and obscures the power struggles invested in social transformation processes.

Moreover, when scrutinizing economic empowerment in the diverse places in the country, there is a need to unpack the BBBEE package and see how empowerment works according to an array of disadvantaged peoples in different localities in South Africa. The racial and gender dimensions of BBBEE need to be

highlighted and we must not ignore South Africa's different economies, the different experiences and economic struggles and the inherent power relations *within* the black empowerment policy blanket.

This study will raise questions about the gendered nature of empowerment in the DRV in terms of understanding how women perceived and experienced their own empowerment in relation to power complexities playing out in the locality of the valley. Focus has been given to the dominant broad applications of economic empowerment as a national strategy for economic participation, but this needs to be explored through local level discourses and ground-level experiences.

It must be recognized that development comprises considerable social stakes at the local and national levels and that there is a need to foreground the complexity of local conditions and understanding local reactions and contestations to empowerment and development interventions 'from below' (van der Waal 2008). Interventions are also "interwoven with interactions between actors originating in particularly heterogeneous social...worlds" (Olivier de Sardan 2005:2). We must thus view empowerment discourses as fluid, dynamic, contextual and multi-layered, and acknowledge that the political dimension of the term is often hidden within complicated processes of differences and diversity (van Driel 2004), and that oftentimes empowerment cannot be a reality in some cases.

Despite its problems, the term empowerment is retained for this study; not as an analytical term, but rather as a manifestation of women's perceived (or subjective) roles in their communities and their allegations of empowerment. As Campbell and MacPhail acknowledge, understandings of empowerment need to focus on the *emotional* and *motivational* dimensions of empowerment, conceptualising empowerment in terms of a subjective sense of confidence (Campbell and MacPhail 2002:333). People make sense of empowerment in their own worlds in multiple and complex ways using social signs and language. Therefore empowerment is manifested and given meaning through peoples' own life experiences. To understand the emotional and motivational dimensions of women's empowerment and their reactions to conditions,, we need to listen to the voices of women and take heed of social signs which are indicative of their social realities.

In Gender and Development theorising (GAD), women are considered to be agents and not passive recipients of development and empowerment - agents who "make choices, have a critical perspective on their own situations and think and organize collectively against their oppression" (Scott 1995: 130). However Bourdieu intimated that agency is not directly observable; it is only given meaning in the experience of the subjectivity (Bourdieu 1991:39). Empowerment as a perceived or conscious notion refers to complicated processes and relations that can mean different things to different people and therefore needs to be relegated to the subjective realm.

Recognising the structural disempowerment and gendered hierarchies within which women were situated complicates their claims of empowerment. There is a dire need for knowledge producers to think critically about how women's empowerment is put forward. Much feminist research falls into the trap that denies women's agency. Even in contemporary feminist writings, the old ideology of women as 'weak' is there if you look deep enough. The too-often told stories of women as traditionally despairing are patronizing. Dispelling the "trope of female 'weakness'" (Becker 2003:12), in this thesis I construct a picture of the women in the valley as assertive, strong, resilient and with abilities to adapt to changing life and livelihood circumstances while at the same time situating them within their contextual and structural constraints. Agency therefore cannot be taken for granted. Women's articulations of empowerment and their moments of agency were undermined by constraints but were at the same time in resistance or denial of these conditions. Only through capturing women's critique of their own life worlds were these claims of empowerment socially validated but also sometimes romanticized.

Therefore this thesis offers an unconventional view of empowerment. My focus will be on the practice of claiming empowerment in the midst of disadvantageous circumstances. By uncovering how empowerment is locally constructed by a range of women in the valley and by national and global discourses, instrumentalist notions of gender and empowerment are needed to understand women's agency (Kabeer 1999:459): how women challenge dominant gender structures, understand and negotiate development promises and claim their 'empowerment' on the individual and collective level.

What surfaced through women's language and words during my field visits were women's own local constructions of their livelihood and community practices and strong notions of empowerment that revolved around local discourses of 'respectability and responsible behaviour,' 'failing men' and 'strong women.' I noted these were most often expressed subversions that articulated shifting constellations of gender and power in the valley. Noticing these negotiations and subversions in their words profoundly affected the direction my thesis would take. It became a study of deconstructing women's everyday empowerment discourses and social practices 'from below'. My motivation included illustrating that empowerment is not a 'top-town' intervention or process, but rather empowerment is *embodied* and *practiced*. It is a negotiation of the world around you that enters your consciousness in multiple ways. It is not a just a word or term to be used to justify interventions – it is a global discourse that is consumed locally in a multitude of ways and is subjective.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial literature and notions of 'the entrepreneur' have been profoundly immersed in male-centric discourses that were for a long time conventionally taken-for-granted. I aim to reveal that much of the economic and business-orientated rhetoric of entrepreneurial literature fails to take into account the social

actions and creative negotiations of 'the entrepreneur'. Through looking at new literature that brings relations and negotiations of power and gender into understandings of, women's entrepreneurship, its value in the DRV is understood more clearly.

Notions of power appear in Green and Cohen's (1995) critique of male-centric explanations in entrepreneurial literature. Whilst theorists have generally linked the entrepreneur to the innovative, heroic male, women entrepreneurs are regarded by some authors as innovative "simply because they are women entrepreneurs, by virtue of making atypical career choices ... breaking out of the domains traditionally allocated to women" (Green and Cohen 1995:299). This meant that the activities or behaviour of women entrepreneurs were defined and evaluated according to the standards of 'invisible' or naturalized masculine norms. In line with this analysis, Lewis (2006) reveals that some women entrepreneurs draw on an ideology of 'gender blindness' to emphasise their similarities to men. Writing on the 'othering' of the female entrepreneur, Lewis attempts to understand how women silenced gender issues and thereby kept gender out of entrepreneurship in order to avoid being marked or symbolically constructed as 'the other' (Lewis 2006:458). She reveals how women often denied that gender had an effect on their success and chose not to enact a 'gender display'. Lewis (2006) challenges gendered entrepreneurship with her awareness of gender invisibility or silence – looking at how female entrepreneurs try to avoid being identified as different from the masculine norm of entrepreneurship. She argues for ways in which women challenge the conventional definitions of what it is to be a successful entrepreneur.

Many economic and entrepreneurial theorists are critiqued by anthropologists for their negligence of female experiences and meaning-making processes in entrepreneurial debates. New literature that challenges the male-centric view of entrepreneurship focuses on how women resist gender norms in their ways of 'doing' entrepreneurship. Much of this literature is suited to looking at women entering male-dominated businesses. The literature makes room for a discussion of women's negotiations between performing their gender roles, and at the same time, negotiating around them to illustrate their economic "male" abilities.

The dearth of qualitative, in-depth literature on women entrepreneurs is especially lacking, in South Africa and across the world. Entrepreneurial literature remains enmeshed in western paradigms of economic rationality and universalism. In fact, entrepreneurship seems to have been "historically located in the symbolic universe of the male" (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio 2004a:408) and has failed to allow interpretations of the female within entrepreneurial practices. The male-centred focus of entrepreneurial theory has dire consequences for interpreting the manners in which women enter entrepreneurship, and dismisses women's subjective experiences of the entrepreneurial process. Generally, primary focuses on entrepreneurship are alleged to be neutral of issues of gender and power relations. The hegemony of

entrepreneurial interpretations is critiqued in a few in-depth ethnographies on women entrepreneurs that I will make use of to interpret my findings. These analyses highlight the discursive practices of entrepreneurship and uncover ways in which women entered entrepreneurship (Bruni et al. 2004 a and b), how women interpreted and gave different meanings to their practices of entrepreneurship (Fenwick 2002) and how women challenged dominant understandings of what it was to be a successful entrepreneur (Lewis 2006). These offered different points of view and methodologies that embraced gender and the fluid practices of entrepreneurship, not bound by economic viewpoints. By using theories of social and symbolic constructivism and performativity, these studies helped to interpret entrepreneurship as a diachronic practice, one that is “learnt and practiced in appropriate occasions” and “how the codes of a gendered identity are kept, changed and transgressed” in entrepreneurial practices (Bruni et al. 2004a:407).

A Critique of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach: Taking a look at socially constructed realities

In critiquing the SLA (Sustainable Livelihoods Approach) (Chamber and Conway 1992), the term livelihoods appears to involve much more than capital and assets, access to resources and effects of structures on livelihoods. As will be shown, livelihoods in the DRV were not only ways of living that were structured by constraints. Livelihoods encompassed fluid negotiations and productivities in the face of daunting influences that helped women shape not only their economic well-being, but more often than not, helped them to nurture ideas about themselves socially and in relation to men.. While the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (Brundtland 1987) frames many explorations of livelihoods across the globe, what is lacking in the framework is an in-depth understanding of livelihoods as diverse and complex. Furthermore, more often than not, the SLA is difficult to apply to a variety of contexts with unique societal fabrics.

To understand livelihoods in predominantly Third World countries, development practitioners have drawn on the SLA. It is an approach that is heralded to be an overarching perspective on poverty, development and empowerment. The SLA is hailed in that it places emphasis on people’s economic realities in relation to multiple influential factors, processes and institutions (Pratt 2006, Carney 2003, Rakodi and Lloyd Jones 2002, Ellis 2000). It is primarily a conceptual framework for analysing causes of poverty, peoples’ access to resources and their diverse livelihood activities. It is also a framework for assessing and prioritising interventions.

The concept of livelihoods has become increasingly popular in development thinking as a way of conceptualising the many economic activities that poor people undertake in order to survive. Its key elements include environment, diversification and sustainable economic growth. The SLA has evolved from three decades of changing perspectives on poverty, how poor people construct their lives, and the

importance of structural and institutional issues (Ashley and Carney 1999). In 1999, the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United Kingdom endorsed the SLA as complementary to traditional development approaches, but not as an innovative alternative. Since appearing in the Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future*) of the World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987, the SLA has been central to many development engagements. It was the wish of the Report that all human beings should be able to achieve their basic needs. The Report highlighted three fundamental components of sustainable development: environmental maintenance, economic growth and social equity, and recognized that achieving this equity and sustainable growth would require technological and social change. In this manner, the SLA provides an analytical and universal approach based on normative principles of people-centred, participatory and empowerment approaches (Carney 2003:8). These approaches in themselves are invoked to concern the poor and to better their lives.

By looking at poor people's assets, capabilities, vulnerabilities and constraints in their livelihoods, the SLA argues that livelihoods are dependent on various types of resources or assets. Access to these resources is often controlled by structures in societies that in turn can determine the livelihood positions of people. Structures refer to both formal and informal institutions and organizations that shape livelihoods by influencing access to assets, individual and personal strategies, vulnerability, and terms of exchange. They may occur at multiple levels, from the household to community, national, and even global levels (Adato and Meinzen-Dick 2002:10). In this sense the SLA is appealing to my study because it makes room for an exploration of the broader structural relations that impact on the ways in which people build their livelihoods. However, the framework gives no acknowledgement to the acute need to analyze the operation of the broader processes to understand *how* structures relate to one another, the inherent power relations within these processes, and how different types of structures impact on people differently. Additionally, assets in the SLA are presented in a 'pentagon of assets' dissected by approved notions of human, natural, financial, psychological and social capital. What I found confining was that the SLA provides a "checklist" (Ashley and Carney 1999) that may not include priorities for development for different countries or contexts.

People's abilities to engage in particular strategies that define their livelihoods depend on various types of capabilities and capital, as well as structures and processes. Theorists like Pratt (2006); Carney (1998); Bebbington (2000) and Moser (1998) recognize that people draw on a diversity of assets, combining them in different ways in order to pursue sustainable livelihoods. Ellis (2000) makes the diversification of livelihoods a central theme to his analysis on *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries*. In his analysis, his notion of diversification recognizes that people survive by doing many different things, rather than just one strategy. These strategies are linked to flexible labour markets and changing economic

environments and seasons. Diversification results from both macro- level processes, including globalisation, economic restructuring, development policy and welfare reform, and changing labour markets with shifting employment opportunities and seasonal income prospects, as well as local factors, such as, migrant labour and changes in family structure. This multiplicity of factors determines what livelihood changes people undergo and which push and pull factors presiding over livelihood strategies are most resilient (Moser 1993, Bebbington 2000; Pratt 2006). This approach places a 'risk and vulnerability' factor onto livelihood management in rural areas and illustrates the forces that may or may not support or facilitate livelihood strategies. These are positive elements that are useful for understanding and managing the complexity of women's livelihoods in the DRV as it helps to highlight constraints and opportunities and diverse ways people manoeuvre between them. However, the approach can be critiqued in a number of ways.

Although Ellis (2000) argues that under a wide variety of circumstances and considering risk factors and vulnerabilities, the capability of households and individuals to diversify their livelihood strategies should be facilitated rather than discouraged, he gives no empirical evidence on how diversification actually enhances or constrains livelihoods in reality and in different contexts, or whether diversification has instrumental or purely survivalist characteristics. The diversification argument falls short of understanding other non-income based tactics which people perform in order to strengthen their livelihoods. It must be recognized that not all phenomena that affect livelihoods and poverty dynamics in one context can be neatly boxed up into a universal list of determinants. This shows that the SLA has a particular set of principles, which raises questions about the planning, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Generally, the SLA runs the risk of over-simplifying the contextual and fluid nature of livelihoods and misses out on the subtle moments of agency that are inherent in people's livelihood strategies.

A criticism is given by Murray (2001) who in commending the livelihoods framework for its focus on understanding dynamic modes of livelihood in diverse historical contexts, argues that an adequate "understanding of the broader processes within which particular household livelihood profiles and choices have their existence [needs to be supplemented by an understanding of] household conflicts and struggles, as well as inequalities of power and conflicts of interest between communities and others, such as local elites or government agencies" (du Toit 2004a:7). The culturally charged struggles for power within community-driven approaches to livelihood development are more than often overlooked. It is predictable that such processes need to be highlighted through empirical or ethnographic research.

Bebbington's ethnographic work on livelihoods in sites across Latin America and in Indonesia typically uncovers resistance in livelihood strategies of locals and the inequalities of power that exist between them and their governments. Bebbington's work in the Andes, Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina (2000, 2001) and in

Jakarta, (Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi and Guggenheim 2004) reveals tensions which arise between villagers and their governments when they try to claim power and resources. In Bolivia, Bebbington and Bebbington (2001) revealed how local populations re-created themselves as *sindicatos* to fit within the new structures of governmental organisation. These were local responses to changes in the broader political and economic environment (Bebbington and Bebbington 2001:12). The discussion of village politics and governance in Jakarta highlighted the particular ways in which Javanese people held onto history and resisted new forms of 'modernized' governance that was powered by new laws and regulations over land ownership with heavy surveillance. These "New Order" government arrangements and liberal conceptions of local governance were contested through revivals of traditional *adat* rules and laws (Bebbington et al. 2004). Such work demonstrates that in theorising about livelihoods, it is important to talk about history, structures, power relations and agency that elude many discussions on livelihoods in conventional development literature. Livelihood diversity results from complex interactions with poverty, employment opportunities and agricultural relations of production, social dynamics, gender relations and the macro-economy. These interactions are not always straightforward.

The current analytical approach of the SLA reflects troubling retreats from history, experience and relations of power that are inherent in local ideologies and material conditions of communities. More importantly, livelihoods analyses ignore the gender aspects and mediations of livelihood practices. While practitioners such as Ellis (2000, 1998) explicate how diverse livelihood strategies are embedded in socio-economic and political structures and processes, Pratt (2006) maintains that livelihoods analyses need to develop profiles of women's livelihood strategies as well as analyse the social dynamics and multiple players and practices that either enable or restrict their livelihood options. Therefore, conceptual and methodological frameworks utilised in the SLA need to examine the complex historical, socio-economic relations and power differentials that exist between peoples and groups, and within communities. Interrelations of power and gender within and outside the household that affect women and their participation in the process of development also need to be understood (Afshar 1991). The extent and nature of women's power as well as its increase or decrease can have a powerful influence on livelihoods (Adato and Meizen-Dick 2002:28). Women oftentimes engage in a resistant fashion with the choices they have available to them at the micro-level of everyday life. There needs to be a focus on the power relations inherent in women's negotiations around gendered structuring powers and their calculations of the best way to do so. There is a need to highlight the complex strings of politically negotiated social representations that inform livelihoods and access to assets. In this light pursuits of livelihoods become contentious sites of struggle.

Based on a literature review, it seemed that studies that adopted the SLA (Sustainable Livelihoods Approach) of development largely ignored the role of gender subjectivities and power relations when

investigating women's economic activities and their dynamic creative roles (see for exceptions Oberhauser et al. 2004; Whitehead and Kabeer 2001; Lund and Srinivas 2000, Francis 2000). The framework also comes with established tools and methodologies and a list of Sustainable Livelihoods Principles that are backed up by these methodologies. Carney realizes that the users and the uses of the SLA are diverse. She says that more attention needs to be given to users' analysis and understanding of livelihoods and to the different ways the SLA is appropriated and used in different contexts (Carney 2003:8).

Similar to Pratt's (2006) dissertation on women's livelihoods, my research adopts an analysis that involves women in their particular places, in their own language, making decisions, establishing networks, and building strategies about sustaining themselves and their families. It explores how the gendering of discourses around political structures and power processes affected this strategizing. This involved a dynamic approach that could account for the micro, meso and macro levels in which structures, processes and practices occur and inter-relate (Pratt 2006:62).

Practice theory

The contribution of practice theory to this study resides largely in the recognition of the effect of social influences on agency. Human actions are central, but are never considered in isolation from the social structures that shape them. In ways, a notion of structured human behaviour can be criticized for theoretically rooting practice in fixed dispositions and bounded possibilities of agency. Bourdieu's analytical framework offers room to tease out the relation between structure and agency and makes space for negotiation, resistance and social change within dispositions and impositions (Ahearn 2001:118). Bourdieu's comprehensive concept of 'habitus' (borrowed from Marcel Mauss 1954) was coined to relate specifically to those cultural predispositions that are anchored in the human body and serve to shape individual's abilities. Bourdieu defined 'habitus' as the modes of life (or culturally conditioned meanings) that prescribe the ways people are conditioned to live and behave. The 'habitus' is made up of 'cognitive and motivating structures' that enable people to generate suitable practices or rituals in response to demands placed on them by the structures and rules of society. Practices and their outcomes - whether intended or unintended - reproduce or reconfigure the 'habitus' or structuring structures (Bourdieu 1977:78). Referring to agency, Morris expands on Bourdieu, defining practice theory as "emphasized habitual forms of embodiment in [an] effort to overcome the oppositions between individual and society" (Morris 1995:567). Ortner proposes that actors are "loosely structured" and relatively "free" (quoted by Ahearn 2001:120). Ortner suggests that structuring powers cannot be totally hegemonic or exclusive. They cannot entirely determine an individual's behaviour or practices. Practices are rather performed by agents and are not necessarily bounded by structures. They are fluid moments of agency that may remain within boundaries or breach them. Practices are adaptive and strategic while at the same time are situated within shifting hegemonic impositions.

Conclusion

My use of practice to interpret women's practices in the valley derives from core theorists mentioned above as well as ethnographies that used notions of practice and performance to understand the myriad complexities embedded in everyday actions. After I present the context of the valley and include various articulations and social actions and interactions of women, I take an opportunity to surmise my findings within an interpretative use of practice theory (Chapter 7). In examining the situation of DRV women, various scholars' use of practice provides useful theorization for understanding their livelihoods and makes meaning of their claims of empowerment. It provides me with apt support in describing the mutual feedback mechanism between norms and agency in the valley and sets precedents to question and critique the dominance of certain approaches to understanding women's development and empowerment.

I felt that a livelihoods approach can only give limited accommodation to my exploration into women's livelihood practices in the DRV. While the approach helped to identify how women's practices are tied to, restricted by, and enhanced by the local socio-economic context of the DRV, it ignores how women manipulate taken for granted terms like empowerment and made them their own. By only focusing on strategies of livelihood, and not on what De Certeau (1984) calls 'tactics,' the SLA framework leaves little room to accommodate issues of agency and the subtle *politics* of livelihood practices and their inherent instrumentalities.

Livelihood practice as an instrumentality, an organizing power, a tactic and a 'bricolage' (quoting De Certeau 1984) gives an agentive dimension to my analysis. Through the dominion of practice, livelihoods become processual, socially constructed, infused with contested meanings, context specific, and embedded in structure, discourse and power relations. Throughout my ethnography, new understandings of livelihoods give fleshy tissue to the bony skeleton of the SLA. The use of ethnographic methods was central to uncovering these new and sometimes hidden understandings of why women claimed what they claimed and did what they did. The following chapter discusses my methodological approach to this study.

CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

We need a complex humanism, a good deal of interpretation underpinned by theories that take power seriously and a critical reflexivity that is embodied and grounded in forms of practice (Parker 1999:34).

Introduction

The aim of this ethnography is to explore, capture and relate women's articulations of empowerment as they faced adverse and opportunistic conditions in the valley. This chapter presents the search techniques and research methods that were used to collect data about and from women in the valley. A qualitative research approach with research methods that were gender sensitive was helpful in understanding local perspectives and 'thick descriptions' of women's lives and their subjective experiences. My search techniques led me throughout the research process to find detailed and in-depth studies that could help me to critique conventional descriptions of gender, empowerment, livelihoods and entrepreneurship that I felt limited my analysis. I had to find ways of uncovering the power-related discourses and practices that shaped ways women spoke and acted. I wanted to prove the literature wrong or deficient in some way and show that myriad practices of empowerment and agency can exist. However, women's practices are not truths and cannot be proved. They are processes and moments that need to be captured and understood from the ground up.

Qualitative approaches to methodology, often described as constructivist or naturalistic approaches offered inquiry processes that seek to understand human interaction, how human interaction creates a social reality, and how individuals interpret their social realities (Creswell 1994). A qualitative approach that delved deeper power and politics and notions of agency and social determination was helpful. This chapter provides an exploration of the key research strategies employed in order to give precedence to women's voices and their different perspectives.

Selecting the site and participants

Finding the women to become participants in my research flowed from my initial contact with women managing homestays in two of the three communities in the valley. While these were 'formal' initiatives driven and supported (weakly) by the municipality's tourism budget, through speaking to these women I identified various other local ventures that were considered, by some women, to be entrepreneurial in character. Women entrepreneurs in the DRV were often 'invisible' due to the informal nature of their home-based activities. At the end of individual interviews and focus groups held with various women in each community, I asked participants to think of and identify other 'entrepreneurial women' in their communities that they knew about. This is how I went about selecting my participants for my study. My approach relied on the local conceptions of a woman entrepreneur or 'woman of steel' to be used in order to identify other

potential participants and this added credibility to my research. Because I was able to mention the referee's name when meeting the next entrepreneur, I was able to build a sense of trust and familiarity through my selection process. All in all I was able to speak with 56 women from all three communities in the focus groups, 28 in Pniel, 24 in Kylemore, and only six in Lanquedoc. Twenty-eight women 'entrepreneurs' were identified and interviewed: twelve women entrepreneurs in Pniel, nine in Kylemore and seven women in Lanquedoc. Sometimes my identified entrepreneurs would join the focus groups with other non-entrepreneurs.

The women formed a research selection that was complex, hybrid and reflected the effects of power differentials on women's articulations of strength. The inhabitants of the valley spoke of and acted in manners that delineated some social and community boundaries. The villages I chose as sites for my research were Pniel, Kylemore and Lanquedoc. These were chosen, as they were the three prevalent and established communities in the valley. The community of Banghoek was made up of white farmers and businessmen and I did not venture into that part of the valley. Groot Drakenstein was a community that was considered by the municipality to be part of the valley, but because it comprised farm-dwellers and farm-workers spread out among different farms I decided to not include these inhabitants. The community of Johannesdal was considered a part of Pniel and so was not seen as separate from it and I treated it as such. The community of 'squatters' in the *Gif* near Pniel next to the river was not specifically chosen as a site, although they claimed to be as much a part of the valley as the established communities.

The relations between the communities in the DRV, their differential access to infrastructure and their social cohesion and community spirit said a lot about the differences in perceptions that emerged from women living in these villages. Gleaning meaning of what women said as opposed to what actually happened through looking at the different experiences, contexts and communities played a useful role in the socially situated process of data collection (Robson 1993:193).

In Maria Mies's (1991:66) view, women's experience is defined as follows:

Experience is often equated with personal experience, with the atmosphere, the feelings which a woman has in a certain situation. In my opinion, however, experience means taking real life as the starting point, its subjective concreteness as well as its societal entanglement. ...This term *experience* (authors emphasis) denotes more than specific, momentary individual involvement. It denotes the sum of the processes which individuals or groups have gone through in the production of their lives; it denotes their reality, their history.

In telling women's stories in their own terms, the different women in the communities spoke about 'other' women in the other village. The differences of opinion and interpretations gave my data breadth and helped to highlight the power dynamics in neighbouring relations between the villages. These differences were

explored during my discussions and noted during observations. It is important in this context to remember that power is multi-layered and dynamic, and therefore women's claims to empowerment were situational and fractured: some women may have more access to social power and privilege through their ethnicity, their economic position, or their history. These differences impinge upon their subjective notions of their empowerment. For example the experience of oppression as a coloured woman can be very different from an African or white woman (Harding 1991).

A feminist methodology?

In any research endeavour, gender should be understood as a concept that needs to be analysed and interpreted, rather than something that is taken for granted. Research needs to ask how gender is represented in specific research endeavours and findings. Gender has been an important analytical construct for feminists worldwide who address notions of inequality and difference. Feminist researchers from across the globe argue that women in general are marginalised and their voices are seldom heard. The goal of feminist research therefore is to empower women and bring their voices to the fore, "grasping the experiences, understandings and lives of women themselves as seen from their own perspective" (Henwood and Pidgeon 1995:16). Some feminist writers recognise the importance of language for giving voice – meaning – to [women's] experiences and shaping their subjectivity (Weedon 1987:33). However, the context in which "giving voice" takes place shapes the politics and oppositional possibilities of their expressions (Naples 2003:1157).

Within feminist studies, the research participant has a right to the construction and meaning of her own experience. 'Empowerment' and the primacy of experience are located in feminist social research, and both reside at the heart of the debate on the 'gendered politicisation' of research methods (Henwood and Pidgeon 1995:16). Feminist research was informed by women's struggles against oppression and against obedience to gendered ideals and power relations, and usually takes the perspective of the marginalised women's experiences (Wilkinson and Morton 2007). A large critique is feminism's propensity often to discount those women's voices that are audible and speak to resilience and strength. Feminist methodologies and research designs need to recognise that women are not uniformly downtrodden (Puwar 1996). Though talking the talk and walking the walk, women were constructing empowerment discourses and contesting the norms in the valley.

A key concern of some feminist researchers is that women should not be exploited by research, or have their valid experiences dismissed or re-interpreted by the researcher in order to fit within a research discourse which has been shaped by the hegemony of men's experiences and views. Furthermore, some feminists have suggested that the establishment of a close and equal relationship with the participant can lead to the acquisition of more significant and meaningful data (Oakley 1981; Finch 1984). In this way, the participant

will always own the construction of meaning she has ascribed to her experience, regardless of the interpretation placed upon this by the researcher in his or her analysis (Millen 1997). This feministic take on gender comfortably accommodates my analysis of women's practices in the valley as it asks broader ranges of questions about gender as a locally-experienced phenomenon and takes a look at the ideas, judgements and gender constructions attached to women's experiences. It also lends some credibility to my own experience as a female researcher re-interpreting their claims through my own gender lens.

Literature search

In my searching process for literature and studies to support my theoretical argument, I went about searching major electronic bibliographic databases, books in the library, online journals, grey literature and archival material. Electronic databases such as EbscoHost and Google Scholar were my two major search engines. Key search terms included empowerment, gender, development, anthropology, resistance, agency, entrepreneurship, practice and livelihoods. Papers and journal articles appearing in online journals like *Gender and Society*, *Gender Studies*, *Development and Change*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *American Anthropology*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Anthropology Southern Africa* and others provided the bulk of my research literature. Books and book chapters were also reviewed. Grey literature such as government and municipal policy documents and reports, newspaper articles, census and demographic data and tourism web pages for the DRV were also accessed electronically. Based on my review of approximately 300 studies, documents and other literature, it was clear that few papers identified referred to developing countries and I found that little qualitative research had been conducted on issues of women's empowerment and entrepreneurship in South Africa.

My visit to the Solms Delta farm museum highlighted the dense history of the valley to me. Historically and archeologically informed maps of the Drakenstein and DRV spanning 700 000 years lined the walls of the museum. Olden day photographs of the valley, of the initial labourers houses, of women washing clothes and of farm workers toiling on the farms gave me a real sense of the valley's past. The audio-visual stories about the earliest inhabitants, and the contemporary people, their history and post-apartheid realities were stimulating and provided an introductory overview into life in the valley. Census data, labour logs and marriage registers were found at the UCT archives giving more substance to the historic data of the valley. My own fieldwork and photographs also placed me within the data collection process. The book by Gavin Lucas (2004) proved indispensable in helping to construct an archaeological and historical memoir of the DRV. Its historical continuity and relevance to present day life in the valley gives an invaluable deconstruction of identity formation of the modern day residents. The archeological approach of the book was based on research conducted in the valley between 1999 and 2002. Through archaeological excavation, archival research and oral histories (obtained from the descendants of freed slaves who lived there in the nineteenth century), Lucas was able to include themes of colonialism, patriarchy and the changing patterns

of land ownership in the valley that included the early maps of the area. His in-depth recordings helped to supplement my archival material. The CD-Roms of the Draft Proposals of the BSDI gave me access to the preliminary planning stages of a major development foray proposed for the DRV. The minutes of public process meetings of the BSDI 'participation' processes were all available on the internet and allowed me access to written accounts of the meetings.

Studies with good methodological designs, specifically qualitative or ethnographic studies were selected in preference to those using more quantitative methods.

Choosing a design

Ethnography is a practice of production that is at once material, discursive and complex (Henriques et al. 1984:106).

Ethnography is a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience. Ethnography is the disciplined and deliberate witness-cum-recording of human events.' (Willis and Trondman, 2000: 5)

Paul Willis's *The Ethnographic Imagination* (2000) considers the art or practice of everyday living to be on the centre stage of any anthropologist's analysis. The understanding and representation of everyday life experiences is central to ethnography, both empirically and theoretically. While anthropologists seek the cultural account of human experiences and dilemmas, they maintains that ethnographic research is not only about understanding identity, but also seeking the social and positional as well as the individual and self-inventing (Willis 2000). The ethnographic enterprise then becomes one that seeks to present, explain and analyse the culture(s) that locate the experience(s) (Willis and Trondman 2000:6). Willis explains that cultural identity is about "the maintenance of the self as a separate and viable force, irreducible to institutional role, ideological definition or dominant social representation...the meaning making involved is not free and open but intrinsically framed and constrained, as well as enabled, in specific and contingent ways by powerful external structural determinations" (Willis 2000:6). Cultural identity further operates within material conditions and inherited discourses. Anthropologists study human creativity – the way people creatively shape their lives within and are shaped by given structures. They view the human experience and cultural identity is continuously in flux and that transforms according to different times (Willis 2000).

Ethnographic research is able to give a ground-level familiarity to understandings of specific contexts and the way people behave. An advantage of ethnographic research is that hypotheses or theories that are developed are grounded solidly in observational data gathered in a naturalistic setting. Empirical evidence

obtained from women themselves was captured through a mosaic of methods designed to build rapport, enable observation and elicit everyday conversations with women in a variety of everyday settings in this study.

As ethnographer, I use dialogue to reach a point of understanding which Clifford explains as “locating cultural interpretations in many sorts of reciprocal contexts and it obliges writers to find diverse ways of rendering negotiated realities as multi-subjective, power-laden and incongruent” (Clifford 1986:15).

The task of the ethnographer is to immerse him/herself into the everyday lives of people and over time, determine and reveal the multiple truths apparent in other's lives (Emmerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995:3). This provides a complete picture of the environment being studied and because it tends to be longitudinal, can capture processes and transformations over time. Thus ethnographic research is more likely than other research methods to lead to new insights and hypotheses. With the aim of understanding the complexities of the micro-level experiences, interactions, perceptions and articulations of empowerment processes and livelihood practices in which women were involved in the DRV, I conducted a two-year ethnographic study which gave importance to everyday practices and which allowed me to engage with women in the community. This type of study maintains that crucial elements of a person's livelihood are difficult to discern from an outsider's perspective: “It is only the concerned people themselves, those living within a given system, who can provide relevant insights into the more subtle constituencies of their life context” (Baumgartner and Högger 2004:36). These subtle insights are subjective, are identified in participant observation and given meaning through narrative.

Choosing a research design and methods involved practical considerations as well as theoretical ones. My goal was to write up descriptions that lead to an empathetic yet critical understanding of women's lives. Quantitative research captured demographic and employment data of women as a social category living in the valley but was limited in its ability to explain processes, motivations and constraints that underlined employment patterns. The strength of ethnography is its ability to investigate the way women view their worlds, in their place, doing their thing. The central purpose of the ethnography was to make sense of the perceptions and actions of women in relation to the environment in which they lived.

Ethnographic Methods

Ethnographic research endeavors to understand cultural logics in specific settings, particular to history and context. History can provide insight into women's claims of empowerment. Historical clues can be elicited from open-ended interviews and casual conversations. To understand the diffuse domains of meaning of empowerment and the contemporary expressions of women's worlds, participant observation allowed me to identify and interpret the ambivalent actions and behaviours of women that defined their practices according

to the spaces and contexts they were in. The focus groups I did and meetings and gatherings I attended allowed me to observe and take note of expressions of group difference.

There is no manner in which to generalise women's practices and claims in the valley, but only to highlight how they were similar to ways in which women resisted dominant discourses in other studies. The value of ethnographic understandings versus generalisations is that the ethnographic method is one that seeks out the odd couplings, the odd connections instead of seeking to create global generalizations (Tsing 2004).

In my interpretative Chapter Seven I make use of comparative ethnographies to compare women in the DRV to women all over the world. This widened my interpretation of their myriad and political practices. Human characteristics and processes cannot be generalized but must be studied holistically as the environment is never the same and time brings about changes. The importance of time to carry out the research must be acknowledged, as although this study spans a period of two years, livelihood strategies and women's perceptions change over a longer time span. They are inextricably linked to the fluidity of resources; the changing economic, social and political local context; and are influenced by adapting, resonating and negotiating development interventions and empowerment processes. Also, the research process can change from day-to-day. While a great many hours of observation and in-depth discussions were needed to understand the context being studied, it seems worth it to uncover the many truths and lies embedded in the field.

Gaining access

Initial contact with inhabitants was made on a field trip with my supervisor. He was doing anthropological research in the valley.² His keen interest in the complex dynamics and organizational intricacies of the valley inspired me to pursue my own research endeavour in the valley. Through him I was introduced to key informants or gatekeepers with whom I established relationships. While I oftentimes found these relationships one-sided in that they gave so much and I took so much, some of them over time developed into mutual relationships. My gatekeepers helped me to talk to many important role players, helped me to observe by easing entry into the churches, meetings and school settings. They also helped me with obtaining important municipal and historical documents.

Participant observation

Participant observation involves immersing oneself into the research setting to gain as much insight into the relations and complexities of that setting as possible. It has been said to be especially relevant during the

² My project is part of a wider social research endeavor in the DRV – an NRF-supported project: Ethnography of organisational complexity in local development in the Western Cape.

initial stages of research because it allows one to seek out and discover what would be appropriate to areas of your research topic, it will help you inform your research question and facilitates in developing a researcher-other relationship (Glesne 1999:44). Ethnographers also use participant observation to understand the setting, the participants and their study is based on observations in the researcher was not only an observer, practices of everyday life with some very dear to me. The fieldwork was period of 2 years during 2006 and time, I tried to visit the valley at least week and again on the weekend. I understand different relations and contextual factors that influenced specifically women entrepreneurs in normally buy juice or snacks before I that led out of the campus life of the vineyards of the DRV. I stayed homestay in Pniel, once with a family in Lanquedoc, and three times at a woman's house in Kylemore. The weekends proved more social than the weekdays. It was over weekends that I had got the opportunities to participate in daily lives: I participated in social events, visited a shebeen, was a spectator at sports events and attended church services, bazaars, birthday parties and functions like a Women's Day Celebration and some informal braais.



behaviour. This field where I as but participated in women who became conducted over a 2007. During this once during the attempted to social and women and more the valley. I would ascended the pass Stellenbosch into over twice at a woman and her

A braai in Kylemore

Through my visits and discussions with women in the valley, I developed some very close friendships. Participant observation involves “being there” and allows most ethnographers the opportunity for acquiring the status of “trusted person” (Glesne 1999:43). I was invited to a wedding (which I did not manage to attend), attended a funeral joined a march against crime in Kylemore in 2007 and was present at an evening meeting held to discuss the influence of drugs on the community. I attended a skills training workshop for three weeks which was held in Pniel in 2006 and sat in on a meeting with BSDI representatives that same year. I was in the audience at the ceremonial unveiling of the slave bell in Pniel in 2007. These occasions gave me opportunities to observe, take fieldnotes and begin to understand the meanings women attached to their words and behaviour.

Actions and behaviour of people are a central aspect to qualitative enquiries. Watching what women did and listening to what they said allowed me to construct meaning within the context they were a part of. Through participant observation the researcher may be able to elicit the subjective experiences and locally defined meanings and perceptions the actors hold. My observations allowed me to validate or refute certain articulations and claims women made in interviews and what I had learned in the literature. My field notebooks, pen and dictaphone were my primary tools of recording observations, reflections and women's words.

The interviewing process

I chose methods that would be engaging, open-ended and that foregrounded women's voices. Interviews with women allowed me access to women's stories. At the root of in-depth interviewing is a process of understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences, not to 'evaluate' or get answers to questions (Seidman 1998:3). Because I expected the women to tell their own individual stories and experiences, a highly structured, formal interview schedule was inappropriate. In the interviews I had an open-ended approach where the interview flexibility promoted the exploration of "gaps, contradictions and difficulties" perceived by the participants (Burman 1994:51). The goal here is to have the participant reconstruct her experience within the topic under study (Seidman 1998:9). While it is never possible to understand other persons completely, the flexibility of probing for understanding can at least help the researcher to make sense of their experiences in relation to their contexts. Through observation and other methods such as reviewing and reading historic documents or contemporary policy documents and newspaper articles, interviewers can place what interviewees say within a broader meaning-making parameter. Seidman argues that as a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language (Seidman 1998:7).

Those 56 women interviewed ranged in age from 28 – 68 years, some were running different types of enterprises. They were from different communities, had different levels of education and were situated differently within local class hierarchies. Many interviews were carried out more often than not in the informant's home and lasted approximately one and a half hours. Most of the women had time to sit with me for an hour or so during the interviewing process as many of them were at home without work or were pursuing home-based activities.

I visited the participants in the study at least three times over the space of two years to glean their lived experiences and the transformations they went through. In sessions with entrepreneurs I firstly conducted a life history approach to elicit their life experiences in context (Seidman 1998:9), asking women where they came from, their family structure, their education status, the employment status of household members, their

involvement in work during their life trajectories, their motivations behind becoming an entrepreneur and their 'ways of doing' respectable entrepreneurship. Past experiences and contemporary experiences come to the fore in this approach. In the second interview I would catch up on their family life, but more importantly explore their successes and anxieties. After reconstructing their earlier experience with their contemporary ones I asked women to talk about their hopes and plans for the future. In this way I hoped to understand women's trajectories over a time period and in the last interview come to grips with their experience as an entrepreneur *within* the contexts they spoke of and what I myself observed.

Most of the women I interviewed were open and willing to talk to me about their employment situations and family and community lives. In some cases, because of time constraints, or because the interviewees dwelled on specific topics or had different points to make or had questions of their own that they wanted to raise, the interviewing process was less complete and less easy to manage. The interviews were mostly very informal and so I did not make anyone sign a consent form. I did enter into verbal agreements with my interviewees that our discussions be tape-recorded and that their names would be changed in the text if I would publish anything from that discussion. Therefore all the names used in my thesis are pseudonyms. Names of communities, organisations, development institutions and community development projects retain their original form with permission from the leaders of the institutions.

Within the two years I was in the field, I also held group discussions with various women. These were the most valuable way of obtaining insights into locally defined meanings. In the focus groups, the conversations revolved around similar questions but elicited much more dynamic and fluid responses and debates. However, the focus groups were not easy to organise. Finding a venue private and quiet enough to hold discussions without making them seem too formal was difficult in some instances. Whereas in Pniel and Kylemore I was able to conduct focus groups with women after a church service on a Sunday inside the church hall, or after an arts and crafts meeting at that venue, or after the various meeting I attended with them, in Lanquedoc it was more of a mission. In Lanquedoc, the use of the hall became extremely difficult to obtain because there seemed no formal path to finding the right person who had the keys to open it up for us. I was only able to hold one focus group of six women that had gathered at the hall and one of which suggested we meet in the garden of her sister's house. As it turned out, all six women were close friends and two were sisters-in-laws, a tight-knit group who knew one another. This group was made up of women whose families had been relocated off the same farm into the *skiem* (housing scheme). They were new to the village like many other residents. In Lanquedoc especially it proved difficult to get a range of different women together in one space because of the dynamics of the community. The village was populated by *inkommers* coming in from farms, established residents who had lived there for years, and a relatively

'separate' populace of Africans who did not mingle with the coloureds. So, I have to admit that my focus groups there were not as 'representative' as I would have hoped.

My first focus group in Pniel was organised through a coordinator of an arts and crafts project for unemployed women and men. The project was taking place at the tourism bureau in the centre of town. The group consisted of 'aspiring' women entrepreneurs who were eager to learn skills development through the project. Out of the 11 Pnielers, there were two women from Lanquedoc. I felt bad because I excluded the men from my discussions. This is one particular focus group I want to draw attention to. While focus groups were often useful to understand what people's general perceptions were on relevant issues, in this case it felt as though people were constrained and held back in the presence of other people from Lanquedoc that were not members of their community. This attests to the underlying tensions and social relations within groups and communities in the valley – as it has been said: group meetings can project a preferred image of the community, village, or group that may not correspond to the underlying reality of individual's lives (Mosse 2004; Ellis 2000).

This focus group particularly helped me to realise the differences between the different villages. The second focus group took place at the church hall after a Women's Day Luncheon celebration. This church group in Pniel were older middle class women, most of them belonging to the *Sustersbond* (Sister's Association) of the church, so they were acquainted with one another. The last focus group in Pniel took place, rather informally, at a birthday braai where 4 women friends and I discussed more openly some of the issues I had picked up in focus groups gone by. In Kylemore, the focus groups were well attended and many of the women knew each other and all lived in the same street in the *skiem*. My last focus group in Kylemore was a travelling one. I had bought some cups and juice with that day, as it was a particularly hot afternoon. When I reached the house where I was to meet the ladies, no one was home. I found my hostess sitting under a shady tree along-side the road. She reckoned that it was too hot for women to remember to meet for the discussion. We put the juice in her fridge and decided that we would walk door to door together and collect some women along the way. This proved a most fun day indeed. At every house we would sit a few minutes with a woman and explain my research. Then she would walk with us to the next house and we would gather women until we had seven women at the last house we visited. It so happened this was the house of an entrepreneur who sold *boerewors* (sausage) rolls on weekends. So we sat together on her *stoep* (verandah) eating *boerewors* rolls and talked about the valley and the Kylemore community. This group proved much more dynamic and talkative than the group of church-going women in Pniel. They were sometimes jokey about their lives, distancing themselves from many harsh realities. A particular incident relating to this bore an image that will stay with me for a long time. A group of women in the *skiem* in Kylemore and I were sitting together on a *stoep* (verandah) one day, talking amongst ourselves, particularly about the

shortcomings of the male species, when lo and behold, one of them, a middle-aged bearded man, emerged like a zombie from a grave on the patch of grass across the road. He must have passed out from 'the drink'. As he was coming into the world again from his stupor, he brought his hand up to a small bloody gash on the side of his head - what I would call a UPI (un-identified party injury). It was his own doing - by over-indulgence. While I gaped and gasped at this public spectacle of a stumbling man, wearing nothing but a pair of black running shoes and primary blue underpants marred with grass stains, the women chuckled and made fun of him. The man attempted slowly to gain momentum and make his way towards the house next door. He was a neighbour. My host had seen him stagger out on the road many times before. Apparently he had "a big problem with his drink." This was a great stimulus for women's complaints over the lack of decorum of men who drank themselves silly on weekends. The women on the *stoep* spoke of some teenagers and men who get into trouble from abusing alcohol. These were mostly working class women who lived in the *skiem* (housing scheme). It said something about their experiences and perceptions that were moulded by class. However, each woman had own individual experiences and perspectives and this helped to make the discussions more interesting and complex, revealing differences of opinion.

In Pniel and Kylemore the group interviews at informants' houses sometimes tended to become distracted, as men and children would enter the room and disrupt the flow of conversation. But sometimes these distractions gave me nuanced insights into the people affecting women's perceptions and experiences. Other times they were quiet and the visit involved cups of tea and more serious talk. Focus group questions probed for the history of the DRV and its people, the different involvements in work and the changing roles and statuses of women. I explored broader questions on the history of the valley, the community in which they lived, the social problems they faced, their involvement in church-related activities, their perceptions of women's strength (also asking how women had changed) and women's roles within the community and in the household. However, the process of the discussion was informal which allowed for open debate and I often listened to the women as they conversed among themselves. These focus groups were sometimes hard to facilitate as women tended to go off on their own tangents and stray far from the topics at hand. Sometimes these deviations gave me indispensable titbits of information.

Another difficulty was getting people to arrive on the date and time agreed between participants and myself. I often relied on women to invite their women friends to take part in the discussions. When I arrived one Saturday afternoon at an informant's house in Lanquedoc, there were no ladies to be interviewed. It seemed like she had forgotten to invite a group to the session. Or maybe it could have been that my request was not followed up because people in the valley were not used to making these sorts of formal appointments and might have been suspicious about my intentions of research. However, these group experiences often were lively and fun, and provided hours of tape and multiple voices that shared information about women in the

valley as a whole. Both types of interview approaches were able to elicit women's stories about the valley and women's perspectives on gender and power relations within their specific contexts. They helped to elicit the shared empirical patterns of women's expressions of power but also gave different contextual textures to their articulations and highlighted effects of power differentials. These individuals' stories were buttressed by women's informal articulations during observations that either refuted or supported common themes that emerged out of the interviews.

The issue of language during the interviews and participant observation processes was at times a challenge. In taking field notes, I would jot down my observations in English, but keep some of the specific Afrikaans references to keep close to the context of the spoken language. Being raised in KwaZulu Natal, in an English-speaking suburb and having gone to an English-speaking school, English was my mother tongue. However, because my father is from the Netherlands I could understand and speak a little Dutch. My Dutch helped me with my command of Afrikaans that I was taught at school as a second language. My early years of academic instruction at Stellenbosch University were predominantly Afrikaans, so I had, out of necessity, to learn the language. Through socialisation, my command of Afrikaans became rather competent as I mingled with Afrikaans-speaking friends. Yet still, conversing with the women in Afrikaans sometimes revealed my language inadequacies. I got my Afrikaans-speaking friends to help me with transcribing and translating some of the parts of interviews that I struggled with. All Afrikaans terms and quotations that I deemed important to keep in their original form (so not to lose their local meaning) appear in italics throughout the text and are followed immediately with an English translation in brackets. Overall, I understood Afrikaans sufficiently well to follow the narratives and ask relevant questions. Inserting women's words into the text helped me to understand and interpret their words by situating them next to mine.

Collecting narratives

The writing up process for me was a huge and time consuming challenge. I had a heap of data and so many of my own interpretations. To understand women's perspectives of life in the valley, narrative analysis, as a methodological device, was selected for this study. A narrative account is usually constructed from qualitative, unstructured data gathered through observations and interviews. Narratives were collected from different women's responses to focus group topics and interviews with entrepreneurs. By collecting narratives from women, I acquired sensitive and detailed information about women's own subjective experiences, values, constructions, assumptions and contradictions that helped me to shape my own story about their lives, and eventually led me to theory that helped me to understand and interpret what I had found more intuitively.

Narration involves “interpreting events, establishing facts, conveying opinion, and constituting interpretations as knowledge [that] are all activities involving socially situated participants, who are agents when they act on what they know, believe, suspect or opine” (Hill and Irvine 1993:2). Narrative offers unique aspects of individual subjective experience and therefore has strength in its ability to uncover and interpret the practices of everyday life (Rapport and Overing 2000:286). It puts people’s commonality in approximation to common conceptions (Osterweil 2002:150). It is a kind of moral reasoning that people posit on both an individual, collective and socio-cultural level. Sizoo purports narrative as a mechanism for connecting women’s local webs of social relations to the wider ones (Sizoo 1997:2). It brings together language and the social, and is a subjective process that is committed to enabling communities of speakers to “analyse and deal strategically with issues of voice, inequality and change” (Hymes 2003: viii). Narrative analysis goes beyond other research methods that try to quantify women’s situations and experiences. It does not reduce women’s needs or sense of self to her socio-economic position, but enables women to express what is meaningful to them that helped to interpret their lives subjectively.

Women’s narratives appear in the text in the ethnographic present. The ethnographic present provides the active voice of women and helps to instil a sense of immediacy of their articulations and claims of empowerment and meanings of their practices. By applying an emphatic-critical perspective to women’s use of ordinary language I feel I was able to get closer to the emotions and intentions that underlined their speech and social actions. In our conversations, I questioned their claims and accounts, and asked them to justify their subject positions. I refrained from foregrounding my interpretation of these claims and let the subjects speak for themselves. The practices of women as spoken about became a repertoire – a mixture of the means and modalities women actually practiced and experienced...which involved choices among alternative conditions and opportunities (Hymes 2003:207). By focusing on what women had to say, this study attempted to give women the space to construct their life worlds so that we can understand their own perspectives.

Writing ethnographic field notes

Writing women’s descriptions involved not only accurately capturing as closely as possible observed reality, but ‘putting into words’ overheard talk and witnessed activities (Emmerson et. Al 1995:5). This led to the long process of turning the voices and lived experiences of women into a written text. The incoherent bits of information scribbled down in 5 notebooks were patched together and incorporated into this overview of women crafting their livelihoods in the valley. The words of women and the observations I had noted along with my own reflective thoughts had to be pooled together and analysed. I made use of field notes collected through participant observation and transcriptions of interviews to identify the themes and locally constructed categories that arose in everyday language and discussions I held with a cohort of women. These

categories were identified through word constructions, metaphors and idioms of 'women of steel' and 'failing men', women's empowerment, behaving respectably, societal transformations and development, formulations of work and entrepreneurial activity and important historical signifiers that appeared in women's narrations.

Grounding women's words in theory

Methodology in ethnography is theoretically informed. There is a special relation between theory and ethnography's empirical evidence of social and cultural change (see Willis and Trondman 2000). My choice of ethnographic design and methods as an anthropologist seeking the deep crevices of life in the valley led me to theory that complemented my interpretations of women's articulations. The theory of practice and associated ethnographies which delved into ideas associated with practice helped me to pick up on the multiple layers of women's gendered experiences and ways they crafted their livelihoods within the changing context of the valley more analytically. The literature search in my study began with collating theoretical pieces surrounding development, empowerment and livelihoods. But through the fieldwork process I began seeing and analysing things women were saying in ways that critiqued these approaches even further. The theory of practice helped me to make sense of it all. Whilst I found Bourdieu (1977, 1990, 1991) and De Certeau (1984) to be the most influential writers and theorists on practice, I felt that more contemporary ethnographies needed to supplement and critique their views. Finding the ethnographic pieces that proved most valuable to my argument of gendered and contested practices was an exciting process for me as I came across various stories of women in different places across the globe. Many of these dealt with concepts of agency and structure, language as a power tool and practices of resistance that leads to new societal formations (Bourdieu 1977, De Certeau, 1984, Scott 1985, Abu-Lughod 1990, Hewammane 2003). Particular South African based ethnographies such as Bekker (2003), Niehaus (2002), Sharp and Boonzaier (1994) and van der Vliet (1991) lent a contextual flavour to my literature search. Reading theories and ethnographies of practice revealed ways in which people are able to negotiate around boundaries of ideological and material representations. They also helped to emphasize the importance of theoretical and empirical knowledge about the way women use and perform language for specific social purposes. They couched my findings nicely.

Reflecting on the process

Ethnography makes use of this *self*-perspective that maintains that the researcher is part of the research process. Here, ethnographic writing allows the researcher a degree of introspection. Words are also heard from me as the researcher. A reflexive approach to research (see Davies 2002; Coffey 1999; Golde 1986) reveals the ways in which fieldwork affects the researcher and the way the researcher inadvertently affects the field context. Self-examinations are usually included as the researcher reflects upon his/her own research

experiences. These subjective experiences can emphasize the stresses and rewards, the sense of emotions or the manner in which identity mediates the roles and attitudes of the researcher (Coffey 1999:2). Like Golde (1986) in her collection of female anthropologists' experiences 'doing' fieldwork, I include some of my thoughts, emotions, difficulties and gratifying experiences of fieldwork (Wolf 1996; Abu-Lughod 1993; Calman 1992).

I enjoyed the dialogue between the women and myself. We often empathized with each other on woman-related issues. I could oftentimes identify the way in which my femininity may have influenced my topic choice and had a bearing on my field experiences. Sharing such profound and sometimes-emotional experiences fostered relationships with these women which I am sure will endure long after the research process.

However, it was important for me to be aware of my own positionality in the research project. I thought of the ways in which my own perspectives, perceptions, knowledge and practices might have impacted on the information gathered. I was a white, English-speaking, tertiary educated and upper-class young woman while most of the women I encountered were older, high school educated and had very low incomes. I also realized I was but a small entity in the bigger picture of their lives. This conundrum was particularly felt when I attended the funeral of one of my informants. I had only got to know this woman on the basis of my research. We had spent hours together sitting on upturned beer crates in her garage, or sunning outside her house. We would talk together one on one about her enterprise and sometimes were joined by patrons seeking beer. Other hours were spent dancing to the DJ on Friday nights at her shebeen. Towards the end of 2007, Dollie was tragically killed in a car crash. All the other passengers survived. I was contacted and informed about the accident, and was told the time and date of the funeral. I took this as an indication that I was perhaps expected to attend. The funeral took place on a Sunday and many people were present. I recognised a few members of the community, but felt like I was intruding on a very intimate affair. I had not known Dollie for long. The eulogies spoke of a woman as a wife, a mother and a friend. I had known Dollie as my 'gutsy woman' who had run a shebeen. The deep religiosity of the ceremony and the expressions of grief made me feel like a fake, like an intruder. I felt I had used up precious hours of her last months on earth to gather information for my benefit. I didn't know how to think about these emotions I was experiencing. Such complexities underlined to me the need to recognize that the insider perspective cannot always be fully attained. It showed how researchers are relative 'outsiders' to the processes and people studied.

The anthropologist can sometimes have a particular and distorted relation to the object of his study: Pierre Bourdieu said it well:

The anthropologist's particular relation to the object of his study contains the makings of a theoretical distortion inasmuch as his situation as an observer, excluded from the real play of social activities by the fact that he has no place (except by choice or by way of a game) in the system observed and had no need to make a place for himself there, inclines him to a hermeneutic representation of practices, leading him to reduce all social relations to communicative relations and, more precisely, to decoding operations...that is, as a means of action and expression... [Where the observer becomes] an "impartial spectator"...condemned to see all practice as a spectacle (Bourdieu 1977:1).

The trick was to maintain a critical interpretation of events and what women claimed and at the same time develop empathetic emotion that one can not help but develop when spending so much time with them in the private and public spaces of their lives. A limit to becoming immersed into the valley was that I sometimes became an active participant in the environment being studied. Anthropologists undertaking fieldwork experience emotional difficulties in relating their own personal culture to the field culture (Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993).

In doing my master's thesis, I was required to be a 'researcher' and critical 'thinker' about a place and its people I at first did not know. By attempting to make sense of my own position as a researcher within the valley, and in these women's lives, a reflection on the nature of relationships that I became part of and the impact of my 'personal baggage' on my relationships with women was of concern to me. My personal baggage was that I considered myself to be a 'strong woman'. I could easily connect with women on their discourses of triumph and strength. My cerebral palsy has been my structural condition, my influential field, within which I have created and interpreted my own subjective experiences and out of which I have 'tactically' articulated or rather, claimed, my own resolve. I have always claimed that "I can do anything" and my mastering of certain everyday practices led others and myself to view me as a 'woman of steel'. Now, not to be blowing my own horn here, (because rising above adversity is relative), I came to think, upon reflection that I had something in common with the DRV women here. We as women just articulated our strength in and from different contexts.

However, it was also sometimes difficult to remain objective and to not get too involved in the lives of the women. Enjoying a variety of social events was great fun, but often I struggled internally when the participants turned to me for support which I felt incapacitated to give. They sometimes viewed me as a social worker, someone who wanted to hear their grievances and who could help them in some way. Often I had to say that I was 'only a researcher' and not a community or social worker who could provide support – I was just there to listen. So sometimes I left interviews with feelings not only of concern for these women but also antagonism as to the role I was playing in their lives. This anxiety turned into a major challenge in making my research useful and meaningful to the women in the valley. At one stage, I actually sent my

curriculum vitae to the municipality in a bid to let them know about my research and secondly to apply for a position as a community development officer in the DRV. My application was not accepted.

Not only did I reflect on my positionality in the research experience, but I also wanted my participants to reflect and share their thoughts and emotions about their experience of the research process. At the end of my group discussions or interviews, I would always ask the participants their thoughts on being part of my research and how sharing their thoughts and articulations of their lives with me affected them. More often than not, they expressed a willingness to share their lives with me in token of “having someone who cares to listen to our troubles” (as one woman put it). Two women in Pniel seemed rather distressed by this last open-ended question I posed to them. It seemed that when I asked them about the interview, it made the whole process seem formal and bureaucratic. On a positive note, others expressed that talking to me and being a part of the research could alert municipal and other development agencies (most women referred broadly to government) to become aware of their plight in the valley and perhaps receive some kind of benefit out of telling their stories. Some entrepreneurs especially touted their participation in this way. Collenly and Clandinin suggest that “Voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables the individual to participate in a community...the struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all part of this process” (Collenly and Clandinin 1990:4). Communication does not come easily to everyone. Linguistic capabilities and formulations may betray some women’s right to be a real part of the research. In talking about women and their lives, some voices were more prominent than others. Some were included and some were excluded. I didn’t see this as a challenge in my methodology: I saw it as a powerful indication of exactly what was going on in the valley in relation to power. Voice is not necessarily about words and spoken articulations. Voice can be construed as expressions of various levels of power, e.g. expressions of physical gestures, body language, poems or songs, who sang the loudest in church, who showed up to my focus groups and who didn’t. Those who remained silent or didn’t show up to an interview expressed something important about who they were.

Identifying the voices that dominated a discourse of strength in this ethnography was useful in pinpointing the meaning-making processes behind women’s empowerment discourse. Another anxiety I had in relation to my analytical framework and methodology was my focus on women’s words and voices only. One or two men’s opinions are explicit in my accounts, but I feel that the exclusion of men’s voices does no harm but serves to strengthen women’s perspectives and articulations of power from their own subjective experiences and reveals patterns that cut across and developed significance out of the heterogeneity of the DRV.

Conclusion

Women's worlds were expressed by women's words. I made this contribution to the ethnographic record of gender and development by using the theory of practice and research methods to capture the meaning of sites of struggle and creative individual paths. The research elicited women's practice of talking about their lives and livelihood practices, but more importantly, the women themselves socially co-constructed the narrative. Viewing livelihoods as linguistic and social practices in the DRV, I now discard the use of livelihoods in the next few chapters as an analytical term, concentrating rather on the multi-variant practices and social actions of women that defined their strength. Women shared with me, in their own words, their ordinary and everyday constructions of gender and of being women in the valley. Their conversations were reactions to the changes that had taken place over the years and illustrated that some women were productive agents. In this manner, subjective voices of women in the valley refashioned gender relations and negotiated the power structures of gender. These power structures have an interesting history to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSFORMATION AND CONDITIONS OF FREEDOM AND CONSTRAINT

Introduction

From the Cape Flats in Manenburg, Cape Town, to the small villages of the DRV, coloured women have faced head on certain constraints and freedoms which have allowed them new statuses in their communities but which have also constrained them in other ways. While the DRV is a uniquely bounded geographical area, it shares a thread of history with coloured people all over the Western Cape and the valley also manifests many of the general South African constraints of inequality, unemployment and poverty. In the new South Africa, transformation has been inserted into popular political discourses surrounding AA and BBEEE. However, transformation signifying social change has not been palpable over a decade after democracy (Terry 2008). While not much change has been felt by coloureds who feel excluded from transformation benefits, their history, identity-making and values of religiosity and a concern for their youth has made many coloured women agents of their own social change. This chapter gives a brief outline of the history of the valley and the transformations that took place. I aim to keep this section brief and allow women to elaborate and contextualise these transitions through their stories of the DRV, and outline the conditions that shaped their lives and which they made sense of and responded to in their own ways.

History, institutions and local ideologies shaped the conditions of freedom and constraint women found themselves in. Women I spoke to were not passive recipients of governing conditions in the valley, nor of national policies out there in the global world. While some women were constrained by financial and social change in ways that hindered their choices and opportunities to claim empowerment, many exhibited and spoke about their ability to maneuver within contexts to prove themselves able to rise above constraints. This chapter outlines how conditions of freedom and constraint framed ways women had lived in the valley and how the conclusion of the potential transformations that will take place by means of the BSDI foregrounds questions about how women will live in the future.

The DRV is a semi-rural area (for lack of a better term) located between two frequently visited tourist destinations in the Winelands of the Western Cape Province – Franschhoek and Stellenbosch. Beautiful wine and fruit farms surrounded the valley, characterized by historical houses and spectacular mountain views. The DRV was steeped in a unique history that had a strong slavery heritage, a religious zeal characteristic of an olden day missionary settlement, and strong coloured identities cultivated during apartheid and the new democracy. The new BSDI couched many promises for improvement and economic and social development in the DRV. However, with any transformation or reactions to change, there are always power structures and differentials embedded in local articulations of life in the valley. The narratives

of 'empowered women' and 'failing men' that emerge in the next chapter were deeply embedded in the historical, economic, political and social worlds of women. History and transformations impacted on their everyday practices.

Slavery and emancipation

Changes in the DRV were shaped by national and global forces, but also had particular local expressions. Livelihood making in the valley has a trajectory dating back many years. Archaeological interpretations of the history of the Dwars River and Groot Drakenstein valleys that were presented at the museum placed the earliest inhabitants of the valley settling there about 70 000 years ago. Artefacts from the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages had been discovered on the mountain slopes and along the Dwars River, however it is the Late Stone Age people from 30 000 years ago who are linked to the Khoi groups, who lived in the valley well into the colonial times. Around 30 000 years ago, nomadic Khoi groups³ roamed the valley and lived off the land, gathering medicinal plants⁴ and flowers from the sides of Simons Mountain (or Simonsberg) and catching fish in the Dwars river. By the 1700s nomadic Khoi groups were settled in the valley and had domesticated cattle and sheep came into contact with European settlers who had established themselves as farmers in the area. The Khoi groups traded in stock with the European settlers for tobacco, copper and tobacco pipes (Lucas 2004:57)⁵. Colonial settlement was entrenched in the Cape when the Dutch traders arrived in 1652.

Unequal land distribution flowing from colonial conquest and farm settlement in the Cape Colony in the 17th and 18th centuries led to most arable land falling in the hands of settler farmers, the white rural landed elite. Historical analyses (Lucas 2004) make the point that the Khoi herders were gradually dis-appropriated from their grazing land and gradually incorporated into the labour force of the agricultural lands in the valley (Pastor-Makhurane 2005:5). Consequently, the Khoi groups began to participate in wage labour by working on farms that had been established by settlers in the DRV. The emergence of these new landed gentry had consequences for the livelihood and social practices of the inhabitants of the valley. The growing fruit and wine industry in the area demanded huge supplies of labour. The increasing need for labour in the production of wheat and wine was met by the Khoi wage labourers and by slaves coming from East Africa, Madagascar and Indonesia. Initially few farmers in the Drakenstein area had slaves, but the demand increased and eventually this region had the greatest proportion of slaves at the Cape.

³ Variations of the term Khoi include Khoisan and Khoe-Khoe, these are linguistic references for the nomadic indigenous peoples that inhabited the DRV.

⁴ The Khoi tradition of using plants for medicinal purposes, was passed down through the generations, and was still collected in the DRV during contemporary times (Pastor-Makhurane 2005:11).

⁵ Mitchell (2003) discusses the links of trade between hunters, herders and farmers in the Cederberg region of the Western Cape during the 16th century.

Slaves were the backbone of the colonial settlement in the valley. In 1782, the number of slave owners in Stellenbosch and surrounds was 140, and the slave population numbered 1494⁶. Slave bells were rung at dawn to herald the start of each working day, and again at intervals during the day, when workers would line up to receive their ration of wine (*'n dop*). Workers became dependent on white farm owners who regulated the *dop-sistiem* or tot-system (which paid workers partly in alcohol) and who established tied housing (which provided on-farm housing for workers and their families). These social practices bound slaves to their masters (Ewert and Hamman 1999, du Toit 2005).

Slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1807, yet slaves were only finally emancipated at the Cape in 1834. They were however required to do a four-year 'apprenticeship' with their former masters before being set free. Worden demonstrates that emancipation was not necessarily a reality for many ex-slaves working on farms in the Western Cape. The emancipation act offered no compensation for slaves in the form of cash or land and many had little option but to stay on the farms – "it is ridiculous to talk of them [the freed slaves] as refusing to work when they know very well they must either work or starve" (Worden 1989:37). However, some ex-slaves gravitated to mission stations in the area where they could obtain land, schooling and learn trades.

Mission settlement and the making of respectable citizens in the DRV

The abolition of slavery in 1834 set in motion social and ideological transformations that deeply impacted on the DRV. Missionaries arrived to 'save' and house the freed slaves, educate them, and reintegrate them into the agricultural landscape. Typically, mission stations were part of a 'civilizing' movement to provide "order, quiet, security and general protection" and were aimed at "improving the 'Hottentots' (coloureds) physical and spiritual well-being" (Boas and Weiskopf 1973:420).

The lack of economic opportunities kept many freed slaves bound to the farms in return for the use of land, a small cash wage or for housing, clothing and food (Orton, Barrientos and Mcclenaghan 2001:470). Ex-slaves were adept in agricultural skills and fruit farming and as incentives to keep the labour pool near to the farms, farmers would provide land and tenure for slave families in mission stations where they could provide labour for farms as well as cultivate their own produce (Pastor-Makhurane 2005:5). In a bid to create 'respectable' citizens, missionaries sought to take over governance of the new community of labourers. Robert Ross, writing on mission stations and respectability in the 19th century in South Africa, held that respectability was one of the core concepts of the Cape colonial period, and was linked to the evangelical mission to convert the "Free People of Colour...to live sober and chaste lives" (Ross 1999:339).

⁶ (www.capegateway.gov.co.za/eng/pubs/public_info/P/82884/4).

His presentation of the Khoi and ex-slaves as 'accepting' Jesus Christ and the package presented by the missionaries resonated with the history of the valley. Ideological conditions of respectability arose out of the colonial encounters within the valley.

In the DRV, oral histories recounted how former Huguenot farmers purchased land (and subdivided it into 99 plots) to provide housing to ex-slaves. The plot was to be used 'productively' and residents were encouraged to cultivate their own fruit trees and vegetables. As Worden (1989) notes, mission stations were virtually the only places where freed slaves could 'own' land in the Western Cape, and even there only a few were able to establish independent control over production and a freedom of dependence on casual wage labour on surrounding farms (Worden 1989:35-37). In order to further assist the ex-slave community in the DRV the farmers of the area in 1843 created the nondenominational Apostolic Trust to fund the building of a church and school for the community. This community was named 'Pniel'. The village of Pniel was originally a mission station started in 1843. Reverend Johan Stegman became the first missionary of the settlement of Pniel (which meant 'face of God'), and he served his community from 1845 to 1910 as spiritual leader, magistrate and schoolmaster. Stegman was a firm believer in education. Pniel became a community which was "intended for the benefit of the Coloured people of the neighbourhood, the object being to educate them in the Apostolic Faith, to give them an ordinary elementary education, and also to train them in agricultural pursuits with a view to making them useful labourers easily available for owners of the neighbouring estates" (van der Waal 2005:10).

A census report of the residents of the Pniel Mission Station dating back to 1849 accounted for 200 men and women living in Pniel at the time⁷. Under the watchful eyes of the Mission Directors, the citizens of Pniel were taught discipline, obedience and respectable codes of behaviour. Women especially were expected to take responsibility for "maintaining cultural values and ethics of the mission community" (Lucas 2004:157). The residents of Pniel had to live under the stringent moral codes applied via the church and mission directors. The strict code of conduct of tenants precluded the residents in Pniel from organizing dances, cutting off branches of trees on their properties and prohibited the sale and use of liquor. Tenants were also required to attend church services and were not allowed to collect acorns without the permission of the church. Residents had to act in accordance to mission principles and could be evicted if they did not abide by the code of conduct. A conservative ideology became embedded in the residents social actions and practices. In this manner the church was seen as a "powerful agent that managed the social transformation of ex-slaves into strongly controlled church members ...and integrated the residents of Pniel into the regional agricultural economy" (van der Waal 2005:12). The building of the Belfry monument in 1973 in Pniel

⁷ (Full document located in the Cape Archives as WCA CCP 4/19/1 Addendum to the Masters and Servant's Ordinance 1841: 'Memorials and reports by the Resident Magistrates on the Missionary Institutions with a summary of the whole' (1849).

commemorated the first slave bell that hung from a tree. In 1992, a freedom monument was erected in Pniel to commemorate the freed slaves who were the first settlers of the mission station in 1943.

New labour forces, new living arrangements and new identities in the DRV

The tradition of fruit and vegetable farming by communities in the valley was developed with the establishment of the mission station of Pniel and continued into the later years of the 20th century (Pastor-Makhurane 2005:12). However, it was their mission management and education that would set the residents of Pniel apart from other farm labourers and led to their middle-class identities. The mission settlement in Pniel nurtured a deep sense of religiosity in residents and gave birth to locally constructed ideas and moral codes of *ordentlikheid* (respectability). Coloured identities nurtured under apartheid gave rise to ambiguous connotations of 'second class citizens' and 'preferential workers'. These ambiguities played out in the land reform, and the establishment of economic and social relations in the valley.

As Pniel flourished and grew, so too did developments in the agricultural land-owning section of the valley. The history of the DRV is closely associated with mining magnate and politician Cecil John Rhodes who after having resigned as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, turned to fruit farming in areas of the Cape. In 1888, Rhodes purchased Boschendal. From 1897 numerous farms – struggling to cope with the *phyloxera* virus that attacked the root of the vines – were bought. Rhodes ripped out the vines and started fruit farming in the area. Boschendal was one of more than twenty farms that he acquired in the Drakenstein valley. Later in the 20th century Boschendal became synonymous with fine wines such as chardonnay and shiraz and the farm played a significant historic and contemporary role in the economic development of the valley.

The importance of agriculture and deciduous fruit farming was further entrenched in the livelihood strategies of the valley's inhabitants during the early 20th century. Developments in farming on an industrial scale began in the twentieth century and farms previously owned by Rhodes were taken over and extended by two successive giant global corporations. During the Anglo-Boer War Rhodes persuaded Alfred Beit and De Beers to become shareholders in his farming ventures with the establishment of the largest deciduous fruit export industry in the country, the Rhodes Fruit Farms (RFF). RFF properties included the land owned by Boschendal and the surrounding farmlands where Pniel, Lanquedoc and Kylemore are.

Labour needed for the RFF farms called for a new proletariat working class. Hereby RFF became the single biggest employer of inhabitants of the valley. The scale of operations at RFF required more labour from surrounding farms (Lucas 2004:162). In 1898 Rhodes, aware of the vital need to attract and retain labour in the face of immense labour demand from the gold and diamond mining industries, commissioned the

eminent architect Sir Herbert Baker to design an orderly village for the farm workers. Originally a model farm worker's village, but now considered a 'historic' village,



An aerial view of the valley (Winter and Baumann 2006)

Lanquedoc farm contained the first semi-detached cottages for labourers on the farms in the valley, and employees of Cecil Rhodes' fruit farms. Baker designed the houses in simplified Cape Dutch style on each side of a tree-lined avenue and each house came with a plot of land for flowers and vegetables and the keeping of two horses, two cows and a pig. A larger plot of land was made available for common livestock grazing. These incentives were meant to attract even more labour.

The project cost 27 000 pounds and included over 100 cottages, a shop, an Anglican church and a school. In addition to the traditional English style St Guiles Church, over 100 houses, a school and a house for the pastor were built. The houses built were well proportioned yet functional, reflecting Baker's interests in Cape Dutch architecture. The result was the village of Lanquedoc, which today still stands under its long avenue of oaks. The farm manager laid down 26 regulations that he said would govern the village. He believed in 'parenting' those less equal and also encouraged sobriety and 'respectable' living. There were strict social practices and alcohol was prohibited. The Lanquedoc establishment became a relocation scheme in early 2000. Lanquedoc currently houses farm workers and migrants from as far away as the Transkei, Eastern Cape. Housing and service delivery issues, social degradation and racial discomfort plague the village currently.

In time, the emergence of other settlements, besides Pniel and Lanquedoc, grew in the valley. Johannesdal and Kylemore were both formed after groups of Pniel inhabitants bought land outside of Pniel. Today these settlements, as well as Franschoek and Stellenbosch are part of the Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM).

The twentieth century ushered in fundamental changes for the valley. In 1904, a railway line was laid into the valley and a cannery and jam factory were erected. Production in the RFF fruit industry was very labour intensive, especially during harvest time. While the majority of farm workers came from Pniel, Lanquedoc, Kylemore and other settlements in the DRV and Groot Drakenstein, during the 1940s some labourers on the farms were African migrant labourers, coming from the Eastern Cape. They were housed in a hostel at the lower end of the DRV.

By 1969, Anglo American Farms Ltd (AAF) acquired the majority interest in RFF. From the 1970s, the diversification of the fruit industry characterized the AAF period of corporate capitalism and heralded a new vision of development and industrialisation for the valley. Since the early 1960s the white-owned farms and estates increased in size and moved towards increased mechanisation. Consequently, the farms and estates only needed seasonal workers at harvest time and during other periods of intensive work; thus, the demand for permanent employees decreased.

Farm workers are among the lowest paid of all workers in South Africa, and women workers receive lower wages than men. Mostly men were employed, although today women form a large part of the agricultural labour force. This type of employment resulted in women being dependant on their male partners for employment and housing. Within the practice of 'family employment', women constituted cheap, flexible and stable sources of seasonal labour on the farms. Whenever possible, men sought other forms of employment, but as women seldom had this option, they were increasingly drawn to the farms. Because they were illiterate, most women could not be hired as industrial workers.

The transition from slavery to wage-earning in the early nineteenth century set some residents in line to become business people in the DRV, while others remained tied to farm labour relations. These degrees of access to income and land ownership played a part in the complex coloured identities that emerged in the DRV.

Demographics, coloured identities and employment constraints in the DRV

In the contemporary context, the valley comprised the communities of Groot Drakenstein, Kylemore, Johannesdal, Pniel, the existing and the newly established housing area of Lanquedoc, and surrounding farms, all of which fall under the broader administration of the Stellenbosch Municipality. Referred to as a 'dormitory suburb' of Stellenbosch (CWDM 2005), the quiet scenery of the valley betrayed the complex relations between the communities living in the area. The DRV, during my research period of 2005-2007, hosted a population of approximately 9000 people. The majority of the inhabitants were coloured Afrikaans-speakers (80%). There was a minority populace of Africans (10%) who were mostly migrants from the Eastern Cape and who resided in Lanquedoc, and a small population of white farmers and business people (10%) living on the surrounding privately owned farmlands. The people in the valley held different social classes and status positions. Pniel, Kylemore and Lanquedoc were part of the DRV but had different histories and had residents with differing social and class statuses and different access to resources and infrastructure. Residents of each village would tell me time and time again that the communities in the valley were "separate". Pniel was considered to be the more conservative and middle-class village, while Kylemore and Lanquedoc were more working class.

'Coloured' conventionally referred to descendents of unions between white settlers, Khoi groups, imported slaves and African people since the colonization of the Cape in the mid-seventeenth century. Pniel in 1968 was designated as a 'Coloured Area' – leading to a few decades of separate administration. Coloureds were classified as second-class citizens of apartheid and entrenched their aspirations of a class culture, a master narrative that ordered their behaviour and cultural relations.

Erasmus says that coloured identities that were formed in this colonial encounter were formed under the power relations embedded in it and have resulted in processes of cultural dispossession, borrowing and transformation" (Erasmus 2001:21). In her defense there was a strong belief in the valley that no ancestry is shared with the Khoi groups (Lucas 2004:75) while others were claiming authentic identity and historical links with the Khoi-San (Erasmus 2000: 73).

Erasmus maintains that different people respond to and contest 'colouredness' in different ways. Her definition is that 'coloured' refers to "those South Africans loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery and a combination of oppressive and preferential treatment during Apartheid" (Erasmus 2000:84). With roots in apartheid's classification system, the term 'coloured' was constructed to make sense of positioning this group in terms of a lack, an ambiguous category straddling the white and black racial characterization of South Africa (Erasmus 2001; 2000). While during Apartheid, the term was used to lay claim to more resources than Africans could, it now stands that some still recognize 'Coloured' identity in

terms of what people lack. In the context of BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) in South Africa, 'coloured' people are marginalized as not black enough (Reddy 2008:210). Apartheid gave preference to coloured workers while at the same time fostering creole coloured identities with blurred senses of belonging. With apartheid's divisions, racialised lines further contoured ideas about class and status for coloured people. Being a coloured woman defined your class position as relatively higher than African women, but lower in status to white women.

The Coloured Labour Preference Policy Act was a form of social and influx control. Through this act, the Western Cape was an area 'reserved' for coloured labour. This state intervention had a profound impact on the racial composition of the labour force in the fruit industry and just about categorised Africans as 'intruders' to justify measures of labour control in the Western Cape and sought to prevent the moral decline and economic impoverishment amongst coloureds" (Humphries 1989:171). Africans could only work in the Western Cape where no coloureds were working. This act brought in antagonism and between coloureds and Africans in the Western Cape. The movement of Africans was further curtailed by influx controls. The Coloured Labour Preference Act further reflected the concern of the new national government about the problems of urbanisation and the movement of Africans to cities (Humphries 1989:169).

The feminisation of the labour force in the textile industry, together with the impact of the Coloured Labour Preference policy in the Western Cape in the mid-1950s was used for influx control and to define, bolster and secure coloured women and men as preferential workers and set them above other female African workers and gave them economically strong positions (Salo 2003).. Women held a relatively powerful economic status in the household (Salo 2003:350). Salo (2003) also describes how women have historically been the economic mainstays in areas such as Manenberg. This is based on jobs available in the Cape Town textile industry, as well as the Apartheid bureaucracy giving women housing grants. Group Areas Act evictions in the 1960s and women being economically empowered led to a racial and gendered economic emasculation of men in coloured townships. In 1985, Coloured preference was abolished and Africans, predominantly from the Eastern Cape, flocked to the Western Cape (Hendicks 2005). The influx of African workers to the DRV after 1985 was influential in creating antagonism between coloured and African workers in the DRV (see Chapter 5). However, this migrancy did not alter the core composition of farm workers, who remained predominantly coloured. Africans were mainly employed as seasonal workers (Kritzinger and Vorster 1996:342).

The 'coloured experience' as Erasmus calls it, conjures up more than just assigning them labour roles, or a position that is not white enough, or not black enough – it becomes a "declaration of embodied difference" (Jackson 2005:211). In her book *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place*, Erasmus recognised the creolised

nature of coloured identities, their creativity, their dignity and their history. Her understandings of the many uses and abuses of 'coloured' reinforce the precarious position of 'colouredness' in the current South African context. Crawford said, "Social change tends to produce stronger communal identities" (Jackson 2005:206). Coloured communities have particular experiences and histories have gone through social changes and transformations that shape their everyday lives, practices and identities. Thus, there is more to identity than political trappings and surface expressions of coloured identity (Jackson 2005:211).

It must be noted that the DRV economy does not function in a vacuum, but forms part of the regional Western Cape economy, the South African economy, and the global economy. Agriculture was the largest sector employing the economically active population of non-metropolitan areas in the Western Cape, providing 38% of formal jobs (Lipton, de Klerk and Lipton 1996: 105). Deciduous farming was also the largest contributor to the primary sector in the Stellenbosch municipal area (CWDM 2005:11).

The deciduous fruit farming industry, which was export-driven and labour intensive, was the biggest employer of coloured people in the Western Cape. The fruit industry was seen to "offer the best wages and service conditions in the agricultural sector and has little difficulties in attracting sufficient quantities of labour" (Kritzinger and Vorster 1996).

Most of the population had access to formal housing – however this housing was not always considered adequate. Some residents in the *skiems* (housing schemes) lived in *hokke* (informal shacks). The *skiems* were notoriously known for crime influx into DRV. The majority of the Coloured and African population experienced high levels of structural and seasonal unemployment (close to 60% during the winter months) and many lived close to the poverty line. Many of the people who resided in the valley had only achieved the minimum formal education of Grade 10. Many, especially women, relied on seasonal fruit-picking and can-packing jobs and other farm and agricultural industry in the area⁸. The Stellenbosch Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (2006) identified the annual household income to average between R20 000 and R70 000. The document ranked housing and economic development as the top two priorities identified by the wards in the DRV, followed by Primary Health Care⁹. A nurse at the local clinic in Kylemore reported HIV, teenage pregnancy and TB to be worst health care scenarios.

⁸ Women's position in the labour market of the valley reflects women's positions in the global labour market (Green and Cohen 1995).

⁹ Exact demographics, employment statistics and socio-economic priorities for the wards of the DRV appear in the Stellenbosch IDP Review (CWDM 2005).

Map of the DRV

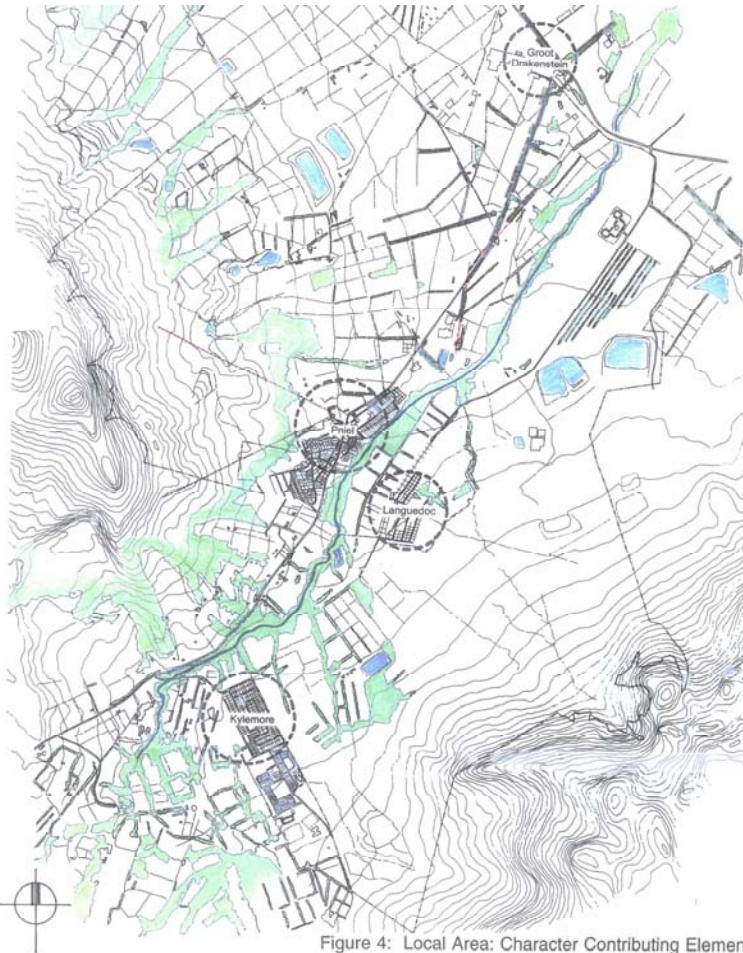


Figure 4: Local Area: Character Contributing Elements

FIGURE 5 : LOCAL AREA: CHARACTER CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS (SOURCE: PIET LOUW AND DAVID DEWAR, ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS, 2005)
Baumann and Winter Heritage Consultants: Boschendal Heritage Assessment: Founders Estates Application: Draft report 16 January 2006

In 2000, the area was designated to fall under the Stellenbosch Municipality. This merge of local authorities was part of the establishment of wall-to-wall local governance processes ahead of the 2000 elections. The transition created new categories for municipalities; metropolitan, district, local and, and included rural areas for the first time (Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998). Outside the metropolitan areas, all local areas fell under a district municipality. Women I spoke to in the valley felt that the transformation to the Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM) had wedged them between two major centres of development and popular tourist destinations, Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, leaving them unattended to.

Global re-structuring of the agro-fruit business in the late twentieth century saw the employment of large numbers of women. Unfortunately, a large score of these employment opportunities within the agricultural sector were seasonal, contract-based, low-skilled and low paid¹⁰. These labour characteristics were

¹⁰ Kritzinger *et al* (1995) shows a significant shift away from permanent labour towards seasonal labour between 1995 and 2000 as farmers restructure their businesses and shed labour in response to shifting agricultural labour markets.

embedded in risk and uncertainty. Being alone and raising their families, or being women whose husbands were unemployed or disabled, pursuing income-generating activities was a vital livelihood practice for those women who felt they were left with the responsibility to look after their families. While some women gave remittances to and shared pensions and grants with other family members, women in these communities had, in light of constraints and transformations, sought ways to strengthen their household's livelihood situations by entering entrepreneurship and showed their sense of strength by becoming involved in community activities and mobilization. Supporting their *dorp* (village) and households, women claimed they had strength and resilience in responding to conditions surrounding them, and were therefore empowered.

Land reform in the DRV

In the 1980s and 1990s, land reform processes prompted the establishment of new housing developments for farm workers across the country. In response to expectations in this regard among its workforce AA (Anglo American) began adding new houses to Baker's former Lanquedoc village for the RFF employees who worked in the cannery, piggery, dairy, and in the vineyards. The Lanquedoc Housing Project (LHP) was undertaken in terms of ESTA¹¹ in order to provide AA employees who qualified for the scheme with security of tenure and home ownership (Baumann and Winter 2006:29).

During 1998, Anglo American Farms (AAF) decided to rationalize their landholdings and sell off their farm properties in the DRV to estate developers. The LHP used the R15 000 grants to employees and additional donations from AA totalling about R35 million. Employees (current and ex) were awarded full ownership of homes costing between R100 000 and R120 000 each. Over 2500 people were relocated to Lanquedoc village in this process. The official handing over of the first homes occurred in November 2003. The real reason why people were moved to Lanquedoc was because the agricultural activities had shrunk enormously – while 500 hectares of productive land was sold. The LHP (Lanquedoc Housing Project) brought in new citizens (*inkommers*) into the Lanquedoc village who were not always received with open arms by the current *inwoners* (residents) of the valley. The 'new' community of farm workers that had recently moved into Lanquedoc lent new-fangled anxieties to the residents of the valley. The *inkommers* (people coming in) were seen to bring *misdaad* (crime) into village, and were blamed for corrupting the youth. Such complex ideas of who was who, who did what, who expected what and who deserved what shaped women's attitudes

¹¹ ESTA – Extension of Security and Tenure Act (1997) aims to provide people with secure tenure where they live, to prevent arbitrary evictions and fulfil the constitutional requirement that all South Africans have access to legally secure tenure of land. It is a contested piece of legislation for land tenure reform that is supposed to protect people who live on land with the consent of the owner against unfair eviction with the bid to create long term secure tenure through on-or-off-site settlement assisted by a government grant and the landowner. However, in reality, ESTA seems to provide farm dwellers in particular with little protection from eviction. Many farm dwellers still do not enjoy security of tenure and are arbitrarily evicted off farms despite legislation. The loophole identified in the legislation was the people who had stayed on farms their whole lives could still get evicted if they lost their jobs.

and behaviours in the valley. In the next chapter the LHP and subsequent relocation of farm workers to Lanquedoc village will be discussed in more detail.

New global development forays, such as de-regulation of labour and land reform processes restructured the local workforce, and destabilized the agricultural base of people's livelihoods. Agricultural employment in the valley was seasonal with many men and women working on 'short-time' in the winter months (when their hours were reduced to four or five hours of work a day). May to October were the most devastating months in terms of reduced or no income and residents claimed that during this period many did not have food in the house. In this context, an important problem was that the agricultural labour market was not sufficiently strong to sustain adequate livelihoods in the valley. Limited employment opportunities in the valley made it necessary for many women to become involved in livelihood strategies outside of casual farm work. While some women had secure jobs in the formal sector, a focus on their informal activities within the DRV communities was pivotal to researching their livelihood strategies. As will be shown, the livelihood pursuits of women were in response to employment vulnerabilities and were shaped by ideological conditions and social stratification. Land reform process in the valley further upset farm workers livelihoods by removing them off farms and relocating them to Lanquedoc where there were no employment opportunities and little infrastructure. These new living arrangements had particular influence on youth – a major concern for women in the DRV.

A Youth in crisis:

The under development of youth, rampant teenage pregnancy and substance abuse were sources of anxieties for women in the valley. Nowadays, women in various communities across South Africa worry about the future of the youth. With the scores of AIDS orphans with no role models, vulnerable children exposed to contexts of crime, high violence and abuse and the spike in the use of drugs and sexual promiscuity, it's no wonder our new president Motlathle (in an interview conducted with a sports presenter on 04 October 2008 on a local television station) called for 'youth development' as a number one priority in South Africa's immediate development future. Many coloured youth grow up in dangerous neighbourhoods where gangsterism is embedded in the social fabric of these areas and therefore have bad role models (Ward 2007). In 1996, Seekings referred to the youth of South Africa as the 'lost generation', youth who lived outside the social structures and were devoid of values deemed necessary to live a 'civilised' life (Seekings 1996:103).

In 'Today There Is No Respect', Hill (1998) writes about how older Mexican women lament the loss of propriety or a particular social order they were used to. Talking about greeting fellow villagers, having command over children and a particular concern with the disengagement of youth with the use of the traditional Spanish language, women in this article were using what Hill argues to be oppositional or contested discourses of nostalgia. She describes how considered the older more 'purer' form of the

Mexicano language and used it for their linguistic ideologies for expressions of respect, as an 'appropriate' vehicle for the social forms of long ago and for the proper observance of status relationships (Hill 1998:69). For them, "the order of respect sustained [society]" (Hill 1998:78). Some elder women she interviewed strongly contested that the older days were better, while others contested that the new bilingualism and education of younger members of their society was a positive thing. What the notion of counter-discourses can illustrate in my study is that while some women I spoke to lamented the decline of morality linked strongly with respect in the valley, there were others that did not claim this as wholly inevitable. This is significant to remember as I strongly argue that most women were more often than not, in my case, disillusioned with the state of the social changes and moral decline in the valley – most visible among the youth.

While women are not passive and speak and act towards changes in their villages, youth also are not passive and in obedience of social codes they deem conservative. While I did not interview the youth separately, I had the privilege to listen to women's perspectives. Elaine Salo's (2003) monograph: *Negotiating Gender and Personhood in the New South Africa: Adolescent Women and Gangsters in Manenberg Township on the Cape Flats* explores how male and female youth destabilize, refashion and transform local racial and gendered identities in relation to the local histories, cultural ideals of masculinity and femininity and with reference to new global cultural forces. Youth accessed new cultural capital through TV programmes, expensive brand clothes and entered cosmopolitan hybrid spaces like shopping malls and nightclubs to break out of the socioeconomic and physical constraints of the township and local gendered and generational constraints that were imposed on them, particularly by the older women.

Older women were noticing the 'moral decline' of the youth and took it upon themselves to 'police' more conservative ideals of femininity and morality by wearing modest attire and protecting one's reputation by not dating a gangster. Younger women felt they had to display modesty and conservative behaviour to earn the respect of older women. However, Salo (2003) also gives the example of younger women who usurped older women's 'policing' and the culturally imposed boundaries of femininity by wearing tight-fitting jeans, high-heeled shoes and modern haircuts. Their white female friends used contraception and therefore were considered by the older women to have loose morals (Salo 2003:353). Salo (2003) argues that younger women were able to reinvent and give transgressive meanings to the local ideas of morality and femininity, and thereby brought about new gendered power arrangements and challenged the powers of older women as sole arbitrators of personhood in the community of Manenberg (Salo 2003:363).

The idea that younger women were able to do this links to my argument later that women were able to rearrange local ideas of femininity and gender through their diversionary acts and language. However, my

point to make here is that older women, like the women in Manenburg, felt that the youth were moving away from the ideals and conservative behaviours they had in mind for them. In the valley, women's anxieties about the youth and women's actions showed how they tried to 'police the youth' and re-instil local ideas of what it meant to be a respectable citizen. In the next chapters, we see how some women with zeal reacted to the perceived moral decline and rapid transformation of the younger generation.

The local development initiative – The BSDI

In future terms of local economic development and opening up empowering spaces for women, the BSDI appears to be a potentially good thing. The objective of those initiating LED in any setting is to identify potential economic opportunities in the local economy, and open these spaces up to disadvantaged communities and struggling entrepreneurs. The purpose of LED is to build the economic competitiveness of the local area and to improve its economic future and the quality of life for individuals and to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. It's a process by which public, business and non-government sectors and partners work collectively to achieve these goals.

The sustainable economic upliftment and community empowerment of the previously disadvantaged communities of the valley received consideration in the draft proposals of the BSDI. The BSDI is a collectively formulated initiative by Boschendal, Two Rivers and AAF and the affected 'beneficiary' communities of the DRV. It aims to give effect to development priorities identified in the Stellenbosch IDP such as promoting economic development through land acquisition and investments, securing the provision of low-cost housing for residents of the valley, ensuring sustainable rehabilitation and conservation of the natural and built environment and heritage of the valley and promoting sustainable agriculture (BSDI 2005:63). With an inherent paternalist feeling of social responsibility and obligation to the displaced farm people and poverty-stricken inhabitants in the DRV, the new owners of Boschendal and various other stakeholders took on the job of driving a most progressive development initiative in the DRV.

The intention was to create partnerships in a co-operative venture between three major stakeholders, namely the private sector, the municipality, and community forums and community members. Herein, the municipality aimed to foster, support and guide the public-private community based programmes and partnerships for promoting sustainable development in the valley. The initiative also involved a wider range of stakeholders such as cultural, tourism, religious and housing organizations or groups (like Imbali Community Crafters, the DRV Tourism Bureau, the Pniel Congregational Church and the LHA). The BSDI has important implications that may affect the livelihoods and community practices of the valley's residents. Aimed at the social development of the people and considered as a mandate for empowerment in the DRV, the BSDI's key objective was the eradication of poverty and inequality.

To justify the arrangement of land transactions and agreements put forth in a quest to develop their properties as 'areas of excellence and good practice' (including the development of luxury housing estates, boutique hotels, a wellness centre and a Gary Player Signature Golf Estate), Boschendal and its partners promised participation, representation, ownership and involvement of all affected people in the new local development process (BSDI 2005:9).

In terms of empowerment, the BSDI proposed a range of innovative projects to be undertaken by the landowners and/or by a structure of Public Benefit Organisations (PBOs) that would be established to manage and control the interests of the various beneficiary communities. The primary input of the BSDI into social development would be through the Dwars River Community Association (DRCA) that would in turn be a primary beneficiary of the primary PBO. It cushions many hopes, ideals and values for development in the area. Boschendal's chairman and leader of the black empowerment consortium which had a 30% stake in the initiative said that he only became involved at Boschendal because he believed the development would significantly benefit the local people. A study by the economist, Oberholzer has showed that when the Boschendal plans receive the go-ahead the proposed development will raise salaries in the DRV by 30% and create 3,000 permanent jobs and 23,000 temporary jobs (Lawson and Oberholzer 2005).

It is important to place the DRV experience in an international context, in respect of the roles of local agriculture and international trade, and local participation, community planning and economic and social regeneration couched in the BSDI. The BSDI as a potentially empowering initiative for women in the valley is contested, as will come to light in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Now an area that is developing in terms of gentlemen estates, tourism, and heritage routes, the DRV has a unique history that sets the stage for the narrations of its current residents and their involvement in the contemporary context. Despite there being different groups with distinct positions in the valley, they are all connected to a slavery past and a common future laid out in the BSDI. Coloured communities have particular experiences and histories that shape their everyday lives. Notions of identity, community, gender, class, social status, respectability, religiosity and patriarchy weave a complex set of relations. These complex relations shaped reactions to and expectations of development in the valley and such social changes produced stronger identities of themselves as women.

Transformation is used as an ongoing process as well as a goal for further social change (Reddy 2008:210). Women in the valley were particularly responsive to conditions of freedom and constraint in bids to socially better themselves and their communities. What will come to light in the next chapters is how they responded to both national and local changes with resistance and compromise. As will come to the fore, women

accommodated certain aspects of their liberation entrenched in the constitution to their benefit, and used it to claim they were equal to men. Ideologies of respectability were also negotiated to suit women's claims of empowerment. Many women also resisted land reform processes but showed resilience in the process too. The advent of the BSDI was seen with skepticism. These responses made women's "utterances reasonable, understandable and legitimate [...] and defines the limits of the 'acceptable' in post-apartheid political language" (Reddy 2008:210).

Now it is important to explore the differentially situated citizens and 'targets' of the diverse development and transformation processes in the valley within their own villages, but also to see how women as a collective category articulate their reactions and responses to processes in the valley.

CHAPTER 5: SUPPORTING THE DORP: RESPECTABLE WOMEN IN THE VALLEY

Introduction

Community reflects particular sets of social arrangements and power relations. Members of a community occupy subjective positions and their practices fit the reigning power relations under conditions of struggle and resistance (Lynn 2006:111).

Local ideas of responsibility and 'ordering of citizens' are revealed by deeper explorations of women's social practices and experiences in their communities. This chapter presents an analysis of three villages in the DRV. The analysis helps to bring to light the ways in which social and economic standing and local gender orders and ideas about being a responsible citizen framed what women articulated about themselves, men and their communities. Women's articulations that they were more resilient and stronger than men were particular constructions of men's passivity in dealing with conditions of constraint or harnessing opportunities in the DRV. The struggles women faced in the light of transformations reflected gender relations and ideological schisms that encouraged women's resilience and claims to empowerment.

In this chapter I attempt to tell stories of life in the valley voiced by the women I met and spoke with. The stories were elicited from my contact with them and my observations in the field. In their stories, they articulated their concerns and worries about the future, how they came to grips with the present problems in their communities and how they made sense of the transformations happening in the valley. Their articulations as captured in the field and my own observations of their situations make up most of the chapter and highlight their struggles in defining themselves as empowered women.

The first section gives women's portrayals of the separate villages in the valley and acknowledges the different local histories and responses of resident women to the world around them. Each village reflected a particular set of social arrangements and power relations that shaped the way women articulated their experiences and determined who spoke and who did not speak. In their accounts, women spoke about their everyday practices that revolved around their involvement in their church and community activities, with a strong emphasis on addressing problems of the youth. The chapter then tries to make sense of how their dedication and commitment to children, their church and community concerns inculcated local ideas about 'respectable' and ordered citizens. Women claimed to be respectable in direct relation to some men's incapacity to act and respond to their constraining conditions.

The next section speaks about women’s needs and expectations of development and how they used certain “empowering spaces” such as the community or church to re-define and construct themselves as strong women. It concludes with an interrogation of the potential empowering spaces that the BSDI could offer for women and their communities to overcome some of the constraints they faced. The chapter concludes that while women felt empowered, certain contexts and disempowering spaces and transformations impeded their visions for the future of their children and of women in general in the valley.

Three villages in the DRV: ‘Supporting the Dorp’

The following exploration of three villages in the DRV shows women practicing their gendered ideal of the ‘*dorp supporter*’ and how women saw themselves as respectable citizens of the DRV. To the outsider, the DRV appeared to be a homogeneous valley and a single social unit. However, for the inhabitants living in their communities, the social cohesion and unity of the valley was not so well defined. The valley’s communities had their own history and degrees of separation. The story of women’s practices in the DRV cannot be told without acknowledging the different social groups, the practices of community in the valley and their complex gender, class and social dynamics. Women’s notions of supporting their community were implicated in the manners in which women’s identities were formed and contested in the valley; how gender orders were enmeshed in these formations; and how ‘respectable’ ways of living informed how women framed and spoke about their worlds. The descriptions of the communities that follow attest to the similarity in some respects, but also the divergent nature of lives of women in the DRV, and illustrate their attitudes towards men in their communities. These attitudes and perceptions revealed ideological and gender schisms that gave women interviewees the space to articulate their claims of resilience and agency.

Pniel – “The Pious People”

The moral space of the Pniel community was defined by its missionary history and a local ideology of respectability. Started as a rural mission village, Pniel was built upon Christian missionary principles. The village was considered a very modest, religious and close-knit community with a particular status in the DRV. What was most tangible was that the inhabitants of Pniel claimed strong ties to a heritage originating in South Africa’s slave history, as their anthem reflects:

At the foot of Simon’s Mountain our
Ancestors once Dwelled
They put their Faith in the living Fountain
And so Pniel became the well
They were but a few God fearing men
Back in eighteen forty three

They had the Glorious vision then
Of what Pniel would one day be.

*So let us lift up our voices and give praise
To our proud ancestors for their
Struggles so brave
Honour and respect them for what
They have done
Let us stand united in our
Beloved Hometown
Coram Deo, Coram Deo, united
We stand*

Wake the song of joy and gladness
For Glorious vic'tories won
For years of strife and struggle
In our beloved town
We praise the Lord Almighty
Guarding and guiding us
And pray for blessings rich and free
On our beloved Hometown

(Coram Deo – Pniel Anthem)

Respectability for women in Pniel was about control over one's behaviour and responsibility towards members of their community, their children and their church. The unity and social cohesion of Pniel was spoken about and observed in the regular social functions of the church, local festivals and their avid attendance at local sporting events. In Pniel, "everybody knows everybody" proclaimed a woman. Pniel was generally considered a 'family town'. Women in Pniel seemed proud of their community's sense of togetherness.

S: I don't want to live in any other place, only here, I am very happy here...the community is strong and everyone stands by each other...if one person is unhappy then we all feel unhappy...everyone here knows each other. There is jealousy everywhere, you see it in people, it's inevitable here where people in other communities might think you're better than them...we all belong to one church and one school in Pniel...it is a very strong neighbourhood. I look after people, if there are illnesses or things, or if people just want to talk about their problems...here in Pniel it is very social...we are glad to see each other and give each other a hug and talk about this and that...we support each other and try to help one another- we are family.

Family was a key social ideal in Pniel and remained a key mode that articulated residents' identity (Lucas 2004:164). Households reverberated around the nuclear family, and married couples would 'start a new home' for their family, "accounting in large part, for the rapid growth of Pniel" (Lucas 2004:164). Houses and land were passed through the generations and many Pnielers owned land that had become at the time of writing prime real estate. Family name and family fame were important.

Control over church membership and over the conduct of residents by the church was a palpable characteristic of Pniel. The United Congregational Church stood at the centre of daily life in the village. Most of the residents in Pniel were members of the church. There was a comment about how many residents "eat, drink and sleep church". The church was claimed to help uphold "a sense of communal identity" where "regular church services and functions, on Sunday, Easter, the church's birthday, or a church bazaar, served to maintain its sense of identity and distinction within the valley" (Lucas 2004:173).

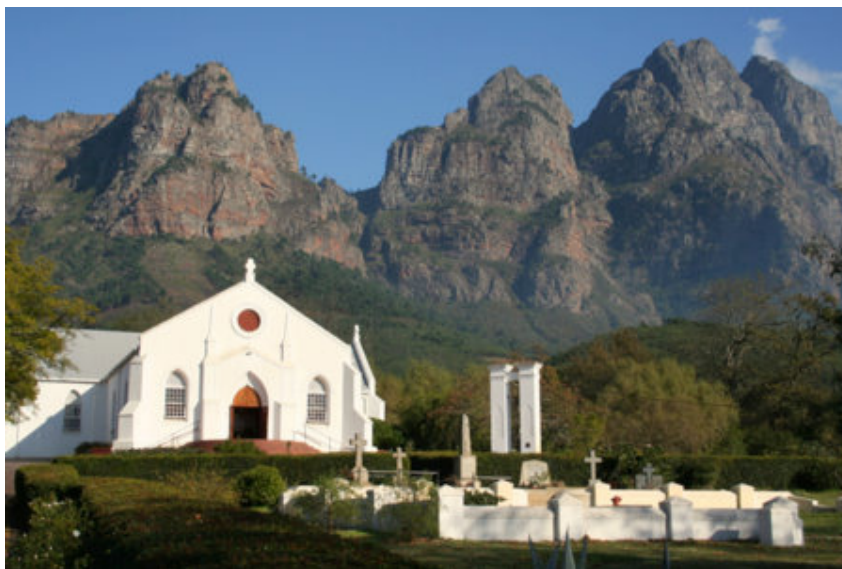
Not unexpectedly, religion was key to many inhabitants' notions of being good citizens and behaving in an appropriate manner. During focus groups in Pniel, women spoke of the church being a guideline to peoples' behaviour, commonly articulated as guiding people to have a common courtesy towards others, particularly those in need and the elderly. It was expected that children respect their elders. Courtesy in this context related not only to good manners, but to inculcate ideas of civility that some women in Pniel alleged 'others' did not have, particularly those people of lower status living in the *Gif* (this word is literally translated into Afrikaans to mean poison or poisonous)¹², in Lanquedoc or those women who still worked on farms and did not run a 'proper' household or did not have the decency to care for others.

As a powerful mediator of social and moral order in the community, the church played an important role in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of residents in Pniel. It helped to order life in the valley, make sense of disorder (like the *Gif*) and kept children in check. A woman told the tale of how her involvement and commitment to her church had a strong influence in the way she brought up her children. One focus group revealed that women attending the Congregational Church in Pniel all felt that their belief in God and their prayers gave them strength and guidance in bringing up their children and making them members of the community.

'Upbringing' had strong links with 'policing' moral behaviour and meant teaching children respectable behaviour. A particular woman from Pniel told the story of how the church watched children for a month

¹² The *Gif* is a term used to refer to place where a number of families had been squatting on Anglo American land on the border of the Pniel Village. These families moved onto the land out of protest to the long periods of waiting for housing that was promised to them. They have erected shacks among the trees above the river and have no access to electricity or running water. These 'squatters' have grown a community of their own, established in common bitterness and marginalization from the Pniel community, while being economically dependent on the lowest income jobs in the community.

when they were studying to become confirmed into full membership by the church. This statement invoked how the youth had to behave and be disciplined during the month leading up to their confirmation ritual. One youth told me of how everyone in Pniel knew who was getting confirmed. Teachers, parents and church members would keep a watchful eye over the youth's behaviour. The informant explained, "the church watches out for *onsedelike* (indecent) behaviour and *losbandigheid* (loose morals)". Drunkenness, promiscuity and bad public behaviour were shunned. An older interviewee told me that in previous generations, disreputable behaviour resulted in *loopstraf*, translated as a 'walking punishment', where transgressors had to repent for their misdemeanours and attend church every Sunday for a month. Such control over behaviour showed just how powerful an institution the church was in the Pniel community. It also illustrated how people were shirked if they transgressed or didn't behave morally in everyday life as one woman put it, "people psychologically stone you if you go against the church". These rhetorical claims profiled the community of Pniel as God-fearing (as their anthem proclaims) and deeply religious. There were also rhetorical claims that constituted the village as a sacred place, where God lives and watches their behaviour. Most women I came across in Pniel articulated a sense of controlled behaviour and conformity to Christian values.



Pniel congregational church

Support for the church was overt in many of the interviews and focus groups held with different groups of women in Pniel. Many were involved in church activities, went to church every Sunday and were involved in baking and sewing for religious ceremonies. Many women regarded themselves as hard working and committed to their church and church-related work.

A woman told me how the Congregational Church was supported largely by women in the village:

[The church] is the oldest place where one can go and reconnect with what is right and what role we need to play in the lives of others and our children, but also how we must be as women ... the women look to the church to lead them and to give them strength, so we work hard together for the church.

Women claimed to work hard to collect money for the church through bazaars and collections. It was said that “this was expected from people, when it comes to the church, we all gather together”.

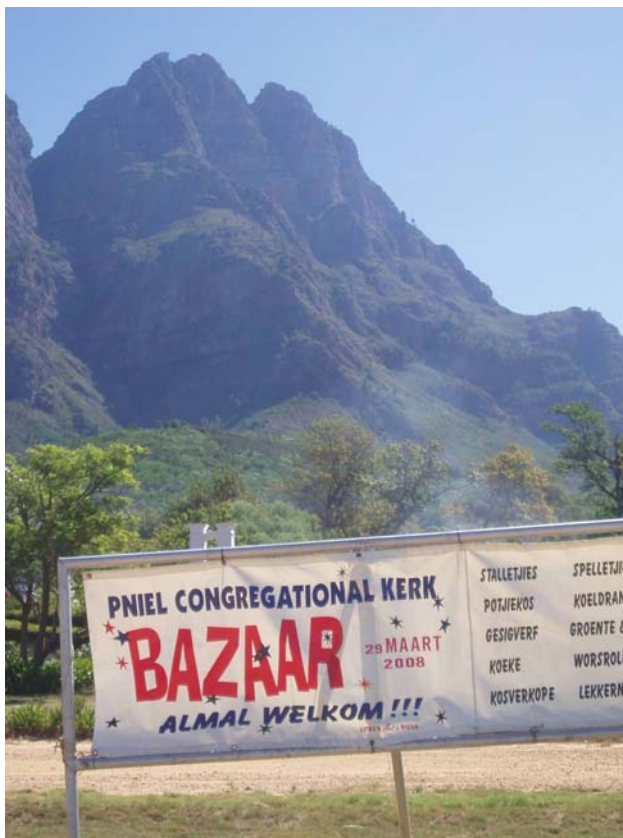
More women than men, it was claimed, supported the church and were involved in the church’s faith-based and welfare organizations such as the *Sustersbond* (Sisters Association). This was a women’s organization for senior women. Their function was to organize bazaars and to support the sick and the elderly. A member of the Sisters Association said: “we don’t have a place where we send our old people off to a retirement home; we care for our own in the community”. Such language gave a sense of how upstanding Pnielers felt obliged to look after their community members. It also pointed to an important social practice, or choice, which these women harnessed.

Church Bazaar

In David Campbell’s *'Beyond Charitable Choice: The Diverse Service Delivery Approaches of Local Faith-Related Organizations'* (2002) he mentions how welfare work choices reflect how people form networks through the church and how congregations fulfil their social obligations. He regards faith-related organizations as agents for “instilling virtues and character in the poor” (2002:207). One can consider the involvement of women in such ‘charitable choices’ to also reflect notions of *ordentlikheid*

(respectability). Men were important in the church because they were the *voorsitters* (the chairmen) or *predikante* (clergymen or ministers) who handled the management and administrative sides of the church’s work. Men were seen to take less heed of such things as choosing to care for elders or choosing to get involved in the church activities. Men were called “lazy” when it came to regular Sunday attendance at church or participating in church events. Women considered these failures as shirking their responsibilities by not going to church as often as they should. Some men were regarded as not being role models for their children, as a woman mentioned “when the fathers don’t go to church, the children will not go either”.

Women felt men were not fulfilling their obligations to instil respect and discipline in their children and felt



they were left with the responsibility of keeping the youth in check. This was seen as a defect in some men. The youth were in crisis because they did not go regularly to church and thus could fall into temptations of drugs and sex. Women saw men as failing to deal with these conditions by not going to church to lament these issues and ask for God's help in securing better futures for their children.

Times were changing, and some Pnielers felt that people were no longer concerned with taking a spiritual approach towards the church and how to behave in their everyday lives. A new local charismatic movement of people turning their backs on the established church was alluded to. Women spoke of a decline in church membership and people "not being godly" as illustrations of this. The new generation of children were also labelled as lazy. The Youth Brigade membership had dwindled and parents claimed they were no longer in control of the youth as they used to be. The new church on the edge of Pniel, in Johannesdal, had recently stirred up mixed emotions in the valley. The Encounter church was formed in response to getting youth involved in religion and re-instilling good morals and behaviour in the youth. However, some residents of Pniel considered the church's strong charismatic and evangelical character as "too loose" and not conservative enough in its approach to religion.

Attitudes towards change were articulated more and more as Pniel women tried to make sense of the moral and social decay happening around them. Decay was particularly associated with the advent of people selling wine from their houses in the communities surrounding the village, an activity that was regarded as *onsedelike* (indecent). Over a half a century ago, the use of alcohol was prohibited within 300 meters of the Pniel Congregational Church. The recent emergence of shebeens (informal liquor outlets) in the valley caused anxiety among Pniel residents and was regarded as disorderly and contrary to the piety of Pniel citizens. A woman said: "in this place, we don't drink; we have respect".

However, some women denied that such activities took place in their community. Residents claimed they observed a social decorum that prevented them from talking about social problems, such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy in their own community. Women were more worried and critical about the immoral "influences from outside Pniel" impacting on their village as perceived in the problems of crime in Lanquedoc spilling over into their community. Women mentioned the socially unacceptable activities and behaviour of people living in the *Gif* as bringing down the status of the village. The *Gif* inhabitants were considered "less proper" than Pnielers. The *Gif* was a small informal settlement with no municipal services. For the most part, women considered these squatters as offensive and they were seen to undermine the supposedly morally clean character of Pniel. References were made about the *Gif* people as "soiling the river water" by using it to clean and wash in. The fact that these people did not live in 'proper' homes was further used to question their existence in the valley.

Homes reflected women's moral visions of *ordentlikheid* in Pniel. Within the home "cleanliness and lack of clutter were considered key attributes of respectability" (Lucas 2004:169). It was clear that this ideology of respectability was something that women strived for in Pniel. Many of the houses that I visited were well looked after, with a garden plot and fruit trees. Inside, the carpets looked vacuumed, the brassware polished and the cushions seemed neatly ordered along the lounge couches. The *sitkamer* (lounge) seemed to be the more 'proper' place in the house. This is where many interviews were conducted, as the *sitkamer* was where guests were received, and we'd drink tea and talk in this space. The radio was often on and tuned to an Afrikaans station, often playing Christian songs. Sometimes the radio would be tuned to Cape Talk, a popular talk show that discussed controversial or political issues.

At one particular house, I sat in the kitchen while my host was preparing dinner. A large bowl of fruit was the centrepiece of the kitchen table and marmalade and *konfyt* (jam) jars stood in rows along the shelves. A basket of plastic lavender flowers hung from the ceiling. As I hummed along to "Islands in the Stream" playing on the radio, my nose was filled with the mouth-watering aroma of lamb stew seeping out of the oven. I lunched at Lydia's house one afternoon. She was a gracious host. I was forbidden to help peel potatoes or help to lay the dining room table. I sat on the *stoep* admiring the view of the mountains until I was called to sit down against the finely crocheted tablecloth and was served hot chicken soup with freshly baked bread! Lydia looked at me slyly at one stage as I brought the delicious broth to my mouth and almost whispered: "shall I go get the wine out of my room? I think I have a bottle of white wine in my cupboard; we can have it because it is a special occasion". The way she asked this seemed almost devious and seemed like she was looking to me for approval to partake in something that for me I didn't need to think twice about. Because of the hushed solicitation, I told her we did not have to drink wine and that the fruit juice on the table was just as good. She got up anyway. She poured two humble glasses and sipped it slowly throughout lunch. I followed her lead. The wine was warm. At the end of lunch, she eagerly screwed the cap back onto the bottle and got up to store the remaining three quarters back in her room. I smiled to myself, reminding myself that this was not only a show of respect, but also a performance around it; a negotiation of 'the unwritten rules' of *ordentlikheid*. After lunch, we walked through the lounge, past the black and white ancestral portraits lining the walls into the garden where we picked apples, peaches and plums. With my Pick 'n Pay packet full, I took my leave.

Residents in Pniel were middle class people who had had longer ownership of the land on which they built their houses for some time now. This land had been awarded to their great-grandparents to build on and the houses were passed on to the next generation. Ownership over a longer period than people in Kylemore and Lanuedoc had pushed the values of their houses up. Nearly all houses had a garden plot where Pnielers grew

their own fruit and vegetables. Owning a house apparently put Pnielers in a better position than others in the valley. Lydia told me she and her four siblings had inherited a plot from their father, which they could subdivide and build their houses on. An outsider exclaimed to me: "To own land is a blessing. Pniel people are lucky in the sense that they own their own homes". A visit to the upper part of town, the *bo-dorp* revealed huge houses on plots against the mountain, double garages and neatly kept yards and gardens. Most of the women in Pniel intimated that people who owned their own houses "lived proper". Some considered it an advantage to live in a big house as it afforded women an opportunity to manage a homestay or run a houseshop from home.

Women's respectable status in the Pniel community was not only defined by how they lived, but also where they lived. Lucas noted that the planning and design of the Pniel mission station reflected group divisions of the slavery period (Lucas 2004:155). This was reflected in the racial segregation and attitudes reflected in the fairness of skin. Historically, colour played a role in defining where residents could reside within the Pniel settlement and so prescribed different social positions within the community. The mission director preferred the lighter-skinned people to stay near the church on the '*Voorstraat*' (Front Street). Residents referred to these loyal and more conservative people as '*Voorstraat*ers' (Front Streeters). Darker-skinned residents were originally given plots of land nearer to the river. Inhabitants of Pniel termed this area '*Masbiekvlei*' (the Mozambican Wetland). '*Masbiekvlei*' was where freed slaves originally from Mozambique lived with their descendents. This area was considered the more working class area of Pniel, whereas more middle class households were found in the '*middebak*' (the older centre part of the village) and up on the side of the mountain in a later extension where the large houses with double garages were to be found. People living in the '*skiem*' (low-cost housing scheme)¹³ were considered by some residents to be over-privileged and had been "given" their property instead of "working for what they have". People moving into the *skiem* at the time of research were married couples that were initially living in rooms in their parents' house and who applied for a house in the scheme. The settling of people in the municipal *skiem* was reacted to with accusations of nepotism. Bitter residents told of how the prime properties near the side of the mountain were given in advance to the more 'elite' families and young couples.

In theory, education is considered a significant strand of respectability (Goodshew 2005:248). The early availability of education in Pniel through the mission school gave the community a relative advantage over the other villages that were established much later in the valley. Along with mission upbringing, education "allowed the community of Pniel to become much more independent than it was in the 19th century. The community was able to exert a much stronger sense of autonomous existence and identity than it had

¹³ Valley residents refer to these sections of the communities as *die skiem* (the scheme) as Municipal housing schemes in the 1980s and again in 1994 and 2000 established low cost housing in the different communities.

previously” (Lucas 2004:163). Until the twentieth century, most residents of Pniel had relied on subsistence agriculture, growing sweet potatoes, potatoes, green beans, peas and carrots and kept chickens and pigs on their plots (Lucas 2004:163). Fifty or so years after the establishment of the mission settlement, most residents from Pniel held a modest education and had progressed into occupations such as small-scale farmers, agriculturalists, traders, masons, clerics, teachers, seamstresses, and hairdressers (I know this from looking at old marriage registers dating back to 1850 and 1890). Because of trade between Stellenbosch and Franschoek during the Anglo Boer war in the early 1900s, Pniel grew into a self-sustaining community. British soldiers would rest their horses and wash in the Dwars River. Pnielers traded food and fruit and merchandise with the troops and women washed their clothes. Historically, the Pnielers were known to be the business people in the valley – the more “professional people”. Some residents had formal employment in agricultural storage services, fruit trade and transport. Residents also took pride in telling me that they had a lawyer, doctor, teacher or headmaster in their family. These claims to more professional occupations seemed to elevate their status and make residents in Pniel seem more class conscious.

Overall, women in Pniel were domestically inclined, but many had acquired tertiary education that had allowed them to follow careers such as teaching, law and nursing. The phrase *'ekonomies voor'* (or economically ahead) used by people in Kylemore and Lanquedoc to portray the Pniel residents was meant to explain their advantageous positions or sometimes was used to undermine how Pnielers were claimed to “look down on people” in other communities. Furthermore, some inhabitants claimed that their economic independence protected some of Pniel’s residents from the constraints of poverty and unemployment the other villagers experienced. There were claims that their economic fortunes made the Pnieler’s more resilient.

Pride is a strand of respectability in Pniel. Women in Pniel had a deep sense of pride in their church, but also in their slavery history and their sport. In 1992, a freedom monument was erected opposite the church to commemorate the village as a missionary settlement established to look after the spiritual welfare of freed slaves. Whilst I was attending the unveiling of the old slave bell in Pniel in 2006 it became clear how the slave bell was used in the past to order and control the lives of slaves on the farms, but also the ex-slaves in the Pniel church settlement; when they were to eat, when to sleep, when to work and when to go home. The bell was a symbol of both the inhumanity of the patron-client relationships of slavery (and ex-slavery) and a representation of the inhabitants’ freedom.

Pniel had a distinct position in the valley. It was a conservative and middle-class community. In terms of community dynamics, the different communities viewed the people of Pniel as somewhat stubborn or arrogant, and intimated that Pniel benefited from its central position in the valley. A woman in Kylemore



said:

Pniel is where the municipality operates from, it gets all the benefits and controls most of the funding, it is where the visitors to the valley drive through and it is where the most infrastructure is – the people in Pniel would rather be on their own and not include us in their development. They feel that they can manage on their own.

The old slave bell in Pniel

Despite projecting a strong sense of community and strong kinship and heritage ties, within Pniel there were subtle issues such as mistrust and suspicion and as one woman put it:

Like in any other community, we have our problems, our jealousy and our fortunate and less fortunate people – it is just that in this community, we don't want to know about it, or speak about it...we are too proud.

I got a sense in Pniel that not many of the residents wanted to talk about their social issues, and strangely enough when the subjects of drugs, teenage pregnancy or poverty were broached, some articulated that there weren't many problems in their community. Others reflected that even if there were problems, no one would talk about them or prioritize them because the people in the community were too proud to acknowledge that there were issues that needed addressing. A resident from within the community said:

We know there is Tik here in our community, and illegal alcohol outlets and people that are worse off and need help, but we choose to ignore it and think it will go away...or we blame it on people from outside the community who aren't *inwoners* (residents) here...no-one here wants to know the bad stuff in the community, we don't want to be morally judged.

In sum, local codes of respectability and morality were deeply ingrained in Pniel. In some senses, *ordentlikheid* was put forward as the truth, and claimed in a variety of ways by women. Their claims revealed a strong adherence to Christian values, support for the church, control of the youth, fulfilling parental and household obligations, decent behaviour, living in a 'proper' home, being educated, having pride in their missionary heritage and sport and for some women staying at home and running a business (see chapter 6). These codes had expectations of responsible behaviour and showed how women were respectable and supported their village in relation to men's passivity.

Women in Pniel articulated stress and anxieties over outside influences affecting the repute of their village such as shebeens and the perceived criminal elements of Lanquedoc. Their anxieties were particularly channelled towards the rebellious youth and their lower attendance at church. Pniel women seemed to be strongly controlled church members who promoted notions of 'moral' behaviour and womanhood shrouded in conservative domesticity.

Kylemore – a “tight-knit” community

Kylemore is nice and quiet and you know people that can help you when you are in need. I have never wanted to live anywhere else. My husband was offered a job recently to work in the gardens of the University in Stellenbosch. We had a chance to live nearer to Stellenbosch. But I don't want to live there because it is a strange place. We are our best when we take the taxi home to the valley because we can be sure that our children will be away from the violence and gangs in Stellenbosch and that is where our family lives and has lived for generations.

While Pniel was in many respects a relatively middle-class community, by comparison, the residents of Kylemore and Lanquedoc had a more working-class character. Many of the residents were working on farms or for the RFF agri-industries at the time of research. By being a relatively marginalized community mostly involved in agricultural production, Kylemore was considered less encapsulated and less class conscious than Pniel, and socially closer to Lanquedoc. However, through talking with women, I got a sense that they too were concerned with the rapid transformations taking place, the lack of role models and the moral decline happening around them, especially evident in the conduct of youth.

Kylemore lies under the Drakenstein mountains, nestled next to land owned by Boschendal and is populated by approximately 3000 people. It had a rugby field, high school, post office, various houseshops and small local shops, about 11 churches and the only clinic in the valley. It was a quiet village, a bustling village, and in my experience, the village with the most community activities. Infrastructurally, all the residents had houses, but there were stark differences between these households.

Like in Pniel, the social differentiation between residents in Kylemore was indicated according to where they lived. The lower end of Kylemore, situated opposite the Old Apostolic church, was the oldest part, and this first phase of Kylemore, *die onderdorp* (the bottom-town) housed the earlier residents who had moved in from Pniel and who were considered to be more conservative and middle class. These residents were considered by some to be people “who were born with a silver spoon in their mouths”. The upper part of Kylemore, *die bo-dorp*, nearer the school was less developed in terms of housing. The *bo-dorp* contained the agricultural working class people who mainly lived in the *skiem*. In the *skiem* there were many *hokkies* (shacks) behind the formal houses or on open sites that were temporary structures that were used until

families could save up enough money for building materials to build or extend their houses. Some of the richest people in the valley lived in the older part of Kylemore. A family who owned a large fruit storage and trading company lived there, as well as men who owned transport businesses and women who managed homestays from their homes who were claimed to be wealthy and successful. So in terms of class or status positions, Kylemore, like Pniel had its own differences.

Differences also were talked about between those who lived in Kylemore and those who lived in Pniel or Lanquedoc. Historically, Kylemore's population had shared education centres with Pniel. I heard some older residents of Kylemore relate that women were often discriminated against in the past for their *korreltjie hare* (curly hair) and *plat neus* (flat nose) by the more economically advanced Pnielers. Pnielers were considered more beautiful, with lighter skin and straight hair. These distinctions were largely rooted in the slave heritage and alluded to stylised codes of identity.

Unemployment in the community was rife, (estimated at 60% during the low season), a result of the seasonal work of agricultural and contractual labour and the low skills in the population. Because of high unemployment, Kylemore was considered a relatively poor neighbourhood. While many men and women had in the past worked in the fruit factories and on the surrounding farms, since the selling of Anglo American land and the restructuring of labour, they were faced with fewer options and many were working as casual labourers on the farms. While some men in Kylemore found temporary contract work in the construction phase of the Berg River Dam Project in Franschhoek, other men worked for sub-contractors in building construction and on farms, often for low wages. Some men managed to maintain a living for their household as independent builders or carpenters but this work was also seasonal (they could not build or paint during the heavy rains in winter) and was dependant on available work. A woman living in the *skiem* in Kylemore commented "... most women in Kylemore, you will find, are working. It is better because we can get *vaste werk* (permanent jobs) as chars (domestic workers)." Another woman explained to me that if the men did have employment, it was often irregular work and as soon as they got money they would squander it at a shebeen.

One man described this lack of ambition in terms of local trajectories of discrimination and lack of opportunities: "From school times...the Pnielers think we are lower class; that we are drinking and do not have jobs like them ... that we only have painters and bricklayers here ... whereas Pniel has business men. At least Lanquedoc is the same as us ... they are also farm workers." Piet added that if he could earn enough money, he would have bought a truck and enter the transport business. But it seemed hopeless. He sighed and looked over to his sister – "I would not be anywhere if it weren't for my sister. She is a fighter and has helped me by letting me stay here and help her sell her goods." This related how some men in the valley felt

they needed to rely on their female counterparts. A man in his late 50s who was listening to our conversation explained this lack of ambition in terms of feeling “outdone” by men in Pniel who owned their own businesses and who had had more opportunities than men in Kylemore. He said he felt more compassion for men in Lanquedoc who were also marginalised.

Marginalisation and pointers to other constraints in the village came to the fore during one of my visits to the local clinic. The clinic sister related to me the scores of HIV infections and TB cases they treated every week and particularly health issues and teenage pregnancies that impacted on the lives of women in the valley. Teenage pregnancy was the most important social problem mentioned by women in Kylemore. Teenage pregnancy was the most visible sign of sexual activity and *onsedelike* (indecent) behaviour among girls. Some women claimed that young girls were getting pregnant at eleven years old because Tik influenced them. Young women, it was claimed, were having babies to feel socially important and girls were not able to say no. Others claimed younger girls viewed pregnancy as giving them more control over younger men, or allowed them access to social grants and financial rewards. All in all, pregnancy among young girls was viewed with distaste, a lack of ‘proper’ upbringing by parents and a portrayal of a decline in morals in the valley. Pregnancy also affected a girl’s schooling and therefore came at a cost that mothers felt was dear.

Seasonal unemployment and overcrowding in some of the houses had aggravated social problems in the community such as the abuse of alcohol and drugs such as dagga, mandrax and Tik. These were a huge source of anxiety for the women in the community who bore the brunt of their husbands’ violence or their youth’s delinquency. Gender abuse in the community was talked about, but rationalized by women as a consequence of men’s lack of responsibility and therefore perceived lack of power through unemployment and alcohol abuse. Women bemoaned the influences that had crept into their quiet village. The employment casualisation processes on farms had exacerbated unemployment in the valley, and alcohol abuse had increased with this. Shebeens, which had sprung up in recent years in the *skiem*, were considered as luring in the criminal elements and made men “loose their way”. When social problems were discussed, the women largely spoke of the matters that were affecting children in their community.

One woman sadly told me how bad the dagga and Tik problem was in Kylemore: “It is so upsetting how the drug dealers are targeting the young girls and then the girls walk around in a *dwaal* (disorientated) and they can hardly open their eyes”. Her daughter gave a comment that girls were doing Tik to get slimmer for the boys. Influences such as Tik enraged many women in the community. Women claimed that their small village was once a quiet and safe haven for children, but that the influence of the drug on households, youth and rising rates of *diefstal* (theft) were indicative of drug addicts trying to support their habits. In a

newspaper article written about Kylemore's Tik problem, *Dorpies Geteiken, Kylemore lyk ál hoe meer na Tik-more* (Villages Targeted, Kylemore looks more and more like Tik-more, Prins 2007) it was claimed that smugglers and drug pushers were targeting smaller villages more than the urban sprawls of the townships because youth were considered more *ontvanklik* (receptive or impressionable). Inhabitants in Kylemore, especially women, strived to stand together on social issues such as this. The huge problem of Tik abuse was brought into the public sphere by means of a protest march that took place in the community early in 2007.

The march was organised by churches in the village of Kylemore. Over 400 residents, mostly were women (including myself) and children marched the streets. I felt that their protest action illustrated that they felt passionately about maintaining the peace and harmony of their village. During one of my focus groups some women voiced their concerns vehemently, saying that children needed to be sheltered from these new influences and given hope and inspiration for their futures.

Other women said that it was because some parents were so conservative that they did not warn their kids about the dangers of such things. Still others said that some parents were too lax in their parenting and upbringing, being too concerned with their drink and not about their children. However, the protest action of the women in Kylemore was used to imply that women in the Kylemore community were responsible and showed their participation in public spaces.

While present at one of the weekly Tik support group meetings that took place in the school hall, these relations and claims were made real to me. The Tik support group was an initiative from the Neighbourhood Watch and the municipal community councillor. The extent of drug abuse among children in the community had prompted women to get together and rally around issues on substance abuse. The evening I was there, the hall was crowded, with many young children in their pyjamas huddled next to their mothers. At one point in the meeting, the chairperson, who was a young man (and actually a Community Development Officer working for the municipality), stood up and asked for all the women to also stand up. I would take a guess that there must have been at least a hundred people in the hall. When asked to stand up, I estimated that approximately 70 women rose from their seats. There were also many young children – I put their numbers at approximately 30, and when the men in the hall were asked to stand up, only three men leaning against the wall at the back of the hall were identified. The leader on the stage looked earnestly at his audience and asserted that the problem was that there were not enough men at the meeting. He asked: "Who will be our future leaders if there are no male role models here? Where are the men?" It was a strange silence that followed his retorts, until a women's voice in one of the rows behind me answered: "The men are at home, in front of the TV, with the television remote on their belly." Many women in the audience

noded and clapped in agreement at this insinuation. This outburst indicated that men were not concerned enough to come to the meeting and that women were the ones who took the initiative.

However, during a focus group with women from all three of the villages, there seemed to be agreement that some men who were petitioning for development in the valley were exceptions. "There are men making a difference" a woman announced. By far, the minister in Pniel was seen by the group to be the most upstanding and energetic man involved in development issues at the time. The newly appointed municipal community officer who lived in Kylemore also had praise sung on his behalf, as did the leader of the Neighbourhood Watch. It is evident that in terms of economic development, the women in general felt they were stronger in that they were more active in social and developmental issues than men in their communities. However, this could have been their own definition of success, as perhaps men were out working and therefore not at home or had less time to be involved.

Women talked about social evils. A woman who lived in Kylemore put her concerns into words:

The children are abusing alcohol. There are no extra activities except for sport after school so if they are not interested in doing that, they walk around the streets and get influenced by the older boys...they get the older boys to buy them alcohol from the shebeens.

Respectability in Kylemore was articulated as responsible behaviour and a community concern for the youth. Protest action showed their vigilance. Women were also participating in crime prevention through working with the Neighbourhood Watch (although men seemed to dominate there). Women spoke of men needing to step up to be role models and control young men so that they did not get the girls pregnant. Women in Kylemore perceived themselves as somehow dominating the community sphere, and they felt gutsy and resilient and that they could do anything men could do. Women related how being strong women in the community was highly valued and created social status.

These factors had instilled anxieties in women that translated into many of their community actions and concern. Reactions to a new residential gated community in Kylemore exemplified women's anxieties of how the community was changing. Residents alleged that the white *inkommers* (incomers) living in their neighbourhood would drive up property prices. Others claimed the presence of whites would help drive out bad influences as the police would patrol more frequently. Whatever the outcome and reactions may be to the new 'wealthier' residents, women in Kylemore articulated that they would maintain a sense of pulling the community together and striving to make it like it used to be in the past. With nostalgic looks on their faces, some women reminisced about the "good old days", when there was no *skiem*, no shebeens, no Tik, and jobs (on farms) were more available.

When speaking of changes and “the good old days”, differences of opinion came to the fore in focus groups held in Kylemore, showing that women were not always in agreement about the extent of their empowerment:

I: How has the role of women, or the position of women in the household changed (in Kylemore)?

K: It is better now because we have more say. We are equal in the law and bring in the money along with men so that shows that it is better than in the past when we had to wait for men.

L: But back then the men weren't like how they are now, men used to be *verantwoordlik* (responsible), now they do and say nothing.

U: Men say nothing, but they still have the power. We must obey what they say. It has always been that way, I think it will remain that way, because that is how men think, that they are the bosses, and that our place is at home, quietly, with the children.

However, in their talk of men as failures, I realised as I wrote up my thesis that in the field I neglected to ask why they felt men were inept now compared to a decade ago. I remember one woman commenting that since the democratic transition, women had been given more rights and therefore men don't assert themselves as much. The new democratic constitution was seen to place women and men on an equal footing by opening up opportunities for women but also allowing them more 'freedom' to work. Changes in the national gender equations written in the constitution were translated and reworded into the local gender order of the valley where women tried to make sense of men's passivity to deal with change. They articulated that men and women were now equal, and that re-defined roles and expectations in their households. It seemed women were talking about the contemporary situation, to what men did at the present. The contrast between women and men was drawn in direct relation to how women and men were reacting and responding, or not responding, to the current social and economic conditions in their village.

Lanquedoc – a 'model' farm workers' village

A resident in Pniel pointed over the valley and showed me the village of Lanquedoc; “look”, she said, “there lie the silver ships, all in rows”¹⁴. From the main road that winds through the valley on its way to Franschoek, I saw on the northern side through the trees the shining aluminium of the hundreds of roofs of the housing scheme that took shape in Lanquedoc, situated adjacent to the AA land and Boschendal Estate. The century-old oak-lined street of neatly designed worker's cottages, a project by architect Herbert Baker, stood in some contrast with the newly built houses.

¹⁴ Ironically, the design of the housing project was intended to be in line with the houses designed by Herbert Baker “where care was taken to design a village that would not look like a *treintjedorp* (train village – so called because of the monotonous rows of houses in Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing schemes” (van der Waal 2005:18). It is precisely this that people allude to.



A view from Pniel looking towards the houses of the LHP



One of the original Sir Herbert Baker farm worker's cottages in Lanquedoc

During one of my first fieldtrip visits to Lanquedoc, it was raining lightly, and Bertha sat on the *stoep* (veranda) of her small house. She had plenty of time to sit around at that time. It was winter in the Boland, which meant that she was unemployed. Normally she picked fruit on a farm near the village. She had been doing casual farm work since she was 17 years old. She had previously lived on a farm where she had worked, sharing accommodation with seven others in her family. After 20 years on the farm, her family and scores of other workers were moved off the farms and relocated to Lanquedoc where Boschendal and other state institutions had initiated the LHP. Families were given a house that was largely subsidised by Boschendal and the state as compensation for the farm worker families' relocation.

At the time of research Bertha lived in a two-bed-roomed house in the new housing phase of Lanquedoc, or what the residents termed the *skiem*. She shared the house with her husband, her sister, her niece and three children. Her optimism about acquiring the new house had faded with the dour situation her family was in. They were struggling to pay the municipal rates and other expenses that came with owning the new house. Luckily her husband had remained employed through RFG (Rhodes Food Group), but she and her sister had had no work for three months. It was necessary that they worked to supplement the household income. At that time, Bertha's sister was looking for domestic work in Stellenbosch. With Bertha's husband's pay cheque of R1000 a month covering water and electricity, Bertha could only afford to buy the bare necessities of bread and milk at the local mobile shops or houseshops in Lanquedoc. Trips into town (Stellenbosch) were essential to buy groceries and toilet paper, as it was much cheaper at Pick and Pay or Shoprite. Yet, it cost R18 for the return trip and with a minimum household income, such trips were done only once a month. Such a situation was not particular to Bertha and her family. Many in Lanquedoc shared the grim circumstances of seasonal unemployment and the tensions that came with relocation. Social extremities and community upheavals in Lanquedoc underlined a village that was marginalized and hit by poverty. Social organisation and lack of community cohesion in Lanquedoc was impacted by the consequences of relocation stemming from land reform processes taking place in the valley during my research.

Constraints of Land Reform and Expectations of Development: The Lanquedoc Housing Project (LHP)

To understand the contemporary social and community dynamics and tensions in Lanquedoc, the processes of land reform and relocation in the DRV need to be understood. Land reform and relocation processes further impacted on residents' ideas of belonging and class in the valley, and ideas of respectable or decent living. A new community was built in Lanquedoc to house farm workers off farmlands.

The LHP was a land reform project carried out by the national Department of Land Affairs, AA and the CWDM. AA acted as the donor of the land and of substantial funds to make the housing project possible. The farm workers appointed the executive committee of the Lanquedoc Housing Association (LHA) as the



Communal Property Association (CPA) in line with land reform legislation, to negotiate on the required qualifications that would make the residents of Lanquedoc homeowners through the LHP. After years of negotiation, it was decided that residents would be awarded full homeownership through the LHP. The criterion for qualification was that workers had to have been permanent employees of AAF, they had to live on Anglo American-owned

farms or in Lanquedoc, and a house was thus allocated to them. Later, the planners and owners of the land of the LHP realized that because of their low incomes, the workers could not afford to raise bonds or apply for home loans. Also, complaints led the LHA and AA to extend the criteria to include 'household members'. Furthermore, AA agreed to help by initially subsidizing the municipal rates.

It was a process where farm workers had to apply for a 'gift house'. A former AA and then a Boschendal manager described this process as giving a gift of a house to up-standing people of 'The Company'. Four hundred and fifty five new houses were built and in 2004, qualified families were transferred from the farms to the new Lanquedoc housing scheme, and became homeowners. The new houses had flush toilets, two- or three-bedrooms, a kitchen, small lounge and a small garden plot. All the new houses were designed to have a second floor above. These 'proper' houses had expectations of nuclear families, tarred roads, streetlights and community cohesion. These were expectations of modernity that in practice were seldom realised



(Ferguson 1999). Ideas about community, entitlement, 'proper' houses and compensation made the LHP a contested process and revealed people's despondencies as well as resilience in a situation of new constraints.

The 'proper' houses of the LHP

The LHP process alluded to responsible citizenship and respectable living. From AA and Boschendal discourses it was clear that ownership was duly awarded to up-standing and loyal employees. The 'gift' houses given to 'responsible' farm workers in Lanquedoc reflected how

AA's obligations to house these people were institutionalised in the form of a 'gift relationship'. Mauss's (1954, 1990) idea of 'inalienability' is an important notion to use in the conceptualization of the gift exchange inherent in the LHP. He talks of the notion of private property in a commodity economy where, when objects are sold, the ownership rights are fully transferred to the new owner. The object has thereby become 'alienated' from its original owner. However, in a gift economy, the objects that are given as a gift are 'inalienated' from the givers; they are loaned rather than sold and ceded. It is the fact that the identity of the giver is perpetually bound up with the object given, which causes the gift to have a power that compels the recipient to reciprocate. Because gifts are inalienable they must be returned; the act of giving creates a gift-debt that has to be repaid (Mauss 1954, 1990). The gift economy is important because it organizes relationships between people in a certain way. The giver gets power from giving away, and the recipients enter an obligatory state of being. The gift becomes a social fact as well as a political manoeuvre. Gift giving is also embedded in context. In the case of the LHP, the gift-giving exchange of the new houses was laden with power plays and expectations of reciprocated respectability. Theoretically speaking, what was evident is that Boschendal as the employer of farm workers and giver of the gift houses expected the new citizens of Lanquedoc to live 'properly' and to exude characteristics of a 'model' community. What was also apparent was that this expectation of ideal living was not possible under the socio-economic conditions and community relations that characterized the village. Not surprisingly, the move off surrounding farms into Lanquedoc was contested. There were court cases and some farm families resisted the relocation process and stayed on the farms. This reaction was not expected by AA or the new owners of Boschendal.

The establishment of 'proper' housing for farm and factory workers in Lanquedoc had political dimensions and unintended consequences. Ross (2005) examines the building of model communities around notions of respectability. The development and relocation of residents to The Park was considered a 'humanitarian' intervention by state developers. The Park would be visually pleasing, with uniform houses and a church and community hall. The park was envisaged to 'order' respectable social relations and create 'a model community'. Through education and creating a Homeowners' Association, rules of conduct would be laid down and people would be made responsible for themselves (Ross 2005:638). Through conversations with the residents while they were preparing mentally for the move, Fiona Ross was able to capture the narratives that were constructed around The Park. Residents encapsulated their own meanings of *ordentlikheid* in the discourses around the move. It was widely held that the move to formal housing would make them decent and provide environments where they would be able to "behave in accord with social desires" (Ross 2005:641). However, in practice it turned out that the move generated unexpected moral panics and reconfigurations of respectable behaviour. 'The Park', like the LHP became a site of struggle where notions of decency and good citizenship were difficult to achieve. While Boschendal continued with the downscaling of workers that the RFF of AA had begun, expectations that their lives and houses would be

better were not met by residents in Lanquedoc. The continuing constraints of unemployment and detachment from farm life plagued their expectations and romantic perceptions of the LHP process.

While most workers in Lanquedoc were pleased to acquire a 'proper' home, many were not satisfied. Although workers could live in their own houses, many had dependants, and houses were seen as too small. New residents felt the show houses they had seen before relocation had misguided them, and claimed that those houses had been bigger than the ones they had finally received. There were issues about eligibility and entitlement. Others felt the houses were not good enough. Included in home-ownership, were both positive and negative changes. Although some residents had built on balconies and added second storeys to their houses or put in partitions to divide some rooms in order to extend them for their families, it was only those residents who could afford the extra costs of renovating. Also, after the initial period of subsidisation came the extra burden of paying rates to the municipality. A resident explained that the water, tax and refuse services cost too much money: "these services alone cost us R200 a month, and this does not include electricity". Residents had experienced a loss of a sense of community and family that they had established within the 'safe' context of farm-life. However, despite the residents being work-shopped before the relocation, there was dissent over the 'incorrect' allocation of houses. Accusations of the unfair managing of the process were made and women interviewed said they felt that AA had done them a dis-service. The statement below sums up a woman's dismay and anxiety over the re-settlement process:

When the farms were sold, we lost our jobs. I used to work on the farm, and we all lived together in the big farm-worker house. We have lived here now for three years and still we sit here with no work and little money. And it's a scary place to sit in. Back on the farms, we were not scared and we knew we would always have work. It was a safer place to raise our children, but here there is too much crime. What's the use of having a home if you can't afford to feed or protect your children?

I had no reply for her.

The original residents in Lanquedoc who felt the '*inkommers*' living in the housing scheme brought crime and problematic social issues into the village also reacted to and contested the settlement process negatively. Various women interviewed in the village saw the LHP as a site of struggle in many different ways. Like Ferguson's (1999) narrations of the anxieties and expectations that Zambians held in anticipation of the new electrical revolution¹⁵, many people in Lanquedoc were disappointed and sidelined through the LHP process. The LHP was supposed to be moving them forward, but instead it was a process that pushed them

¹⁵ Ferguson's exploration of expectations by the Copperbelt mineworkers in the Zambian Copperbelt electrification development reminded me a lot of what was experienced in the LHP. Ferguson suggests that with modernization, mineworkers expected certain benefits that in the end only served to push them further away from global world, "illustrating the down side of global capitalism" (Ferguson 1999:236). His article explores the inherent inequalities, new second class memberships, exclusion and *abjection* (his emphasis) that inevitably comes with developments such as Electrifying the Zambian Copperbelt or providing new houses for farmworkers like in the LHP. The development story, he explains, often remains a 'myth' in many political-economic realities (Ferguson 1999:248).

out of the place in the world they once occupied (Ferguson 1999:236). Ferguson's term *abjection* sums up how the populace of Lanquedoc felt when promises of modernisation failed to be met.

In reality, the LHP had brought in criminal elements, according to many. *Smokkelhuise* (shebeens) were appendaged to some of the houses in the *skiem*. Women claimed that these structures attracted the sordid types who often were involved in criminal activity. "Last Friday a man was stabbed there" commented one resident, who pointed to a smuggling house that was known as *Die Rooi Hel* (the Red Hell). Women oftentimes asserted that women abuse and child molestation were the worst forms of social evils, for which the abuse of alcohol provided an explanation. They bemoaned the inadequate policing or state protection for women and children in Lanquedoc. I had a discussion with the social worker from the Department of Welfare in Paarl who confirmed the dire situation of the inhabitants. She related numerous issues to me, covering the problems of women abuse, child neglect, unemployment, single-headed households and irresponsible parenting. Women abuse in the village was a huge problem, and some women had formed a women's group to identify abused women and get them out of their situations. Religion helped women to build resilience and to face up to conditions and struggles in Lanquedoc. The women especially used religion as a foundation for their security and for handling their economic woes. Aunti Dini was a member of the Mother's Union at the Anglican Church. This organization was established to nurture community concern for the women in the village. It facilitated information on childcare and women abuse, and sent women out to pray for and instil hope in women who were struggling to survive.

The social worker expressed concern about the underdevelopment of the Lanquedoc community. She told me that many children living there did not go to school because their parents could not afford to buy uniforms or pack them lunches. She berated the social conditions that plagued the village too, blaming the inferior managing of the LHP process. She related how the farm residents were all put together in one village when they were not ready or prepared mentally for such a transformation. Such a 'quick-start community' was, in her opinion, doomed to fail as no structures had been put into place. Within the community, there were few facilities available, and no school. The Tik issue was huge in the village with people recounting that children got involved in Tik because of the poverty and unemployment and the lack of recreation in the valley.

Differences of opinions came to the fore in focus groups held in Lanquedoc, showing that women were not always in agreement about the extent of their own empowerment and resilience in light of the conditions they faced. An example:

I: So how do you feel about living in Lanquedoc as opposed to living on the farms?

M: The farm life was much quieter and easier; you knew where your next meal would come from. Here in Lanquedoc it is too chaotic, the streets are filled with influences that we don't know, and which can harm our kids.

S: I think that it is better that my husband and I moved here. We have our own house and we don't have to live together all in one house like on the farm. Plus the children get to go to a better school.

V: Lanquedoc is closer to Stellenbosch where the shops are and the jobs are, the farms were too isolated.

W: But we can not afford to go to Stellenbosch to look for jobs, it is expensive to travel there and sometimes you don't find a char job and then your money is wasted.

What was evident was that complaints about housing and inadequate infrastructure were rife among the residents in Lanquedoc.

The ex-labourers' dependence and reliance on the RFF is tangible nowadays when people in Lanquedoc, and actually in the entire valley's communities, talked of how Boschendal "owes them". While people in Pniel and Kylemore felt AA should allow them access to land for use of the river and mountain for tourism development, people in Lanquedoc were unsatisfied with their houses and the lack of infrastructure in the village. In fact, what was happening was that people in Lanquedoc were largely contesting the land reform processes. This illustrated how obligations between management and labourers extended far beyond the labour-wage nexus to include a moral and social obligation (Du Toit 1993:315). During the ceremonial event of the unveiling of the slave bell in Pniel, the Mayor of Stellenbosch thanked Boschendal and RFF during the ceremony for "the historical roles they played in the valley". When I heard this I shifted in my seat thinking of the realities of the communities in the contemporary context of the valley. It seemed Rhodes' dream of establishing a moral and exemplary workers' village had been toppled along with AA's solution of 'home-ownership' for the retrenched and displaced farm workers. The respectable future of Lanquedoc lay in the balance.

Note from the field: A day in Lanquedoc, 29 August 2006

After the last of the heavy winter rains had cleared and the sun shone for a day, I drove again through to Lanquedoc and walked through the muddy streets with Monica, her belly swollen with her pregnancy. The damage to structures in the village was apparent in some of the houses, either damaged due to storm and rain, or by vandalism or neglect. There were no recreational facilities to be seen and extremely un-level soccer field. The community hall seemed to be barred up and empty and there was no school, post office or library (the nearest education institution for children is the primary school in Pniel). As we walked around, Monica also surreptitiously pointed out ten 'smokkelhuise' to me, which dealt in drugs and alcohol illegally. I had underestimated the size of the village.

With over 700 households and 3500 people, the village extends over a large area between the vineyards of Boschendal Estate and AA properties. At some houses, I identified the Coca-Cola and Fanta signs on walls and doors which indicated they were houseshops. Many residents in informal settlements across South Africa manage houseshops (or *spazas*). These shops are usually set up in a room or shack extension to the house and sell basic necessities and thus provide incomes for household members. Considering the lack of infrastructure and no supermarket in the village, these houseshops were quite lucrative. The so-called informal sector of Lanquedoc mushroomed with houseshops, street traders and shebeens. The houseshops offered basic necessities such as bread, milk, rice, cooldrinks, matches and paraffin. There were container stores that were rented out, in one case, by a woman, who used the space to trade in basic produce as well as meat. The two handfuls of shebeens that hid among the houses in Lanquedoc sold alcohol (without a license) and were very crowded and noisy, and this is probably why they are associated with crime and violence.

In this case, respectability comes to be defined negatively as implying hostility to alcohol consumption, gambling, smuggling and crime. Disrespectable behaviour was coupled with debauchery and disorder surrounding the shebeens. The potential of safe living and having a village where citizens are housed and ordered in terms of decent behaviour was not an ideal that was attained in Lanquedoc. The problems associated with the move and the degradation over recent years had precipitated a loss of decency.

Driving along the original oak-lined street of the Sir Herbert Baker village (see photograph below) up into the *skiem* with its uniform-style houses, it was clear that the different types of houses in the different parts of Lanquedoc characterized residents' historical and employment status in the village. The pretty renovated Herbert Baker's cottages housed the original residents, the ones who had been permanently employed by RFF.



The *inkommers* lived in the new LHP-designed houses in the *skiem*. Over time some residents had added onto these houses, an extra storey or *stoep*, and tended to their gardens so that they reflected their expectations of a new 'family home'. Monica's home had been modified to include an extra bedroom, her kitchen floor was tiled and she had a new sofa in her living area to reflect her income as well as notions of proper living. So not all new residents were 'poor' and 'improprious'. Material things (see Ross 2005, Salo 2003, Meintjies 2001¹⁶) reflected a decency within the private space of the home that connects with the public expectations of proper behaviour. Jeppie (1998) talks about how coloured women in District Six hung a net curtain between spaces in the home that were considered public or private domestic space: "Behind it, women could be less concerned with their appearance, a family's real class – in the colloquial sense – could be hidden or revealed, and arguments settled without the rest of the neighbourhood watching (quoted in Jackson 2005:221).

To some degree, there seemed to be resentment with occasional racial undertones amongst the residents in the older oak-lined street of Lanquedoc about the influx of less unsophisticated farm labourers into the new *skiem*. While driving through an area in Lanquedoc, my passenger exclaimed that we were entering '*Bantuland*' (Bantu Country) where African hostel dwellers had relocated. They resided in the centre of the village, but were viewed as socially separate from the coloured residents. They were considered intruders. Some residents considered them as bringing down the propriety of the village by not looking after their gardens, polluting the environment and inviting migrant squatters to erect shacks among their houses. A woman that we met in the oak-lined main road commented: "sometimes we wish they lived in a separate village, they are not like us, they have different ways of behaving and doing things – we used to be proud of where we lived, but now it is just not the same". The anxiety in her statement was actually also extended to all the new farm workers who had moved in, of which Monica was one – in my field notes I reflected that I had felt uncomfortable that Monica had heard this.

The village exhibited some racialized class differences between African and coloured farm workers. However, there were intimations that on farms where African and coloured workers used to work and live together, relations had been quite good, and that it was the environment and changes that were upsetting relations. Referring to hostel accommodation for African workers and houses for coloured workers in the past, Pastor-Makhurane noted how divisions between permanent employees and seasonal workers have been

¹⁶ Helen Meintjies (2001) seeks to understand the ways in which washing machines and other material appliances (as symbolic objects) are necessary in the construction and negotiation of women's 'proper' roles and relations. These objects become sites for contestation over their definitions of desirable or propitious gender roles and identities.

entrenched in resource allocation in employer-granted accommodation that has had an impact on community relationships in Lanquedoc (Pastor -Makhurane 2005:9).

The movement intended to order citizens from diverse backgrounds had ebbed into a string of disorders. The coloured and African settlement of Lanquedoc, which largely accommodated farm workers and their families, had an aura of an artificial community whose future had no sustainability. Job creation beyond the scope of agricultural or farm work was very limited at the time of research. Added to this, the seasonality of farm-related work left many, especially women, temporarily without income during the year. Thus many women I spoke to in Lanquedoc felt despondent, marginalized, dispossessed, judged by other communities, and that they were dealing with social problems with little infrastructure or support. These conditions shaped their livelihoods practices and articulations of empowerment and disempowerment. On the flip side, the struggles of living in Lanquedoc reflected gender relations and women's resilience to poverty and abuse.

What tied this community together was their (albeit sometimes intermittent) employment on the farms and feelings of exclusion and neglect from the other communities and institutions in the valley. A shared sentiment during one focus group in Lanquedoc was that residents felt abandoned by their farm managers, were frustrated at the slow pace of infrastructure progress in the valley (which is the responsibility of the local and district municipality) and were deeply troubled by the social decay of the village. One woman retorted:

We have been forgotten. We used to be well cared for, we had jobs and an income and a safe and close-knit living environment on the farm. Now we have erratic income, and no support from Boschendal or the municipality on how to build up our community. We need to all come together and not sit alone in our houses waiting for things to get better.

To some people, Lanquedoc was considered an 'artificial' village. Housing a new group of the rural proletariat, this village was lacking in societal glue and infrastructural support. While residents were given new houses, a lack of organization and leadership had provoked internal struggles and had sanctioned resentments. Due to the tangible lack of social power, some residents in Lanquedoc were disillusioned about their futures.

Respectable citizens?

Respectability is not a static notion, it but changes and is subverted and dispelled in various contexts and circumstances. The socio-economic circumstances of some people living in South Africa, particularly in lower class groupings, are exposed to certain structural conditions that are not conducive to fostering and following ideological norms of respectability. As was illustrated, the village of Lanquedoc in the valley had a lower-class populace – most of the residents coming from farms. Their move off the farms into the

'workers' village' brought with it socio-economic changes which had effects on their practices and responses. Their poverty and dispossession had consequences for their social dispositions and social behaviour. Many inhabitants were unhappy with the change, others were overcome by the challenges of being structurally marginalised and their seemingly 'amoral' conduct became the space where deep anxieties and ambivalences over notions of development and transformation were played out.

Women I spoke to in each of these villages claimed to be respectable in their own right as women, but also as agents of social response and change in the valley. Men were referred to as irresponsible, lazy and unmotivated. In Pniel, men were no longer regarded as good role models for their children by going to church and were considered apathetic to their responsibilities of parenting. In Kylemore, men were not taking initiative to get involved in community concerns and make a difference in the community. In Lanquedoc, many men were considered to be abusive and '*onsedelik*' (immoral/indecent), taking advantage of children on the street and supplying children with drugs and alcohol at the shebeens. Women's claims about the failure of men pointed to particular gendered notions of women as the protectors and carers of children. Concerns over the youth were tangible in respect of all three communities and bound women in their claims of both empowerment and disempowerment.

Women's priorities for action and spaces of empowerment

What were women's perceived constraints in the DRV and what were they doing about them? How were women reacting and dealing with transformations in the valley? What were their expectations for the future?

For one thing, women *spoke* about their responses. Through my being the interrogator as well as the listener, my fieldnote book and tape recorder, and sometimes just me alone, hanging out with them, gave women the space and opportunity to voice their concerns. My presence provided a space that women used and negotiated to lay claims to their agency. But women also, in Bourdieu's words, had the 'linguistic capital' to stake claims of strength. In their own ways, women were acting on their concerns and responding to constraints by entering and utilising not only the linguistic space I created, but they also took advantage of the community, church and entrepreneurial spaces to socially act. These spaces were constructed as vehicles women could use to claim their prowess in "getting things done". Their productive instances and presence in these spaces also allowed them to lay claim to a sense of moral superiority, specifically in relation to men.

The moving away by the youth from the conservatism of the church and traditional ideas of respect, unemployment levels and men's idleness were viewed as contradictory conditions in which women had to nurture notions of *ordentlikheid*. Men lacked responsibility to their roles as fathers, did not express concern

for the youth and church, were more likely to be the ones who would give into drink and were thus not considered as respectable role models:

B: men drink and don't go to church, women support and bake for the church. When I go to church I get my daughter to watch the shop for me, or I close it, no one should put his or her business before God. God gave me the strength to do my business so I cannot leave Him out of my day.

S: Men think that because the constitution says we are equal they don't have to work hard anymore.

Through their articulations and words, women were re-affirming new gender orders and resisting discourses of respectable men which prevailed in the past. Women saw men as failing to deal with contemporary conditions. Women were reconstructing local gender hierarchies and putting themselves morally above men.

The perceived constraints of women were generally concerns that they felt capable of addressing. However, varying degrees of resilience and action showed how some women felt that the conditions and changes in the valley had overwhelmed them.

Priorities for action

The language which the women used to talk about their communities and their social and development expectations revealed a great deal about their claims to agency and empowerment. Generally, women I spoke to prioritised social and youth development. The residents in all three villages for the most part perceived development needs in terms of housing, skills development and infrastructure.

The women particularly reflected the need for social development and community safety in response to the increase of drugs into the area. The changes in the valley were seen to threaten the youth's future. Gangsterism and Tik coming into Kylemore had increased petty crime and teenage girls were falling pregnant. The priorities of community development and upliftment, fighting crime and resolving the youth crisis remained high on Kylemore women's list. Overall, women prioritised a concern for the youth and to rid the valley from bad influences. Women's priorities included 'control' of the young: children's obedience to their parents, children were to be "seen and not heard", and children needed to be disciplined and given role models. The need to control the youth and to mend their disreputable behaviour and social loafing was voiced. In Pniel, women claimed the youth were choosing not to go to church and they were worried this might lead to their social and moral decay. It was interesting how the communities tended to ascribe their social problems and moral decay to 'outside influences'. The influx of people from farms into the valley and smugglers and dealers "turning the youth away from the community" were cited as the causes to the

problems in the valley. "The devil is here", one Pnieler commented when talking about the social dilemmas in the valley.

Housing needs were particularly poignant in Lanquedoc. Despite municipal contributions, the housing issue in Lanquedoc still had a long way to go and there were deep-seated contestations over the process. Some residents still lived in shacks rather than formal housing in Lanquedoc and Kylemore. In Pniel, the squatters in the Gif claimed they had been on the housing waiting list for over a decade. The unintended consequences of building new houses in Lanquedoc were highlighted as the social burdens of alcoholism, crime, and overcrowding. What was also almost always highlighted by women as concerns were the everyday needs like street lights, bread prices, family issues like health and schooling, and issues of drugs, child abuse and garbage collection. In Lanquedoc the shebeens were seen as sources of corruption on young girls and boys. The lack of recreational activities and opportunities for young people drove them toward the social scene at the shebeen. Similarly, despite there being a rudimentary playground in Kylemore which was fenced off, some women felt that it was unsafe to let their children play there as it was too close to the notorious Malva Street in the *skiem* where gambling, drug use and shebeen running was taking place. A similar concern was raised by a woman in Lanquedoc who said she was worried about children getting exposed to criminal behaviour in the streets and being tempted by the evils of alcohol:

I have seen the men who lose faith in themselves and go all night to the shebeen. That shebeen is open from Thursday through to Monday and it influences the children. There are many children from a very young age in the community who are running around and who are exposed to molestation from men.

The social worker in the area supported these claims. In response to these conditions, there was talk about starting an after-school rugby camp. Subsequently, sports development was viewed by some women in Lanquedoc as a critical step in the right direction to keep children focused and off the streets. Day-care to keep children off the streets after school was also a priority.

Women abuse was a circumstance some women found themselves in. When I spoke to the group in Lanquedoc that rallied around gender and child abuse in the village, they claimed that the men's lack of control over their own destinies led them to take over control of women in sexually dominating ways. But, to a large degree, women did not admit hopelessness in the face of poverty, gender abuse, and development and employment constraints – some chose not to talk about it, while others showed up their action and strength to respond to the dire situation: "we know what the needs in our communities are...women are mostly heading community involvements because we are prepared to go the whole way". Women therefore alleged that they held a distinct position in the local gender hierarchy, a position of community strength and entrepreneurial action that defined them as 'women of steel'.

Informants spoke of lack of solidarity on issues of development. It was intimated that development in the valley needed to be a consolidated approach between the different political affiliations. Such *politieke-verdraagsaamheid* (political tolerance) between the different political party memberships was viewed as necessary to enhance the delivery of services in the area. It was intimated that women would be the likely force within politics in the area that would rally for better service delivery. A local resident in Kylemore (who is also a political role player in the community) said: “women are driving the car in development, even though the river is deep, the women will get through the river”, intimating that women were strong and were able to get things done. She added: “*ek is nie 'n vrou van bek nie, maar 'n vrou van werk*” which when translated into English alleged that men in the communities were ‘all talk and no action’. Many women expressed strong views on the passivity of men and their inactivity or lesser involvement in community and development issues in the valley. However, different life experiences produced different subjectivities, and thus women’s development priorities and concerns would have differed from those of men, accounting for the perception that men “did not care for such things”. What is evident was that women put forward their community and social concerns as extensions of their roles as mothers and ‘*dorp supporters*’.

Empowering spaces

The community

Many women placed themselves within the church, community organisations and community projects that were empowering contexts that reaffirmed their strength. They were the leading members of Eye on the Child and formed the majority of a community group rallying around Tik abuse and were members of a Women’s Abuse Forum in Lanquedoc. Women dominated these spaces, illustrating their concern for youth.

These groups of women worked in partnership with the police and the Neighbourhood Watch, but these civic forums were for the most part dominated by men. In some manner of speaking, women were marginalized and excluded from some public spheres such as these forums and decision-making processes around social and developmental issues in their communities. While mostly women and children populated the Tik Support group space, their ‘participation’ in the group was non-descript. The male leader took control, all the preachers were men, and no women got up to talk of their experiences of the drug. The Neighbourhood Watch, unlike some other groups like the ‘*Sustersbond*’ (Association of Sisters), was not a predominantly female space, although women far outnumbered men in their attendance at a meeting I attended.

The Eye on the Child organization, established in 2000 in Kylemore, had a large female membership and identified ‘safe-houses’ for abused women and children in the community. The women involved all went through training to ‘become empowered’ to take the children away from the abusers. There was also a strong

presence of community policing through the Neighbourhood Watch that took on tasks of identifying outsiders or smugglers who were associated with the problems of drug abuse and also to report incidences of child and domestic abuse to the police. Where the Eye on the Child group had women actively participating in its cause, the Neighbourhood Watch, a regulating body in the community comprising mostly of men, predominantly steered it. At meetings and in the public sphere, men tended to use more space than women. However, in private women were claiming and speaking of their power and strength, forming “counterpublics which confront the politics of difference in which some publics may have more power than others” (Staeheli and Thompson 1997: 31). All in all, many women viewed these groups as suitable places for an extension of their duties as mothers but also as platforms for their own empowerment. The women in the DRV laid claims to empowerment and came together in protest marches and certain spaces to affirm their place in the local gender order.

The community as a significant context or condition of empowerment for women was regarded highly among women. Community was seen as a context where women defined and negotiated their social power. It was also the terrain of clients that they had to serve in their entrepreneurship.

The church

As Thornton and Ramphela have intimated, churches can become public symbols of the community of believers who enact their commitment to the community within them and through them (Thornton and Ramphela 1988:29). The churches in the DRV provided important services to women in the valley and served as a context of empowerment for women. Social problems were more intimately dealt within the sphere of religion. The Tik support group offered religion as the solution to Tik abuse – affirmed by an ex-addict on stage who announced: “if you give your life over to God, you will not be tempted – you will remain clean, chaste, and respectable”. In Lanquedoc, the Anglican Church’s Mothers Union played a role in empowering women through educating them on health issues and empowering them to speak out on women and child abuse. Therefore it seemed that amongst the populations in the valley, the church and religion was awarded a part to play in dealing with constraints in the valley. The role of the church in development was appreciated by the residents of the valley and was considered important and an appropriate outlet for women and youth to become involved in the development of their communities. Referring to the activities of the Christian Women’s Service, a woman in Kylemore related:

The church in our community is very helpful – if there is a loss in your family they help you. They come pray for you. They help people in need mostly. If you don’t have food they will bring you a food parcel. We all put blankets and food in a box on Sundays and those get given to families that need them most.

Indeed, churches and religious organizations formed by far the most important role in the immediate survival strategies of households through food-parcels. In Pniel, the church was concerned with the social

development of its youth and children. The Sisterhood and the Youth Brigade were both church-centred initiatives that aimed to empower women and involve the youth in religious and development concerns.

In Kylemore, a member of another women-based religious organization expressed that the developmental roles of the churches are pivotal in the communities, but that their roles should be more integrated:

We must stop being selfish and start looking out for each other. We cannot do development in our own church corners: we need to share ideas and come to solutions together to fight the bad outside influences (referring to the drug dealers from Idas Valley – a Coloured community nearer to Stellenbosch notorious for their gangs and drug problems).

Members of each community occupied subjective positions and thus women's everyday practices were sites of struggle that appropriated and negotiated and were socially marked by the reigning conditions and power relations in the valley. Women's philanthropic¹⁷ actions structured and reflected the state of their situations and the potential of women in the valley to exert their 'moments of agency'. Overall, the women I spoke to were striving for success and the upliftment of themselves and their communities. The inhabitants described themselves as humble and 'respectful', and put great value in their church and community.

The BSDI – a future space for women to deal with constraints?

Due to the under-development and poverty in the area, the owners of Boschendal and other stakeholders, including the municipality have put forward yet another transformation that women will live through, but that may also have the potential to provide more spaces and opportunities for women to reinforce their strength and help them to deal with their concerns. Couched in the rhetoric of LED, the draft proposals of the BSDI (2004, 2005) make many promises:

The current owner of the company (Boschendal) "has long standing commitments to the various communities in the [valley], which it intends to see honoured. Some of these commitments are in the process of being fulfilled and others are ongoing. These commitments to the communities of Lanquedoc, [Kylemore] and Pniel have been developed in consultation with the local communities and Stellenbosch Municipality, as a means to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development (BSDI 2005)

It was proposed that the benefits allocated to the communities "would make it easier to deal with the challenges that may arise in the dealings with complex and changing community aspirations and needs" (BSDI 2004:12). In a speech I heard in Pniel on National Heritage Day in 2006, the CEO of Boschendal intimated how the proposed development initiatives and established BTT (Boschendal Treasury Trust)

¹⁷ Philanthropy is generally defined as the act of donating money, goods, time or effort (often referred to as time, talent or treasure) to support a charitable cause, usually over an extended period of time and with a defined objective. In a more general sense, philanthropy may encompass any altruistic activity intended to promote good or improve human quality of life. Someone who is known for practicing philanthropy may be called a *philanthropist*. Although such individuals are often rich, people may perform philanthropic acts without possessing great wealth (Wikipedia).

would “help uplift the community and help them forward”. But while some key players in the communities who sat on the Board of the initiative intimated optimistic results from the BSDI, saying that “the Boschendal development is like the sun that is rising in our dark ages”, others from within the communities viewed it with suspicion and caution.

Many members in the BTT and those within the Boschendal Interim Forum (BIF) had dissenting views about the benefits of the proposals. Antagonisms within the DRV communities and power relations between Boschendal (and its constituencies) and the local communities inspired distrust and competition. In minutes obtained from a SAHRA meeting in 2006 between architects, urban consultants, municipal members and community trust forums, important problems with the proposed BSDI were recorded: “The BIF is not against the development. However, it feels that the process has not been thorough. People on the street do not know enough about the development” (SAHRA 2006:20). The Community Development Forum voiced concerns that Boschendal had handpicked members of the BIF trust and interim forum and were therefore not representative of the community.

It was intimated by trustees that “a social process of this magnitude, calibre and depth cannot be understood in isolation from its social context. The DRV consists of five diverse communities that provide a very dynamic context for this initiative. It is therefore appropriate that a document which focuses on all communities in some detail be submitted” (SAHRA 2006:15). Other concerns raised by community representatives were that no clear proposals regarding urban growth, access to land and community development had been submitted. These promises appeared in the BSDI draft proposals and heritage impact studies (Winter and Baumann 2006) but appeared without any content specifications or intended planning stipulations or dates. There were opposing community views to the promised economic benefits that the communities would derive and community representatives claimed that the initiative propagandised the development (SAHRA 2006:12). During the meeting, the premise that only 3 objections out of a population of 11,600 meant that the community was in favour of the development was stated as not necessarily being the case – it was possible that the community was in fact unaware of the proposals and that there had been a “lack of adequate and transparent data on the process” (SAHRA 2006:18). These allegations highlighted the lack of participation in the public participation process. All in all, women I encountered were not against development in the valley. They were concerned with inappropriate developments to date such as the LHP undertaken by Boschendal that had resulted in a poor living environment as well as the removal of farm-workers off the land. They were also concerned that the promised jobs would not benefit them in ways they expected, and I heard several women comment that they would be employed, but only in areas of domestic work, waitressing in the new boutique hotels or being gardeners in the new landscapes.

While the initiative's draft proposals promise empowerment and partnerships with the community beneficiaries, women spoke sceptically about it, doubting its ability to address concerns they felt were important and that may be overlooked by the proposed development projects. Also, they felt that for themselves, the BSDI would not necessarily empower them – they argued that the places and spaces they occupied in their communities needed to be brought into the equation.

The one-size-fits-all approach of the BSDI was largely contested by residents. They felt that what were largely cushioned in the BSDI proposals were untested ideas for development and community projects that in practice would not deliver on the priorities and development needs in their communities. However, the proposals bound these fluid and loosely connected communities in a future that would affect them all.

Conclusion

The DRV was not a bounded entity but was made up of different communities with different flows of history and power relations and their own locally defined meanings and priorities of development. The central representation informing what some women claimed during my research in the valley was that of themselves as being strong, or being 'women of steel'. This representation permeated many of the women's accounts of their community relations and livelihood practices. The narratives of 'women of steel' and 'failing men' and women claiming empowerment in this thesis were deeply embedded in the historical, economic, social and political worlds of women in the DRV, and the various layers of transformation that impacted on their everyday practices.

Showing their resilience in the face of land reform, unemployment and moral decline in men and the youth, women sought to transform their lives and the lives of others.. The context of the valley provided various community and entrepreneurial spaces and opportunities for some women to define their strength and empowerment in relation to men. These spaces and range of definitions of strength and resilience need to be explored. What is important to understand is that the women I interviewed all characterized the valley in their own way, defining their type of work against gender expectations that were not the same for every woman. However, many women I spoke with typified a portrayal of women in the valley that generally spoke of their moral superiority and responsibility. For some women, entering certain entrepreneurial spaces allowed them to validate local values of respectability (or *ordentlikheid*) by doing activities that were considered more 'feminine' and therefore 'appropriate' whilst others entered more contested and asocial terrains of entrepreneurship by running a shebeen (locally constructed as a male-dominated type of work) and thereby re-aligned local gender constructions in relation to men.

By outlining the entrepreneurial strategies that women adopted in the context of these restraints we can get a clearer picture of women's community concerns which were embedded in their entrepreneurial practices and their constructions around respectability and empowerment. The following analysis of individual and collective entrepreneurial strategies in the DRV is situated in the socio-economic realities and constraints these women talked about and acted against.

CHAPTER 6: PERFORMING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE VALLEY: BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND DEFINING SUCCESS

Introduction

This chapter shows how entrepreneurs hold different definitions of their entrepreneurship and 'success.' Entrepreneurs are people who actively position themselves as 'different to the dominant' (Fenwick 2002:162) or as individuals who generate change in normative orders (Stewart 1991:72). Another explanation is one who takes initiative, manipulates persons and resources in the pursuit of profit (in some discernible form) (Barth 1963:6). I found that in trying to understand women as entrepreneurs in the DRV, I had to grasp their own definitions – definitions that were variable but also had a common thread of 'doing good' for their community, showing their status as business women and taking advantage of local opportunities and initiatives to prove themselves as 'empowered' women. Entrepreneurship was not only about moments of economic agency but was specifically tied to local ideas of social acceptance and respectability. Where their activities did not fit into moral ideals of acceptable women's work, their activities became sites of struggle; of resistance and of accommodation to these norms.

This chapter elaborates on the social determination of certain entrepreneurial activities in the communities of the valley. It expounds the motivations of women who entered entrepreneurial spaces and illuminates their own explications of their choice of activity. While these social actions and choices were negotiated and appropriated around local notions of responsibility and 'acceptable' women's work, they showed how women rose to opportunities and defined their success in their own terms.

Entrepreneurs as responding to constraints

In the new South Africa, Koelble (2008) writes that 'entrepreneur' takes on various meanings and describes a wide range of individuals and their activities; the 'township entrepreneurs', the 'social entrepreneurs', and the 'black entrepreneurs.' Situating these individuals and their activities in context, Koelble asks whether the ANC's neo-liberal economic policies opened opportunities for entrepreneurs to create new businesses, or whether individuals became creative in enterprise due to their need to escalate out of the poverty trap (Koelble 2008:168). That aside, interestingly, his descriptions of the 'township' and 'social' entrepreneur provided insight into the kinds of activities and behaviours I encountered in the field. I like the way he described "those plucky individuals who lifted themselves up by their own bootstraps, achieved a modicum of wealth, and therefore should not be seen as role models for the rest of society. These individuals have taken responsibility for their own success and have, with drive and determination, overcome the odds stacked against them" (Koelble 2008:166). His description of 'township' entrepreneurs rings true for some entrepreneurs in the valley as they stood up against constraints. I could not say this for all of them because as 'entrepreneurs,' they also attached different meanings and interpretations of why or how they did what

they did. Fenwick argues that entrepreneurs have their own reasons for their entrepreneurship and create their own meanings of success (Fenwick 2002). In the DRV, some women's activities reflected a philanthropic need and responsibility to help the youth and their communities, much like Koeble's 'social entrepreneur.' On the other hand, others sought means of attaining not only money but also status in their community through their activity. However they defined their social actions of entrepreneurship, women were responding to conditions of constraint and opportunity, and in doing so claimed that they were independent, resilient, gutsy and "just like a man."

A note from the field, 18 June 2006:

It is June, mid-winter, and I'm back home in my cosy bed reflecting on my day spent in the valley. Today I made sense of women's activities in the field and got a lot more clarity on who is considered to be an entrepreneur in the valley and who is not. I spoke to Maria, Georgia and Beli this afternoon in Lanquedoc, sitting inside wrapped up in my jacket and them in their woolen cardigans with heads of curlers. Their kids were all inside on account of the rain and I bounced a youngster on my lap while the other children fidgeted with their mother's hair or attire, taking discomfort in the presence of me as a stranger in their home. I suspect they didn't feel as comfortable around me, but then again, I'm not good with kids. The women all asked me questions about my own well being, how my research was going, if I was still with my boyfriend and whether my mom and dad were well...

...It is hard sometimes when you become 'friends' with research participants to barge into their homes and ask your questions. Today I wanted to talk with them about entrepreneurs in their neighbourhood. Maria asked me what I meant by 'entrepreneur'...that caught me off guard, I didn't want to give her a raw definition out of the textbook. In my mind these three ladies and perhaps all who live in the new *skiem* of Lanquedoc are entrepreneurs in the sense that they are able to create and craft and redefine their new existence in that strange place. While we spoke candidly amongst one another, they each came up with names of women hairdressers and caters and mobile shop owners who they announced to be *besigheids vrouens* (business women). Underneath their naming and thinking, I sensed their own underlying senses of disillusionment perhaps that they had no employment of their own. They told me they were used to working on farms, and didn't know how else to make a living.

Women in the DRV were not an exclusive category. It is also evident that the villages in the DRV and the women living there were not homogeneous and that they differed from each other. Women entrepreneurs held different social positions. Women faced different constraints, had different uses of business and community spaces to deal with constraints and class variants and these differences defined their activities. In Lanquedoc, the lack of infrastructure, seasonal employment and lack of social cohesion in the village were considered big constraints on women's entrepreneurial strategies. Also women had few spaces to do their entrepreneurship. The new LHP houses offered a very small space in which to carry out home-based

activities so women had to rent mobile containers or use the streets as spaces. During a focus group, women in Kylemore told me that because they lacked a proper education, they couldn't get good jobs. Seasonal work on farms and in the factories was also a constraint. They also told me how they had to work or find ways of making an income because their husbands were too lazy to work or didn't earn enough to support the household. As may be expected, the crisis of youth and child abuse and community underdevelopment defined their strategies to a large degree too. In another village, a group of bakers in Pniel were under pressure in the kitchen to get another cake in the oven – they were catering for a religious event at the church, taking place the next day. One of them told me that baking was a skill that she'd learnt from her mother: "my grandmother was a big baker, my cousin does the pastries at Boschendal – it runs in the family". Like other entrepreneurs in Pniel, these women defined a lot of what they did in line with gender expectations and ideals of being respectable. They also liked to take advantage of their larger homes to use the spaces to run homestays and houseshops.

Why women 'do' entrepreneurship in the valley

There was a variety of reasons why women started their own businesses and entrepreneurial activities in the valley. In general, with a few exceptions, their primary reason for starting a business was economic necessity. This motivation was supported by claims that men were not living up to, or could not live up to, their responsibilities of being the breadwinner. From the entrepreneurs I interviewed 24 out of 28 women were married, three of these had disabled husbands, 7 had husbands on a pension, and 15 husbands were working on farms or were seasonal contract builders. These jobs were volatile, erratic and paid very little. The 3 widows were making do by themselves.

The male as the head of household and breadwinner was a particular construction of the local gender order in the valley. Women used this ideal to underscore men's authority in the household by taking over this role. Because men were 'failing' to live up to their responsibilities, women perceived themselves as 'stronger' than men. These responsibilities included providing economically for their household, but also extended to social concern for the community, behaving 'respectably' and taking an entrepreneurial initiative.

Women motivated their activities as providing needed services to clients in the valley or fulfilling a community need, as the entrepreneurs below said:

In Stellenbosch, there are too many shops, too much choice, but here in Lanquedoc there are not so much luxuries and so I felt it better to provide people with that (Mobile Shop owner in Lanquedoc)

Another commented:

I became business-minded and had a desire to start sewing. We got women together who could sew. We saw an opportunity to make uniforms and sports clothes for the local schools and rugby clubs and thereby support our local community too (Seamstress in Pniel).

And another said:

I have many clients, women who come to me for a style; I do the girl's hair for their dances
(Hairdresser in Kylemore).

Along with Dollie who suggested:

I started this job because I saw there was a demand. The people in this community like to drink and relax on the weekends; it is sociable. I don't only do this because of poverty; I do it because society is looking for a place like this so that they can forget their troubles. A resident in Kylemore said to me that the shebeens get a lot of support because there are no other social activities in our area (Shebeen owner in Kylemore)

The lack of infrastructure and community needs in the valley motivated some women to respond to these conditions and take the opportunity to provide services to a wide range of clientele.

Some entrepreneurs said that they ran a home based business not only out of economic necessity, but also as a reason to stay at home to watch the children because of bad influences that affect youth who have no one to keep them in check.

I was hoping to get my application through as soon as possible, it is a bad situation for children here who are on the streets and I wanted to take them in and look after them until their parents finish work (Crèche owner in Kylemore).

Some women's concern for young children and desire to keep them off the streets showed that they were motivated to help out in their community (*dorp supporters*).

Other women I interviewed used the meeting to brag about their activities, showing that they were worthy and independent – women with 'guts.' Women wanted to show their independence, which they claimed would be a sign of modern times. These women said they wanted to prove they were empowered to be an entrepreneur. Here, women consciously challenged male spaces e.g. by running a shebeen or claimed that they were better at running a business than men were:

People get jealous that I am a woman that has a good business, but it shows that I am above the rest, and that makes men jealous. But women are equal, perhaps better than men in the sense that men are not so money wise as we are. I am the one who pays the bills. These are modern days. Women change and men see it and let us go on with what we do best. Men usually want to be in power, but they see that we are doing it better so they let us go on with it (Mobile shop owner in Lanquedoc).

Men also want to start houseshops but they don't know a first thing – they do it the wrong way and sell things without a license. Men have no business sense (Houseshop owner in Kylemore)

And for those women who lived in the *skiems* of Lanquedoc and Kylemore, their entrepreneurial activities were survival strategies that saw, for example, two women juggling multiple income generating activities just to keep their heads above water.

These different strands of motivations will make more sense in the following narrations of women and their entrepreneurial activities. While there were different motivations, most of them articulated that they were strong women by responding to needs and constraints within their communities and their own lives.

Multiple income-generating activities

In Kylemore, I sat and drank tea with Sara at her home. She told me:

I have always wanted to make my enterprises really interesting, and also do something that I could do from my own place, and also activities that I could do during the winter. After a lot of work in my garden, my *restaurantjie* (small restaurant) took off. We would open it up on the weekend, me and another woman, and sell burgers and fish and chips. I also had braais here and did Christmas and Easter functions.

We moved outside so that Sara could show me her garden. All the women that passed us in the street waved to us. Two neighbouring men sat on old deck chairs on the side of the street talking amongst themselves. Sara sensed that her strong hand gestures of where the tables and chairs were positioned in her garden were not giving me the full picture of her restaurant enterprise and she went back into the house to retrieve two albums to show me with pride the photographs she had taken of her garden restaurant at the side of her house. She had kept some paper menus and decorated serviettes from some of her functions as mementos and gave them to me one by one, making sure I looked at them in detail. Sara went on:

We did not draw up a business plan or anything...we did not know that that was what you did...I go around the community selling tickets and now and then I have a function. But I need a lot of things to make my place nice – I want people to support me so that I can buy more chairs, tables, tablecloths...I want to make sure that the place looks good so that when people walk into the tea-garden they see that it is something interesting and different. I make flower arrangements myself to put on top of the tables, and I have to take care that my garden looks good too. It is hard work. My daughter helped me with the functions, but last year my daughter died in a car accident ... and my husband has a heart problem and often lies in the hospital so I am actually making the income.

The functions I held became irregular because there is always something happening in the community so I must fit in where I can. There is competition, as sometimes the church will have something like a bazaar, or the school will have a function, so I must find out first when I can do my functions. Also, in winter I cannot do my functions because they are held outside and in the winter it rains. In winter sometimes I try to sell clothes that I buy at second-hand clothing shops in a stall in the black township near Stellenbosch and sell them in the street. Sometimes I sell boerewors rolls on weekends on the side of the road, or from inside my house when it rains. I have been involved in everything to make a living and to support my family.

Sara was involved in multiple income generating activities and was extremely involved in her community. Among other things, she was always readily available to help out others in need. She had taken in a girl who had been abused by her alcoholic father. Her strong involvement in the Eye on the Child organization had made her more aware of abuse in the community. She also volunteered at the soup kitchen in winter. Sara had gained permission from the Department of Social Development and Welfare to run a crèche from her home and she told me: "I was hoping to get my application through as soon as possible, it is a bad situation for children here who are on the streets and I wanted to take them in and look after them until their parents finish work". Sara's concern for young children and to keep them off the streets showed that she was a *dorp supporter* at heart. Also, she was involved for a long time in a community crafters project where she learnt flower arranging and some rudimentary business skills. She said that acquiring these skills had helped her go further with her entrepreneurial ventures. Sara also managed a small houseshop from her home, where she sold vegetables, fruit and other amenities.



Sara standing outside her houseshop in Kylemore

On weekends she sometimes sold boerewors rolls for R7.50 each, or she sometimes set up her stall on the side of the road near her house and creatively decked the tables with handbags, clothes, toys, hats, nappies and other things. She purchased her merchandise at wholesale price in Cape Town and the fruit and vegetables she got from the farms. Sara survived doing many different activities rather than one livelihood strategy.



Sara standing next to her stall with her brother

Her strategies were linked to seasonal periods of the year. Sara earned a paltry R1000 a month on which she had to feed her family.

Yes, it has been difficult at times to earn a decent income...with my husband not working, I have to do many things to keep it together...and the community is very supporting and helping...they know me and know that I am caring and involved in the community...especially helping with the children and women...in this community it is a woman's world because we know the hardship but we carry on.

Sara showed that some women in the valley did whatever it took to bring in income, but also how they took pride in uplifting their communities. Her social entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship for non-profit and for a cause) pointed out a kind of philanthropic motivation that she shared with some entrepreneurs in the valley.

Other multiple income generating activities included domestic work and selling vegetables. Rhonda was a Xhosa-speaking migrant living in the *skiem* of Lanquedoc. Daily, she would wake up early, meet the trailer carrying her produce on the main street, unload it and arrange the fruit and vegetables neatly under her make-shift tent canopy of steel and shade cloth. Rhonda told me:

I came to live with my father's brother in Lanquedoc who said there was work on the farms...he works for RFF in the factory...but I could not find work there...I worked as a domestic worker...but not because I am pregnant I can not do the work...so I stay here in the village and find things to do...I decided to sell the produce from the farms...his friend gets me the goods from the farms for a good price and he lets me rent the trailer to bring the vegetables to Lanquedoc and I put my stall up here on the street. My husband works shifts as a security guard for a company in Franschhoek. But he makes very little money.

Rhonda told me how hard it was to be away from the city (Stellenbosch) as she felt that there were more work opportunities there than in the valley: "In the winter the work opportunities here are little - in the winter, all of the farm workers, except for the chars (domestic workers) are at home". The seasonality of work in the DRV was a huge constraint on the women's livelihoods. What was hard with Rhonda was that she seemed very unhappy with her situation and desperate to find more work:

Can you not help me, please, it is not too good for me to sit here and wait for people to buy my fruit...it will be hard for me now to find char work because I am going to have a baby...but I need to grow my business and there is no hope here in this place.

Rhonda earned R150 a day selling vegetables. But that is not everyday. Some days she earns close to nothing. Generally her husband's contribution to the household expenses just covers the grocery bill, and he oftentimes helps to pay for the rental of the trailer. Rhonda's income from her vegetable stall covers all other expenses, including the R500 that she remits home to the Eastern Cape every month to her two other children who stay with their grandmother. This helps to cover their school fees and uniforms.

Rhonda was strategising for her and her children's monetary needs. She did not have anything to say about her work meaning anything other than getting food on the table and making sure her children had uniforms and could go to school. Her husband did work, and she said that he was a good man. But they were both struggling to make ends meet. Her entrepreneurship was basic survival.



Like Rhonda, Fay set up an informal stall and sold Proteas and *Fynbos* (wild flowers indigenous to South Africa) on the side of the main provincial road leading out of the valley to Stellenbosch (see photograph above). At the age of 15 she had begun working on the farms, picking fruit. She then earned a mere R5 a day. For 10 years she had worked on the farm. It was a hard life. She stayed with her parents who lived in a *hokkie* (informal shack structure) in the

skiem in Kylemore. She then did casual labour in a fruit-packing factory in the town of Stellenbosch for the next 15 years earning up to R580 a month. The factory closed down recently, forcing her back to the farms to resume fruit picking which paid her less. For the past few months, on the weekends, from morning until evening, she sold flowers on the side of the main road entering the DRV. She did farm work during the week earning R40 a day but the extra R280 she earned on weekends selling flowers was a necessity: "With the extra money I make with flower-selling I can afford to raise my children, buy them uniforms and make sure they have a decent meal on their plates." Mostly tourists would stop and buy the flowers for R30 a bunch. Most of this money went to the farmers who had contracted her to sell the flowers. In personal communication with her, Fay told me politely that she enjoyed selling flowers: "It is nice to sit here and sell these flowers, it is relaxing and I can sit here and watch the people and listen to my radio."

Fay accounted that her work on farms was frowned upon by some in Kylemore because it was considered work for those who lived in the *skiem* and were lower in class. She told me that selling flowers in the spring and summer gave her space to be away from the farms and from the community to just sit and take pleasure in what she was doing. It was not unpleasant work at all, but it was necessary to do, because, like Rhonda, she had children to feed and a household to maintain.

Catering for ceremonies

Henriette was a short smiling woman in her sixties who ran a tea garden from her family home in Pniel. She considered herself a baker by profession. There were a number of women in the Pniel community who professed to be bakers. Henriette said:

I am a baker, like my mother was and like my grandmother was. So I do orders for people in the community and as far away as people in Cape Town who hear about my delicious *Boere* (farm-style) *melkterte* (milk tarts) en *koeksisters* (deep fried bits of dough soaked in syrup). I also do baking for confirmations and the funerals that take place. I am also involved in the church, I'm a member of the *Susters* (Sisters Association) and there are days when we go and pray for people and we take them food that we have baked. My husband was a principal, but now he is retired, he gets his pension money, but that is not enough.

When talking of her role as a woman, Henriette commanded respect and placed importance on the value of her role in caring for others. She maintained that she was the strongest one in the family:

I am a woman who is as strong as steel. Spiritually, I help the family a lot, and if there are problems they always come to me. I have always been someone of inner strength in the family and they have lots of respect for me.



Henriette's platters

When probed about what her husband viewed as her role as a woman she genially retorted:

I am most probably the role model for him – I am the strong one – maybe stronger than him.

Catering entrepreneurs in the valley were mostly found in Pniel and Kylemore. Women's interest in baking stemmed from a kind of middle-class domesticity and was linked to providing food and clothes for religious ceremonies. These enterprises reflected more socially normative activities that defined their success as women and being religious and therefore responsible member of their communities. The high involvement of women bakers in church and religious ceremonies such as confirmations, weddings and funerals illustrated a more conservative route to generating income, and fell directly in line with respectability and gender norms in the valley. These women also seemed to strategize on the opportunistic side of entrepreneurship:

There is always a need in the communities for people to do catering and baking because we are domestic people and we like to make gatherings social by including some food.

Sewing for weddings, school and sports teams

There were no shops in the valley where women and men could buy new clothes, a dress for a social event, bed or table linen or school uniforms. The sewers in the valley responded to this constraint by filling in this gap, and in doing so, extended their domestic skills into their entrepreneurship:

Three months after my husband died, I started to support myself and my family through dress-making...sometimes I would also work during the day and then come home and clean the house and sew until late at night...my specialty is actually wedding dresses but I also do bridesmaids dresses and baptism dresses.

I'm a designer and a sewer. I have a wedding in December and it usually takes me two months to do a whole wedding. All my dresses are different and creative...I've got a good head for business.

Leah told me that she would make up to R200 a dress, depending on the style. From the seamstress's I spoke to, some were widowed or divorced, while others whose husbands were working started up their small sewing enterprise out of enjoyment for sewing and for adding to the household income. Some of them sewed and sold curtains, bed linen, dresses for weddings and dances, and tablecloths. One seamstress showed particular entrepreneurial ingenuity by selling her clothes at a stall in Stellenbosch. In response to her entrepreneurial activity a friend remarked:

I admire this woman because she saw an opportunity to make clothes for farm workers, which is a big market, and when she gets off the taxi here at the end of the day, she will always have bags of groceries and food to feed her family.

Clothes manufacturers in the DRV were based at home and usually operated individually. They were also doing activities that subscribed to ideal gender notions of women, and saw women strategising and taking opportunities to serve a large client base in the valley. By serving their communities, they were acting respectably.

Ursula in Pniel was an entrepreneur who dreamed bigger than a home-based enterprise. Ursula was a housewife who started a project where housewives in the area could get together to make additional income. Ursula explained her story:

I became business-minded and had a desire to start sewing. We got women together who could sew. We saw an opportunity to make uniforms and sports clothes for the local schools and rugby clubs and thereby support our local community too.

Initially it was started as a community project with the aim of employment creation for women – initiated by a local Pniel woman. At first there were ten ladies involved, but over the years the work became less, and there was not enough money to pay so many women. So then it became seven women, then there were only three sewing amidst machines and materials. The project initiator, Ursula told me it was better that there were fewer women sewing because in that way the shared profits could be larger. Ursula went once a week to Cape Town to buy the material needed. Selling the clothes made these women happy and made them feel powerful. Involvement in these 'organic or home-grown' projects represented a step towards self-empowerment (Oberhauser & Pratt 2004: 219). They expressed that the more they sewed, the more innovative they got with the clothes and materials. Ursula said:

Now we want to make things to cater more for individuals in the community so that we can sell them at the church bazaars...we need local customers...there is no clothing shop in the valley so if we can find out what the community wants we can broaden our products. However right now I have too many orders and we are working day and night...we have no time to think of bigger things.

In the case of the DRV, advantages as well as constraints were evident in a project such as the sewing project. Although I did not have a range of projects to explore, the cases below provide interesting avenues in which women were involved in empowering entrepreneurial contexts moulded for them by the outside. In these projects, 90% of the members were women. Most members were Coloured, with the exception of African ladies from Lanquedoc, and their ages ranged from late 20s to early 60s. Ursula's sewing project showed her philanthropic need to help people, but she also became well known in her community and thus elevated her status. That she was employing other women showed that she was 'supporting the dorp.'

Running a homestay

There were numerous women in the valley who were finding innovative entries into the burgeoning tourism industry in the valley. This involvement has for the most part been in the form of homestays that were located in Pniel (four homestays) and Kylemore (two homestays). These homestays came about through the Cape Winelands Home-Stay initiative which identified a group of women in the area, in 2002, to receive entrepreneurial and tourism training. They were promoted and supported by the provincial government and received educational and skills development through the District Municipality. The homestays were meant to provide an alternative form of accommodation, offering a comfortable room in a family environment for tourists to gain personal insight into the life of the valley people and to learn the history and culture.

Various comments about why some women became involved in setting up homestays included:

- a. A lady came to talk to us about the tourism business of starting a homestay and it seemed it would be a good opportunity to make some money.
- b. I started a homestay for people to feel at home – a home away from home. I just love it. I love to be a mother to people and cook and look after them.
- c. I started my homestay five years ago to earn some extra income. All my children were out of the house...to tell you the truth, I am a 'people's person.' I am very fond of people and I like to get to know people and like to speak with them, but naturally I started the homestay so that I could live better.

By far, the women who set-up homestays, as an entrepreneurial practice in the valley performed their entrepreneurial strategy around ideas of being religious, a good mother, a *dorp supporter* and a woman with business savvy. Having people stay in their homes allowed them to show how 'proper' they lived, how 'clean' their houses were and how graceful a host a woman could be. They also expected their husbands to be gracious and involved with guests, not to drink and to contribute to the upkeep of the household. Their entrepreneurial strategies were not only ways of maintaining the identity of respectable women, but also a way of entering the formal tourism sector to market the valley as a respectful place to live. Homestays in the valley tried to emulate the culture of the residents and mirrored a good Christian way of living. They also defined normative gender roles of women and men.

Tourism enterprises such as homestays and B&Bs saw women producing household services in line with their reproductive roles of caring and nurturing and illustrated that they had pride in their homes and communities. That the women themselves owned the homestays gave them a further sense of pride. However, tourism is a highly competitive arena in which to strategize. Women felt that more B&B establishments needed to be set up by women in the communities as these held more weight in tourism brochures, as one homestay owner commented:

People who stop at the tourism bureau see that there are B&Bs and pick these places. They seem to think a homestay is something of a native experience, they don't realise it is a chance to just be in a comfortable home with warm people.

There were also deep-seated issues expressed by the homestay women in Kylemore that the Pniel tourism bureau was not marketing their homestays and was 'favoring' the homestays in Pniel over Kylemore. The two women mentioned one particular woman with a homestay who they claimed was "getting all the tourists" because Pniel people at the tourism office "supported their own people." These women perhaps ignored the fact that this particular homestay was located *op die werf* (the central church ground in Pniel) located close to the tourism bureau, the historical Congregational church, the Freedom Monument, the slave bell and Boschendal which gave it a particular appeal to tourists.

However, when speaking to the women who owned the tourism-orientated homestay enterprises it seemed that these enterprises did not sufficiently contribute to the household income. Tourists and visitors to the valley were mostly passers-by, making their way to the big attractions of Boschendal and other wine farms and who chose to rather stay in Stellenbosch or Franschhoek. As a result, five out of the six homestays mostly accommodated contract workers who worked on the Berg River Dam Project. These rent-payers made sure the 'homestay' rooms were filled for at least two-year periods. Other homestay owners allowed students who were doing research in the valley to rent a room on a monthly basis. These strategies greatly reduced the risk of low room occupation and guaranteed women steady incomes. Speaking on behalf of the homestay women, Elsie said: "because we don't get enough tourists to stay with us (this they attributed to dismal marketing on behalf of the Pniel Tourism Bureau), we take in men from all over the country who are working at the dam – this way we are guaranteed a regular income." The homestay enterprises did not work as intended as specifically tourism ventures. That all of them were accommodating not tourists, but rather students and contract workers, showed how women had responded to a need and were providing a service.

Many of the women who ran homestays in the valley did it because of interest, to get additional income and because they had the room in their houses to cater for guests or long-time dwellers because their children did not live with them anymore. Interestingly, Ioannides (2003) discusses "Non-Entrepreneurs" as passive

entrepreneurs or laggards who perceive tourism to be an industry with low entry barriers and an opportunity for them to supplement their income during the tourist season, but can hardly be described as professionals (people intending to make a long-term career). Rather, they are 'non-entrepreneurs,' often retired or semi-retired persons using their own savings to start a small, albeit informal business. Such a conceptualization seems to fit comfortably with a number of women involved in homestays in the valley. The homestays were set up in houses that were usually larger than others in the respective communities and the perception of homestay owners by other women in the valley was that they were older women who had the security of a pension or were the more 'wealthy' and 'elite' women within their communities. The space of a bigger house lent these homestay women a bigger chance at success.

Incidentally, because from the start many homestay women relied on the training and input from outside tourism agents and training programmes, their own sense of initiative was undermined and although they claimed to be empowered, they were still oftentimes unsuccessful in their ventures.

Mobiles, *Spazas* and Houseshops

Almal het swaar, dus is daar so baie househops.

Everyone has it bad; that is why there are so many houseshops.

There were a number of women entrepreneurs who managed houseshops and mobile shops in each of the communities. These were commercial enterprises set up in houses or containers that provided locals with everyday essential items. Referred to colloquially in African townships as a *spaza*, houseshops or mobiles as they were called in the valley usually sell soft drinks, cigarettes, newspapers, candles, matches, bread, sugar and milk and are generally operated with basic amenities. *Spazas* operate out of houses, usually in townships or informal residential areas. *Spazas* arose out of the township landscape during the 1960s and 1970s when residents resisted apartheid legislature that had restricted African people's trading in the cities and towns, leading to growth in informal trade in townships. Traders were often forced to trade underground and took on an air of 'illicit disturbance' to formal white retailers. The nature of the emergent informal enterprises as part of an 'institution of resistance' defined the word *spaza* as 'that which causes disturbance or blunder' (Spiegel 2005:193). As Spiegel notes, the term *spaza* can be used, as in the case of Marconi Beam (an informal settlement in Cape Town) as "something not contextually proper or normal [...] an unsatisfactory alternative [that] does not meet the standards for urban living" (Spiegel 2005:192). *Spaza* refers to, in various contexts as something that is cheap or of poor quality (Spiegel 2005:197), something that is unreal or artificial but overall refers to an inadequacy expected of proper urban citizenship (Spiegel 2005:203). Most of the communities of the DRV don't call their retail trading stores *spazas*, but rather mobiles or houseshops. However, houseshops are considered more 'proper' than mobiles. Mobiles were run

from containers, and while they were usually easily set up in the busiest areas of the community or could be moved, they were run by poorer people who did not have 'nice enough' or 'big enough' houses to utilize for their businesses.

Women in the DRV purchased their stock from wholesalers. Their shops depended largely on low-income earners for their existence. Their patrons were usually residents in the *skiem*, except in the case of Monica (below) who relied more on the residents who had steady jobs, and therefore more money. In Lanquedoc, houseshops illustrated the attempts of unemployed women to make a living. The women managing houseshops in the village were considered as opportunity-motivated entrepreneurs as there was no formal shop in the village. Referring to the lack of infrastructure in the village, a woman in Lanquedoc cited:

I decided to start the houseshop in 2002 as I saw there was a need to provide people with things in the community. I had little savings but I started off small in the front part of my house selling things through the window. Now, I am running full time and my husband is also helping me...most times the shop earns about R200 daily...there are lots of houseshops in Lanquedoc so people mainly from my area support me...the competition is there but I am confident in my shop.

A focus group set up in Lanquedoc revealed that many people visited these shops and felt they were relatively stable ways for people to earn an income. A draw card was the shop's proximity as there were no commercial centres within easy distance in the valley. A drawback for the residents was that their credit used to pile up and that oftentimes prices were higher on locally-sold goods than on goods bought at the Pick and Pay in Stellenbosch.

My interview with Helen took place under a tree in her yard, sitting on two old chairs near to the container with the Coca-Cola signature sprawled across it. She told me that she positioned her mobile-shop in the Herbert Baker street in the lower part of Lanquedoc, away from the *skiem* because people there had more steady incomes as they were still working on farms, while people in the *skiem* had smaller incomes. She relied on its position near to activity and where the wage-earners lived and passed-by:

I bring my mobile to this part of the village because it is where people walk up and down, it is where the farm trucks come and pick up and drop off the workers, and it is where the husbands have work so the children can buy more sweets and cooldrinks.

New to the village and missing Idas Valley, Helen felt that she did not fit in with the people in Lanquedoc when she said, "I don't mingle, I see how bored the people get, and then they turn to the drink".

At the age of twenty-nine, she was eager to keep busy and to do something constructive:

I don't like being bored, to sit here all day with nothing to do would drive me crazy. My husband is gone all day working, I need to work; it shows that I am better than some women here that do nothing.



Helen mentioned that there was a lot of competition in Lanquedoc between the houseshops and mobile shops, but that that didn't worry her because she had her newspapers, and she knew how bored people liked to read their gossip stories.

It is a blessing that I have this mobile shop; it provides me with a steady income from which I can be my own person and look after my daughter. I put away R60 a day and keep it in a bank account so that I can save up money for my daughter's college tuition one day.

The mobile shop had her daughter's name on it alongside the Coca Cola sign (see photograph above).

Helen's entrepreneurship was caused by her concern for her children but she also commented that she only did 'good' (respectable work), "I only sell bread and luxuries, not liquor or bad things that corrupt people" she commented. Helen wanted her mobile shop to be seen with some respect in that she had not resorted to running a 'disrespectful' enterprise, a shebeen, like some men had started in her village. Her remarks about women having a better business savvy than some men supported other claims among the valley's women entrepreneurs that men "didn't have the guts to start their own business; they don't want to be seen to fail." Throughout Helen's story, there were important comments made about how her involvement in entrepreneurship was a "sign of the times," that women were equal to men in that they had just as much "rights" to do business as men had. I probed her further on these comments and she tried to explain:

In the house it is expected, from old times, that women stay at home and watch the kids, do the cleaning and things like that ... some women still do this ... they think it is what they should do ... some women realize that there is no sense in only doing these things in the house ... because husbands no longer work as hard as they used to, they can't support the family, so women realize they can do both (reproductive and economic roles).

Helen argued that because women were starting businesses and taking care of the home and household needs at the same time, they had strength and willpower.

In Pniel, Karien ran a houseshop from her large home. Her husband lost his job in the motor industry due to retrenchments in 2004. At the time of fieldwork he was working on a farm. His weekly income of R700 a week hardly covered the day to day spending of the household and education fees for the children, as Karien mentioned, "the work on the farm does not pay well. It is seasonal and during winter he does not get to work a full day." Talking about her relationship with her husband, Karien declared:

We are both equal in the eyes of God. Losing his job was trouble for the family and the marriage, so I had to step up. Women around this place say that I have guts, but I say that's what you do when you are in tough times, you go out and do something about it, you just move on and out of that situation. Men are losing their jobs and also want to start houseshops but they don't know a first thing – they do it the wrong way and sell things without a license. Men have no business sense. I nearly gave up – but I have guts. I made the choice to do this.

In 2004, the municipal housing scheme took shape in Pniel. With the influx of new people to her neighbourhood, Karien saw an opportunity to make some money and provide amenities to the population around her. In 2005, Karien submitted her proposal to start a houseshop to Red Door, a local economic development agency in the Western Cape¹⁸. They agreed to help her with funding to start her business. The submission was a long process and it took a year before she received the funding, in the form of a loan, to start up her enterprise. She motivated her entrepreneurship by saying:

I saw an opportunity and I took it. I motivated to Red Door that there were few facilities available in our little village, proved to them that I had business sense and an excellent location for the tuckshop and took the step. With the tuckshop I hoped to live a better life and educate my children so they one day can be independent like me. Also, I wanted to be with my children while they were in school. When I see what goes on in this community, I feel it my duty to watch my kids, to guide them. A woman's place is in the home so I chose to run a business from home.

Karien sold cooldrinks, soap, washing powder, toilet paper, potatoes, onions, spices, pies and airtime. Because she sold airtime (which everyone needed) and *lekkerder dinge* (nicer things like chocolates and sweets) for the children, she got a steady flow of customers. Her daily income was between R400 – R600, and on weekends she made up to R1000 a day. This sounded like a lot of money to me. Added up it could mean that she was earning way more than others that were heading shops in her community. She exclaimed that her business was booming – and ofcourse it would. Her turnover was high due to the new settlers across from her. She owned the shop that up to 1000 people could visit in one day.

A handful of women mentioned that the success of houseshops in Pniel made some men and women jealous in the community. Karien remarked that sometimes people were not so polite with her when they heard that she owned the houseshop, “they were jealous, but they had to accept it,” she said. She gloated that other women were envious of her willpower and savvy: “women look up to me; people in this community notice that I am successful.” She told me that women would say to her: “*Ons smag om te doen wat jy doen*” (we crave to do what you do). Women were envious and at the same time seemed passionate about what she did. Running an enterprise demonstrated to others that entrepreneurial women had both the passion and clout and defined her status among other women. Karien added that the help of Red Door had given her an added push

¹⁸ The RED Door project is an initiative of the Enterprise Development sub-directorate within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. The sub-directorate aims to promote the development of small and/or black-owned enterprises. It helps with facilitating the drawing up of business plans, applying for tenders and providing funding for micro – small enterprises.

to start up her business. She admitted that not enough women in her community knew of such an organization that could help out and fund women for their small businesses. This assertion showed how there was a lack of information in the community of Pniel on such service providers, and also that many women's ignorance of opportunities such as these were constraints to them for reaching their full potential in their businesses or in their dreams of starting a business.

Entrepreneurship as resistance: managing a shebeen

Some entrepreneurial activities were considered less desirable for women to do in the valley. Selling alcohol from your home was one particular activity that I came across where women participants were frowned upon. A woman running a *smokkelhuis* was considered by some to be bad because her success came from defiling men and youth with alcohol. There were other stories about a woman with 'guts' in Kylemore who managed an informal shebeen in the *skiem* in Kylemore. One woman, when I asked her how she felt about women doing such work as managing a shebeen she answered: "doing a terrible thing like running a shebeen on weekends from your house is not so bad, it shows that you will do anything to make sure that your children are kept healthy and fed, and have uniforms for school." A few women, mostly residing in the *skiem* viewed the female shebeen owner as a respected member of their community. Women like her were considered gutsy and faced constraints head on. A woman shebeen owner, like those that did farm work or were street vendors were considered hardy and showed they were empowered because they took any work they could find, and even did 'disrespectable' work such as running a shebeen to look after their children and households. The women were therefore saying that women were taking a stand against men's deficiencies and had the guts to run shebeens in order to put food on the table, whereas men did nothing.

At the time of research, during 2006/7, there were about 13 informal shebeens in Lanquedoc and four in Kylemore. There were no shebeens in Pniel, although 'illicit' drinking was taking place in the *Gif*. Women managed two of the six shebeens in Kylemore. By and large, shebeens were run by, and frequented by men. The majority of women in each of the communities constructed the shebeens as notorious enterprises and 'disrespectable' male-dominant spaces where men would drink their lives away and lose inhibitions to hurt their wives and children. Police and members of the local neighbourhood watches would occasionally crack down on these illegal liquor outlets, but soon afterwards, they would be up and running again. Shebeens were considered sources of criminal elements such as drug dealing and drug-taking and where men became involved in scandalous behaviour. The shebeen was a visibly masculine place within the local public spaces of Kylemore and Lanquedoc. Women saw shebeens as "corrupting the youth." Women I spoke to generally saw shebeens as disreputable spaces that women do not go to. However, in communities like Kylemore and Lanquedoc, with the huge unemployment statistics, and in Lanquedoc particularly, the low morale of many farm workers who had been displaced from their homes and communities, shebeens became social spaces where residents could share their marginalised position and socialise together. The often rowdy behaviour

allowed there and the mind-numbing effects of alcohol offered a solace from emotional trauma some women carried with them. To the more middle class women of Kylemore, women entering these spaces, let alone managing them, was regarded with disdain. Shebeen-running was considered not 'proper' work for women to do as it was regarded to be socially destructive and a bad example to their children. Running a shebeen was considered as an irresponsible, often illegal activity, one that did more harm than good to the community. Running a shebeen as an entrepreneurial activity in the valley can thus be characterised as a subversive critique of dominant gender ideals and moral values in the public space (Hewamanne 2003:71).

Operating on the underside of the local economy, a woman "with guts" was managing a shebeen in the community of Kylemore. The female shebeen owner said:

Residents look at me in the community and know that I am a strong and gutsy woman, socially they see me in that light...I know it is not good to run a shebeen, but when you have to make a living and feed your children and there are no other opportunities in the valley, then you must do what you need to do...I started off with just a few crates of beer and the enterprise grew from there...but wine is where you make your money...the people like to drink wine. I get a lot of support from the people in the *skiem* because there are no other social activities to partake in.

Dollie's Shebeen

Dollie managed a shebeen from her garage in the *skiem* in Kylemore on weekends, a strategy to make money that she decided to initiate four years earlier. At the back of her house, behind the kitchen, she had turned a would-be garage into a business premise. The one part of the cement room was stocked with crates of Black Label beer that she sold for R8 a quart. Dollie said her biggest sales were on Friday nights and on Saturdays. Informal liquor sales in the valley are done from residents's houses – termed *smokkelhuise*. Dollie's enterprise was not really a shebeen but more a house where liquor was sold, a *smokkelhuis* – a shebeen also provides a space for drinking to customers¹⁹. While she had a few upturned empty beer crates in her yard for her and her women friends to sit and enjoy a cold quart, she strongly discouraged men and women from sitting down and hanging around with their drinks. She had a family with young children in the house and did not want them to be 'influenced.'

Dollie's husband worked as a bricklayer, but oftentimes was without work in winter because of the rainy weather. Dollie stressed that running the shebeen was important, as it brought in money, but added that her main job was as a housewife:

¹⁹ Shebeen and *smokkelhuise* were used interchangeably between the residents in the communities. I think the strong reactions towards shebeens were because they had more visibly bad effects or influences within a public space that was frowned upon by many women. What people did or drank within the confines of their homes was considered acceptable. The public spectacle of drinking at a shebeen was less accepted by residents.

It is the hardest job of all, and the most demanding, she told me about being a housewife, you have to make sure you do the washing, the ironing, the homework and make sure that food is provided every night. I started this job because I saw there was a demand. I knew I could make money by doing this. The people in this community like to drink and relax on the weekends because it is a sociable activity.

On my next visit, I got to experience just how sociable the shebeen was. I popped into Dollie's house after church on a sunny Sunday afternoon. The music was blaring and I had to shout for someone to hear me – "Come around the back", voices from within yelled. I wandered around the back of the house and bumped into two men with a beer bottle wrapped up under each arm. They greeted me courteously and went their way. The security gate was locked and I stood on the outside, hearing laughter from within. Dollie was surprised to see me, and gave me a hug: "Come in, wow, it is good to have you here, let me get you a cold beer, go into the room, the people are sitting there and we are *kuiering* (visiting with each other) *lekker* (good)." Three women sat huddled on a make-shift couch and a man sat on a chair, smoking a cigarette. It was clear that the group had already tapped into the beer bottles, as there were three empty bottles, an ashtray full of cigarettes and some glassy eyed looks. But still, a jovial atmosphere greeted me.

The women made space on the couch; I introduced myself and sat down. Next thing I know I had an ice-cold glass of beer in my hand and everyone was grinning around me. I had visited after a solemn service at the Apostolic Church, and I felt a bit overdressed, but still, I felt welcomed. We chatted amongst ourselves, about me mostly, where I came from and what I was doing in the valley. Whilst patron after patron, mostly men, shouted their orders through the gate, the group questioned me about my studies, my family and whether I had a boyfriend. "Its hard to find good men nowadays Ingrid." a woman told me, "you really have to look hard - they are very rare." I had to concur. What I picked up through our discussions were discourses of strained working opportunities and men "who sit and don't do much." Dollie told me she had no time to sit: "I am always busy – in this house I run two businesses, housework and selling liquor. But luckily my husband is here to help me on the weekends because he is home, and we do it together." Indeed, while Dollie was leaving the room ever so often to attend to the Sunday lunch or to one of her children, her husband would serve the thirsties. At some stage, I heard a man at the gate shout "*jirre man, maar die vrouens is meer vinniger as die mans*" claiming that women were faster at providing beer than men were. There was laughter all round, but it hit home to me once more that women sometimes were regarded as more reliable than men in the community.

Women used the space of Dollie's shebeen in different ways. They occupied the yard of Dollie's house to sit and sun their legs, sip their quarts and allowed themselves to revel in the outside space of laughter but also where they felt they could speak openly, and often drunkenly, about their problems at home or lack of jobs

or opportunities. They were not like the men who would stagger around – they were asked to leave the yard and go and drink elsewhere.



Dollie and her friends

Two of Dollie's women friends helped her to hand out the beers, collect change and help serve the customers. They were the two constants who would sit in the yard together in the mornings smoking cigarettes and sipping cold Black Label. Their unemployment allowed them the time to help Dollie out. They were there when Dollie had to go to the shops to replenish supplies, helped her to load the car with empty bottles for refunds and were constant companions who shared the sociality of her business.

Dollie used to work on one of the farms in the area. She moved to the *skiem* in Kylemore when she got married in 1989. In 1990 she left the farm-work: "My husband did not like that I worked on the farm", she told me that first day. He said it would be better for me to stay at home, and then when I got a child that was better." Out of 'respect' for her husband's wishes, Dollie entered into a business that she could run from home. Her husband contributed financially to her shebeen start up.

Dollie: I don't only do this because of poverty; I do it because the community is looking for a place like this so that they can forget their troubles. They look at me in the community and know that I am a strong and gutsy woman, socially they see me in that light...I know it is not good to run a shebeen, but when you have to make a living and feed your children and there are no other opportunities in the valley, then you must do what you need to do...I started off with just a few crates of beer and the enterprise grew from there...but wine is where you make your money...the people like to drink wine. I get a lot of support from the people in the *skiem* because there are no other social activities to partake in.

Dollie applied for a license to start the shebeen in 1995 but only got it nine years later. In 2003, she told me, she was raided by the police and fined a hefty sum for running without a license. She then claimed that she got her application approved soon after that and had been in successful, and legal, business for 3 years (although a local Neighbourhood Watch member claimed that nobody in Kylemore had a license for selling liquor). Her patrons came mostly from the *skiem* and were the more marginalized of the community. A resident had earlier intimated to me that informal shebeens run from people's houses got a lot of support because there were no other social activities in the community. She told me, "no rape, murder or fighting happens here, just because I run a shebeen people think there will be violence." She told me that strictly no under-18's were permitted to buy beer or wine from her. By her following statement, I sensed that the notoriety of shebeen spaces was a challenge that she faced in 'doing' her enterprise:

I am not scared of running a *smokkelhuis*, I do it from my house where there are children so the people must just buy and leave. I don't offer any entertainment so they don't stay and misbehave so they remain sober around us.

Dollie's shebeen space was interestingly divided into spheres of men, women and children. While a group of women, including myself, sat and sipped beer from glasses and smoked cigarettes, letting our ash fall into ashtrays on the coffee table, the men curled their fists around the security gate bars, blurting out profanities and demanding to be served. It was like Dollie was successfully keeping out the bad, 'male' elements that other women decried. The space behind the bars felt like an enterprise, a business which kept Dollie getting up from her spot on the couch several times to serve the next customer. Dollie reached out to a button that had come undone on her blouse, and closed it back up. This was not done because we were in the presence of men but perhaps an indication of her being conscious of her appearance and that she needed to look good in front of me and play the host. Later, Dollie's sister got up from the couch, peered into a cracked mirror behind the door, and doused her dry lips, and her chin, with an ointment. When Sunday lunch was ready to be served, Dollie's youngest daughter and 5-year old son came and sat at our feet handling their chicken drumsticks with their hands. Dollie's husband sat on a chair smoking a cigarette. I was served a tremendously hot and heaped plate of potatoes, chicken breast, peas, carrots and the most delicious gravy I have ever had. Now, we sat on the couches, with our plates on our laps, with serviettes, knives and forks, our beer glasses topped up when a lady to my right asked me to sponsor the next quart. This was a family affair. The supposedly 'sordid' space of the shebeen was experienced on my part differently than how it had been locally constructed by some valley residents, particularly those living in Pniel, in more middle class areas in the communities, members of the neighbourhood watch and the police. Dollie wanted to change how other women viewed her activity:

You can see that I do nothing bad here. Yes the police have come to close me down, but not because I was corrupting people, it was because my license had not come through. It is not a sin to sell liquor; it is just not right when you do it without going through the right channels.

Dollie said that unlike most men that ran *smokkelhuise* from their shacks in the *skiem*, where drugs were involved, and they certainly had not obtained a legal license to trade in alcohol, she on the other hand had made every effort to obtain a license and to do it the 'proper' way. Because the licensing process had taken so long, she had sometimes sold beer to community members illegally. Although the Neighbourhood Watch and the police had harassed her, Dollie stated:

No amount of police harassment could force me to close down my business. It is a legitimate way I can earn money. I have a family to look after. I am not a criminal.

Dollie felt that her entrepreneurship was not as scandalous as others may have thought.

It wasn't until later on in the afternoon, when lunch had settled and we moved beyond the security bars outside to sit in the sun, that I saw the other side of the 'congenial' nature of Dollie's work. I was witness to a visibly pregnant teenage girl, seemingly under 18-years old (no one asked her for identification), openly being served quarts of beer and I felt that pang of "this is not right" hit me. And when, many times during my visits to Kylemore, I would see middle-aged men in public spaces under the influence of alcohol, their demeanors sour and incoherent, I remembered how those demeanors often turned to rage within the private sphere of the home. They mentioned that if there were fewer shebeens and more recreational activities and job opportunities, the community would be a safer place and a more 'moral' place:

Paula: I will not support the shebeens, I do not have to drink to make my life better, and I keep myself busy in the Lord and in my family. I do not have time to get into those types of things; they can only make you lose control. This woman [Dollie] who knows she is doing something that is destroying us, she must think of her community. It will not be good for her to carry on...she is selfish to do that kind of business, nothing good can come out of it except more money for herself. What good is money if you have a bad place to live in?

I had good times visiting Dollie and her friends behind the locked gates where people would come to satisfy their drinking needs. I saw all walks of life exchange their pennies for bottles of beer. There is no doubt that Dollie's business was demanding; it seemed like she never got a chance to sit down. It was an enterprise steeped in sociality, family, but also negativity. What was relevant to understanding Dollie's 'doing' of her entrepreneurship was that she was performing a role of 'the mother', 'the breadwinner' and the 'gutsy woman' who challenged negative perceptions of her work and justified her type of enterprise. Her claims to being a respectable woman, despite many in the community considering her activity inappropriate, was well-formed around her responsibility to her family and her household, but also to providing a service that was reliable. By 'looking after' her family and people who needed a drink, Dollie performed her work respectably in her own eyes and therefore was able to socially legitimate her 'illegitimate' entrepreneurial activity and redeem herself as a propriety woman.

Sadly, Dollie passed away near the end of my writing up stage of my thesis. The tragedy of her death was not only mourned community wide but left a scarring impact on her husband, children and business. In her memory, her husband mentioned that Dollie was a woman who was admired; she was fun-loving, energetic, a good mother and a 'respected' woman. And two of her regular women patrons and best friends commented that they would not go to any other shebeen where the men were running it. They would miss the good atmosphere that they enjoyed at Dollie's. Most of all, they would miss the woman that they said had made them realize women have capabilities to do things despite what others think.

This line of work seemed by some to imply that women were gutsy or courageous in doing such work and was therefore respected. Other reactions were less positive, and pointed to the stigmatized form of the work. In Campbell's provocative piece on 'Representations of gender, respectability and commercial sex in the shadow of AIDS: a South African case study' (1998), she was able to uncover the strategies women negotiated to endorse their livelihood choice of becoming a sex worker. Women sex workers made claims to respectability through a range of discourses appealing to their role as a mother, the temporary nature of their work; and having 'no other option' (Campbell 1998:696). Similar to these claims, Dollie repeatedly voiced the 'no other option' claim and justified her 'disrespectful' and 'illegal' profession not only as a strategy to feed her children. She demonstrated acquiescence to hegemonic influences that marked the connectedness of resistance and accommodation to local norms (Hewamanne 2003:71). She was challenging conventional notions of 'respectable' work for women, but also accommodating these moral norms by explaining that she was acting responsibly by doing what it took to feed her children.

Smokkelhuise and shebeens, like *spazas*, owe their historical existence to the former government's policies of restricting blacks from formal economic activity in their homelands or informal settlements (Spiegel 2005). In the valley, *smokkelhuise* and a few shebeens were located in the *skiem*s where the population was working class and earned menial wages from domestic and farm work. Dollie therefore was prescribed a distinct social status by some women in her community due to her residing in the *skiem* and serving alcohol to patrons. Defining her as an entrepreneur meant categorizing her as a particular kind of woman. She was constructed as lower in class than women who were baking or sewing or heading up houseshops.

In the face of constraints on access to liquor, enforced by the police and policed by church ideologies and 'rules,' both men and women in the communities of Kylemore and Lanquedoc were utilizing their socially marginal enterprises (shebeen running) to support their households, and to provide a service to others. Shebeens were spaces where women acted 'disrespectability' while at the same time were able to redeem their entrepreneurship by claiming to be responsible. Entering these spaces, women would rather face discrimination than not perform their gender roles within them. Women recognized the opportunities

inherent in running a shebeen and chose to ignore the disrespectable nature of the entrepreneurial tactic they chose. They were entrepreneurs in the sense that they were negotiating around accepted gender norms and codes of respectability.

Paradoxes, ambivalences and mutual feedbacks of entrepreneurship in the valley

Women were drawn into entrepreneurship as a means to gain social acceptance and they found themselves performing their femininity through respectable work such as baking and sewing, but also negotiating it through shebeen running. Their different motivations as discussed above reflected their different positions in their communities. The dynamics of the entrepreneurial activities varied within the different communities and showed different levels of gender roles, social acceptance and patron support. In Pniel, enterprises reflected a domesticity more than in the other communities. Women pursued entrepreneurial avenues that were home-based, such as homestays, baking, and sewing. Some women felt they were forced to confine their economic activities to those that are socially acceptable, generally extensions of their reproductive roles, such as provision of food or housing (Rakodi 1991:43). In Kylemore, the homestay, hairdressing, baking enterprises and houseshops showed how women performed their gender roles in line with women's reproductive roles that contrasted to mainly male shebeen running. Some women performed entrepreneurship through their domesticity whilst others donned the cloak of the 'innovative' entrepreneurial man. A few women I spoke to considered themselves entrepreneurs in so much as they were creative and innovative in their practices and were entering spaces usually dominated by men. This showed how working bought them on par with men and oftentimes showed they were active while men were inactive. Some were silent about their gender, claiming to be just as good as the men (gender blindness) while others were doing and performing their gender identities through their entrepreneurial strategies by claiming they were stronger than men. It is important to acknowledge that generally, many of the women felt they were strong and empowered and were taking the necessary steps to improve their family's livelihood situations, something they felt men were not doing.

By doing certain activities, the entrepreneurial women buttressed ideas of respectability and naturalized ideas about women's work, whilst others negotiated and contested meanings of respectability and womanhood in their pursuits. What became evident was how women's entrepreneurial activities were not only a means of economic survival but also had positive and negative social repercussions for the women themselves and their social environment. In general, actually, their entrepreneurship had little effect on enhancing their business prospects. The interviews clearly suggested that most of these small informal activities were performed in line with ideas about supporting the community and 'doing good.'

The entrepreneurial elements in the activities of the women in the DRV showed how women in the different communities pursued activities that were in line with the social morale of their particular community (such as starting a crèche to keep children off the streets, baking and sewing for church, selling newspapers in Lanquedoc, and the shebeen that sold liquor to bored people) and this construed women as 'dorp supporters.' Although Dollie was engaging in what was considered by some to be an antagonistic entrepreneurial practice, she marked this stigmatized form of work positively by claiming how strong and responsible she was. Dollie tried to claim that she was a 'dorp supporter' too because she was providing alcohol to help people forget about their problems. There was a strong reaction to this by a person who claimed she was anything but a 'dorp supporter.' The fact that she was procuring alcohol that helped to corrupt the youth proved that she was selfish and only thinking of herself, not her community, it was claimed.

Women talked about people's reactions to their particular entrepreneurial actions. Reactions to their entrepreneurship allowed women to socially validate their activities by accepting responses that affirmed and justified their activities. Some women said entrepreneurs showed passion for their communities. Other women claimed they had a certain status by claiming that people in their community noticed if they were successful, and sometimes got jealous. The shebeen owner was respected for what she did by other women living in the *skiem*, even if selling liquor was morally frowned upon. Women's entrepreneurial activities showed they could do anything a man could do; oftentimes they claimed they could do even better than men.

To socially validate their activities, women performed their entrepreneurship in ways that blur, cross, affirm and deny gender norms and ideas about respectability. Their entrepreneurship had different levels of social legitimacy. Women had contradictory experiences of power and subjection through their entrepreneurship but overall, women developed confidence in their competency and pride in their activities. Women's tactics constantly manipulated events and spaces in order to turn them into opportunities. They were able to reinterpret conventional notions of proper women's work and thereby redeem their practices through their contribution towards supporting the family and the community.

Conclusion

It is relevant to acknowledge the different contexts of the communities that shaped the different activities women were harnessing. Issues of constraints such as infrastructure, opportunity and the affordability of space come to light in the types of activities women were involved in. The lower class women in the valley had to find alternative routes to economic upliftment. They stimulate informal avenues and spontaneous enterprises within the grey economy: by selling fruit and flowers or establishing houseshops and shebeens. These women experienced more difficulty in juggling their reproductive and incomes roles. The informal and spontaneous enterprises in Lanquedoc reflected the instability of both the social and economic

environment of the locality - they were trying to survive and generate a household income. The more marginalised and unemployed women were finding access to income through community projects. The more 'elite' women in the area were harnessing empowerment opportunities in baking, sewing and tourism in the DRV. They were the ones that had the space in their houses to 'do' these activities and had access to resources and clientele to serve. These contrasting experiences of women cobbling together their livelihoods from irregular employment in the DRV reveals how the "agency in making livelihood in one context is different to another" (Campbell 2000: 105).

Constraints not only included gender norms and expectations of respectable work for women, but also had characteristics of access to opportunities. When asking about their interest in training and educational opportunities, some of the younger women wanted to access more education to improve their employment situation:

I am tired of sitting around and doing nothing all day and get paid so little – I want to go back to school or college and do law or do community development, but I will have to do it part-time because I will have to find work too to finance my studies and feed my children.

Indeed, furthering their education had many obstacles such as the responsibility of childcare and financial resources. The responsibility of providing an economic livelihood for the children and to give them an education was high on the women's motivation list and contributed to the need for more employment opportunities in the valley. Despite many shortcomings and constraints, women were able to create their own enterprises.

Women entrepreneurs were often prevented from running competitive businesses by their relatively low education and skill levels, which generally limited their access to the various support services. Also, some of these women belonged to households whose members engaged in multiple activities. Highlighting women's contributions to household incomes and community welfare through entrepreneurship underlines the shortcomings in research methodology and design, which tend to neglect the multitude of small and irregular ways women often add to domestic incomes.

Entrepreneurial activities in the DRV were oftentimes paradoxical, ambiguous and were sites of struggle. The data presents an argument about the ways in which women's agency is articulated and lived out in contexts characterised by socio-economic constraints and obstacles. While normally many enterprises failed or were short-lived, it was remarkable how women survived, even when income was erratic or minimal. It pointed out that doing entrepreneurship gave these women a sense of self-worth and empowerment, even if it did not yield significant remuneration. Entrepreneurship was about being a respectable and responsible community and household member and therefore women claimed it held a level of legitimacy within their

communities. In the DRV, some women's activities revealed a philanthropic need and responsibility to help the youth and their communities while others' pointed towards manners of attaining not only money but also a display of social or moral status in their community.

Understanding women's work or income-generating activities as more than just economic agency highlights the shortcomings in entrepreneurial literature to evaluate women's work and work opportunities against women's own constructions of entrepreneurship and meanings of success. Ideological under-evaluations of women's work ignore the significant and creative ways women face up to societal, cultural and economic norms and constraints to make a living and foster well-being in their social environments.

CHAPTER 7: SITES OF STRUGGLE: INTERPRETING WOMEN'S WORDS AND PRACTICES

Introduction

This discussion tries to interpret the questions that arose out of my observations in the field, attempting to understand women's self-definitions of empowerment and their reactions to the world around them. It seeks to comprehend how women understood, constructed and claimed empowerment in the face of daunting conditions and what their social actions meant to them.

My own theoretical position around women making do in the valley is that they seldom harnessed conventional empowerment and livelihood discourses used by global, national and local agents and agencies. Although they were national targets of 'women's empowerment' in South Africa's LED and AA rhetoric, and were promised upliftment through national development agencies like Red Door or a private sector project like the BSDI, women made sense of their own private and public lives within the valley setting to negotiate their own social development and entrepreneurial paths. Insights from the anthropology of development reveal that people have different manners of viewing development interventions and conditions (Edelman and Haugerud 2005). Because of various expectations and interpretations, development is often contested and riddled with disparities and produces unintended consequences (Ferguson 1990). The women who told me stories of their struggles, their community involvements or entrepreneurial practices articulated senses of empowerment that were locally configured, were interpreted differently and had consequences for who they were in the DRV. There were different ways and means, negotiations, manipulations, and down-treading of male capacity to respond to crisis. There were also opportunity-seeking mechanisms that allowed women to face up to some often-disempowering circumstances and in turn call themselves 'women of steel'.

To give light to women's sites of struggles in the DRV, in this chapter I turn to what I believe to be the strongest theory supporting many articulations and arguments in my thesis. While conventional empowerment, livelihood and entrepreneurial literature provided inadequate approaches to understand and interpret these women's experiences, arguments by gender and practice theorists gave me room to make sense of what they were saying and doing. Practice theory is used here to argue for a more fluid conceptualisation of livelihoods (De Certeau 1984; Bourdieu 1977, 1990, 1991). Within the realm of practice, invisible forces and hidden transcripts of livelihoods are uncovered. Livelihoods are seen as social constructs and mediated processes, rather than composites of various types of capital. In the eyes of practice theorists, 'ways of living' are seen as tangible and intangible everyday processes, embedded in relations of power and shaped by structures or conditions.

This chapter underlines the ways in which a refashioned conceptualization of practice provides leverage for discussing myriad daily practices and claims, and why women chose certain social actions over others. The term livelihood became irrelevant after listening to women's notions of making do in the valley. They signposted their social actions and moral superiority as reasons enough for them to consider themselves as 'women of steel'. They were positioning themselves within spaces and 'moments' of agency to define themselves as productive individuals in their communities. These constructions were in relation to men's place in the local gender hierarchy.

Livelihoods as practice

Terms which were loaded with theoretical implications for my study derive from arguments of agency and performance, both of which are important strands of practice theory. More importantly, practice theory allows for debates of structure and agency. Structures and influences will always delineate the movements and agency of individuals. However, according to circumstances and 'appropriate' contexts or moments of opportunity, individuals can bend their practices, break the rules, and often redefine structures according to their own needs. The manners and ways individuals do this can be unconscious, can be taken-for-granted, or remain hidden. Sometimes these movements or moments are deliberated challenges to the norms, and therefore become power infused practices. Either way, individuals perform their identity, their ethnicity, their tradition, their gender position, their entrepreneurship or their language around, within and outside the boundaries of structure to suit certain purposes. But there is always power involved in shifting hierarchies or appropriating everyday relations. Therefore any practice becomes political.

Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) alludes to practice as a 'rule-breaking' and accommodating realm where negotiation and accommodation become agentive notions. Bourdieu took a look at rituals as practices that involve agents and their strategies. In his ethnography he divulges how Kabylia (Algeria) rules of honour were cultivated and embodied, invented and reinvented by men. Male Kabylia 'played' or performed their games of honour. The rules themselves were seen as "the product of a small batch of schemes enabling agents to generate an infinity of practices adapted to endlessly changing situations, without those schemes ever having been considered as explicit principles" (Bourdieu 1977:16). Rules, impositions and structures were not necessarily breached or broken. They were understood in relation to actual practices and grounded in changing contexts. More than once I heard women justifying their inappropriate practices to reflect that they had to adapt to new ideas of what was acceptable for women to do or not to do in the valley. The passivity and silences of men gave them room to do so.

The everyday practices of appropriating discourses are referred to by De Certeau as calculated production and consumption – words that conjure up meaningful representations of the political dimensions of practice. De Certeau's poignant cultural analysis of everyday practices stresses how effective agency is able to

mediate and negotiate power and cultural regulations and subvert them in a tactical bid to undermine it. Tactics of practice were oftentimes forms of necessary resistance to the overarching discourses and practices that structure and organise life. To understand women's rule-breaking especially in some of their entrepreneurial practices, we can try to take into account that the rapid transformations in the valley, of unemployment, land reform and the influences of drugs on their children had forced some women into situations that breeched norms and gender expectations of women.

The work of De Certeau sees theorizing on practice as being about "the relationship that links everyday pursuits to particular circumstances" (De Certeau 1984: ix). His book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) re-examines theories from Bourdieu by highlighting how people use opportunities to subvert rules and rituals imposed upon them. He provides a theoretical framework with concepts and perspectives to study everyday life practices such as cooking, shopping and dwelling. By seeking to understand the frames of power involved in the creativity of these practices, he pits them against the formal structures that organise everyday life. He looks at the 'hidden' or 'mute' processes (or the intangible assets) that are significant to and structure this relationship.

He calls people 'manipulators' or 'users' (agents) who orchestrate everyday practices to appropriate or re-appropriate their dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own specific needs and interests (De Certeau 1984: xiv). De Certeau's book examines the manner in which people alter everyday rituals, laws, languages and street plans to make them their own. For example, how people reinterpret and alter recipes while cooking to adapt it to their own tastes is an act of appropriation. He explains that there is agency in this reinterpretation and appropriation. In the valley a woman made shebeen running an appropriate and socially acceptable work by re-writing the unwritten rules that it was considered a man's job and appropriating the rule to use to her own advantage. By claiming that her entrepreneurial activity illustrated that she was just as capable as any man, she re-adjusted a gender rule and made it her own. She also claimed to be conforming to the gender rules of a mother as nurturer and caregiver by saying that she would do anything to feed her children and make sure they had uniforms for school. This palpable use of language is a hidden transcript, a 'silent technology' or 'microphysic of power' 'from below' that consumed, conformed to and subverted gender powers (De Certeau 1984: xiv). It was also tactical in that Dollie sought to mediate conforming gender positions.

The structure versus agency debate overlaps with anthropological debates on ethnicity, identity and gender practices - debates which bring to life "the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (De Certeau 1984: xiv). Niehaus' (2002) re-examination of Shangaan identity in north-eastern South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s

revisits studies of ethnicity which emphasize how colonial regimes of discipline constructed ethnic groups for their own purposes. Drawing on more recent theories of ethnicity, his article re-examined the old notion of colonial imposition, and looked at the organizational powers of ethnic groups to refashion their own identities to suit their own purposes. It describes issues of agency and the multivocality of ethnic constructs. The study gave flesh to Shangaan agency by understanding how the subordinate Shangaan used terms of their own definition as the basis for collective assertion against the Sotho and the state. In a similar way, women's usage of terms like resilience and empowerment in the valley formed a collective assertion of themselves that inserted them as morally superior to men. Niehaus's study shows how identity is not only ascribed but also achieved – it is permeable and can infuse other identities (Niehaus 2002: 574). This study revealed how ethnicity as a practice could change and transform to suit or contest constrained situations. It is in ways like this that practices can be seen as political maneuvers.

Women's agency cannot always be anticipated but is relative to women manipulating moments and conditions to serve their own agendas. People are creative in their appropriations and subversions of dominant rules and discourses in specific tactical ways that suit their needs.

Talk the talk: women's linguistic capital in the DRV

Narrations or historical tales “have agency and shape moral judgments people make about themselves and other people” (Ahearn 2001:121).

In the DRV setting women negotiated, resisted and succumbed to reigning power relations through their language of empowerment and disempowerment. Women's claims of empowerment were often in resistance to dominant ideologies and gender norms. Also, their claims often showed a mutual feedback mechanism between norms and agency. Their claims were oftentimes ambiguous in that they were in conflict with certain disempowering circumstances. What they spoke about and how they spoke and who spoke reflected power. Linguistic power, says Bourdieu (1990) has conceptual and ontological ties with agency. I argue that recognising the linguistic practices of women and their specific suggestions and idioms of strength and guts shed light on the manners in which women socially constructed or produced changing power relations and gender orders in the valley.

Concepts that were identified in the theoretical literature on practice and performance, such as ‘negotiation’, ‘strategy’, ‘tactics’ and ‘resistance’ were used to understand how women used these constructions, metaphors and idioms to come to terms with the situations in which they were located (Burgess 1984:115-35). The medium for locating, negotiating, communicating, and articulating culture is language. Thus, the words I used in the text to describe women's behaviours and beliefs were not independent of their contextual roots. Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital links to De Certeau's arguments on language as ‘performance’

versus 'competence', where the act of speaking becomes appropriation and re-appropriation "within a field of a linguistic system" (1984: xiii). It does a lot to highlight the 'tactical' ways women used or consumed empowerment and development discourses and made them their own. This process can lead to capturing the social and political 'magic' of women's experiences (Bourdieu 1991:42). In this thesis, empowerment and local conceptions of it are seen as linguistic capital women harness to validate their actions and claims to certain forms of power (Bourdieu 1991:42). Women in this regard used language to transmit their own socially marked experiences of empowerment through the language they spoke.

Scott (1998) provides a point of entry into such an understanding of language as capital. In her critique of post-structuralist feminist theory, Scott unravels ways to understand constructions of meaning and power relations inherent in ostensibly naturalized language. Language is the term "used to mean not simply words, or even a vocabulary and set of grammatical rules but, rather, a meaning-constituting system...through which meaning is constructed and cultural practices organized and by which, accordingly, people represent and understand their world, including who they are and how they relate to others" (Scott 1988:34). She goes on to say that the analysis of language can be a point of departure for understanding how social relations and institutions "are conceived, how they work, how relations of production are experienced and how collective identity is established" (Scott 1988:34). These claims are significant for this study. What is pertinent to this study on women's practices is to encompass and understand the linguistic capital women used and abused to claim certain sentiments of power and to capitalize on their claims to empowerment, ability, choice, truth or authority in the valley. Narrations and statements of women spoke volumes to the way they viewed themselves in relation to others, to men, to context and to culture - and "because language and culture are so tightly interwoven, neither should be studied in isolation from the other, especially when the researcher seeks to understand a concept as complex as agency" (Ahearn, 2001:119).

Similarly, Hall (1976) argues, "Language, the system most used to describe culture, is by nature poorly adapted to this difficult task. It is too linear, not comprehensive enough, too slow, too limited, too constrained, too unnatural, too much a product of its own evolution, and too artificial" (Hall 1976: 57). By observing women's practices, watching their actions and reactions, certain sites of non-verbal communication became important to add meaning, reveal the value of their words as well as deconstruct what women were claiming through the words they chose to use: "Hence it is not sufficient for anthropology to break with native experience and the native representation of that experience: it has to make a second break and question the presuppositions inherent in the position of an outside observer, who, in his preoccupation with interpreting practices, is inclined to introduce into the subject the principles of his relation to the subject, as is attested by the special importance he assigns to communicative functions (whether in language, myth or marriage)" (Bourdieu 1977:2).

So while language and articulations form the basis of women's claims of resilience and strength in the valley, one woman also mentioned that women in her opinion did not only 'talk the talk' of empowerment, but also are proactive in their productive moments and 'walk the walk' by particular social actions.

'Walking the walk': women's 'moments' of agency

Women experienced 'moments' of agency or productive instances as they faced up to constraints in the DRV. Researching women's worlds in the valley relied on both conceptualizing theories and empirical evidence of women having agency, or lacking it, to negotiate their worlds (Morris 1995, Butler 1988, 1990, 1993). Bourdieu surmises that agency is not directly observable. It is only inherent in the experience of subjectivity (Bourdieu 1991).

Many cases provided in the ethnography alerted me to the pivotal interpretation of women's actions and utterances; that they wanted to be seen and believed that they were empowered women. Agency is never a truth, there are limitations to how far women can exert or express their claims. In women's own judgement, they were actively responding to dominant structuring forces in the valley that impacted on their lives and the lives of their children. Their sense of pride in their community and entrepreneurial actions gave meaning to their claims that they don't only *utter* their concerns but were also expressive in their agency and social actions. It was their mediation of discourses of gender and pitting themselves against the supposed inactivity of men that made their arguments so much stronger. They appropriated discourses of inadequate and lazy men to feed their own representations and tropes of self reliance and empowerment.

Agency needs to mediate and negotiate power and authority in order to be effective. De Certeau relegates agency to the manner in which people use tactics to carve out 'diversionary' domains of practice within the constraints placed on them by the powerful (De Certeau 1984:25). Agency is therefore about social transformation, particularly affecting the dominant ideology or structural conditions shaping people's everyday practices. In the valley, women's involvement in their community and church were responses to structural conditions, but also defined them as responsible in that they were reacting to crisis in the valley. Their agency was seen in direct relation to men's passivity to respond to crisis.

Jean and John Comaroff (1991) made a move to grapple with issues of resistance, power, intention and agency in everyday practices of the colonised. They divulged the complex ways that structures of inequality in the colonial encounter were often created and shaped in the absence of "conventional, coercive tools of domination" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:6). They pointed to the multiform of tactics inherent in the historical processes of colonialism in South Africa, and how tactical manoeuvres by Tswana-speakers to incorporate or subvert dominant ideologies were practiced daily. However, De Certeau maintains that tactics

will never entirely take over hegemonic practices, but rather re-appropriate them in different ways (De Certeau 1984: xix). In his paper on *Language and Agency*, Ahearn proposes that practice theory, whilst inherently giving a nuanced or dualistic treatment of people's agency-infused and creative possibilities to manipulate conditions or structures, "offers several promising avenues that treat agency and structure as mutually constitutive" (Ahearn 2001:118).

Foucault's model of agency as "a matter of plurality, mobility and conflict" (Ahearn 2001:116) turns women's practices into power-butressed arenas of contestation and resistance, intimidation and control – as "networks of 'discipline' and 'anti-discipline'" (De Certeau 1984: xv). Dollie had agency in her mediation of the norms and the law – her own anti-discipline. Bourgois used an ethnographic methodology in his study of drug addicts in El Barrio. He claims that the ethnographic method "allows the 'pawns' of larger structural forces to emerge as real human beings who shape their own futures" (Bourgois 1998:xiii). He shows that people (like Dollie) are inherently resistant and are using forms of subversion at the same time.

No other theorizing highlights the political agenda of practice more than theorists who uncover practice as performance (Becker 2003; Sharp & Boonzaier 1994; Butler 1988, 1990, 2003). The idea of the performance of agency has been used in theorizing about the performance of nationhood and ethnic identities. Sharp and Boonzaier (1994) showed how the Nama people lay claim to, or perform an ethnic identity in Namaqualand, South Africa. They argued that Nama perform a 'traditional identity' towards specific ends and within certain contexts. The study highlighted how discourses of development 'from above' had been "re-appropriated and reconfigured, in diverse ways, 'from below'" by the Nama in their claims of ethnicity (Becker 2003:6). Women I spoke to in the communities of the valley claimed they were stronger and more resilient than men to subvert notions of women as passive victims, and that women in their everyday practices can show that they can perform the role of the conformist who bakes and sews and stays at home to raise the children, but they also justified these conforming actions in ways that appropriated ideas about themselves as providing a service to their communities and doing their activities at home to watch over children so that they did not get influenced by drugs. The paradox in their actions and claims was performances around notions of a 'good' or 'respectable' woman. 'From below' women reconfigured their language to redefine the spaces that they inhabited as empowering not only to themselves, but to their children and their communities. Sharp & Boonzaier would refer to this interpretation of some entrepreneurs who did 'socially appropriate' work as instrumental, as a "carefully controlled performance that was used to lay claim to status and positions" (Sharp & Boonzaier 1994:405). Like the Nama identity, DRV women's activities were controlled and performed in response to roles they needed to play. In performing essentialist identities, they could make claims to respectability and responsibility. This reflects the ambiguities and flexibilities in performance. Sharp & Boonzaier viewed Nama performative practice as a role-play: a "highly

self-conscious statement of 'who we are' that is being formulated collectively through dialogue, and modified according to context" (Sharp and Boonzaier 1994: 405). Women in the valley were speaking to who they were, and wanted to be defined as conforming to expectations of their village.

Respectability in the valley was permeable, and women lived by it, but also manipulated it to reinforce their claims and activities. Local ideas of respectability inculcated gender expectations of women being religious, sober and domestically orientated. While women showed that their religious zeal was formative they also manipulated the ideology to downgrade men and to reinforce their own claims of responsibility. Their intentions in their community and entrepreneurial actions were ordered around the necessity to deal with crisis and change in the valley. However, the way they spoke and morally justified their actions gave birth to nuanced ideas of women in the valley and engendered a discourse of empowerment that included tactical maneuvers by some women to distance themselves from the realities they faced. In such a manner of speaking, agency is not taken-for-granted, but something that is manifested in people's language and social and gender actions. It is also something that can be used to block recognition of structures in their lives that confine their movements and limit opportunities or moments for them to be or claim to be agentive individuals. The romanticism of agency cannot be overlooked.

Performing gender

Gender is acknowledged as a process of structuring subjectivities rather than as a structure of fixed relations; where difference and identity are constructed in and through discourses of day-to-day living (Morris 1995:568, 569). Gender invokes a range of theoretical positions, but those positions that stand particularly significant to my findings in the valley revolve around gender as a subjective performance and how analysing gender involves questioning agency and its relationship to social determinations. It takes up gender as permeable and diffuse, yet always provisional and subject to context.

Gender is not a stable fixture. It becomes an ongoing activity embedded in everyday interactions, and these interactions selectively and creatively produce and transform the rules of the social [gendered] order. As Morris (1995) explains, this points out how gender can be ambiguous and indeterminate. Butler agrees when she surmises that "it becomes impossible to separate 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" (Butler 1990:3).

Gender practices are performances that are located in bodily differences. Butler (1988) suggests that women and men learn to routinely and politically *perform* their gendered social practices so that they appear to be natural. The line I take can be found in Butler's description of performativity that suggests that the performance of gender, rather than being a fixed mode of operating, allows for the possibility of challenging and distorting the naturalized norms of gender practice. It is a theory of subjectivity that also fits in nicely

with De Certeau's notion of the tactics of everyday life. Butler explains gender as a public action, where women are actors on stage, performing according to their own interpretations within the confines of already existing norms and institutions (1988: 526). Performance is fluid, constituted and negotiated in social discourse.

The concept of performance is relevant to understanding empowerment claims in the DRV as it allows an understanding of people's social actions in relation to choice and their interpretations of different contexts. Butler (1988) validated this argument through her discussions on the 'social temporality' of gender and identity by saying that gender practices are malleable – they are enacted or constituted in various ways under varying circumstances. Practice therefore is not a static concept, but a political process of transformation, manipulation, resistance and subversion.

Performance provides the necessary entry point to understanding how people manoeuvre around and within gendered constructions of everyday practices and institutions and open up possibilities of contestation and resistance to the norms. Performance posits a break from naturalized truths of gender norms as regulation and control and allows for agents to seize moments and circumstances to redefine and even resist the norms and conditions that define their lives. Gender in the valley becomes a performance that was "socially constructed – talked about, acted on, used, denied, and ignored" (Martin 2003:343).

Likewise, the anthropology of gender looks at gender differences, but more importantly looks at individual subjectivity rather than over-state the social. The anthropology of gender purports positionality as central to gender. Moore argues that the discipline needs to "concern itself with whether individuals can actively recognise and choose the subject positions they take up, and to what degree they are able to resist dominant discourses" (Moore 1994:4). Moore shows that gender positions are often the products of conscious manipulation and manifest ambiguously in light of certain discourses or contexts. Gender is flexible, ambivalent, adaptive and sometimes ironic.

Take for instance the idea of patriarchy. While gender refers also to the power relations between men and women, Moffett (2008) argues that "the complex social, cultural and legal processes that translate [...] into gender differentiation arise from patriarchal distributions of power" (Moffett 2008:106). She explains that the patriarchal system defines men and women by their biological and reproductive features and serves to keep power in the hands of men. The logic is that men are natural leaders, braver, stronger, more rational etc and women, because of their biological characteristics, are defined socially and personally as the nurturers, as weaker and as illogical and irrational emotional beings.

However, there are problems in invoking the concept of patriarchy as a general term to understand the situation of women in relation to men, particularly in the valley setting. In general, patriarchy is emphasized through unequal relations that foster the exploitation or oppression of women. This must be regarded as an essentialist or monolithic concept that buttresses the assumption that relationships between men and women are naturally unequal. In this light the concept is a-historical, and fails to consider the experiences of different groups of women with different ethnicities and classes, at different times and in different places. In the past it was taken for granted that men were the breadwinners and women stayed at home. However, the social construction of gender in the contemporary context of the DRV told a different story. With poverty and lack of productive work for men on the farms, some men were unable to achieve the expectations women had of them. Although women were still relegated to 'the home' responsibilities, an expectation endorsed by the patriarchal history of the valley, women launched parallel income-generating activities and production that allowed them to contribute to or to meet household economic needs as well as fulfil their reproductive role as mother, wife and house nurturer. Some entrepreneurial activities were articulated as a characteristic of women's empowerment. Women in the valley's communities revealed a change in attitudes towards gendered work in recent times. The assumption that men were supposed to be the breadwinners and that women were the ones that were dependants was an idea typical of the paternalistic nature of slavery and farm relations of years past. This assumption was turned around by the rise of women as an emancipating group in the valley, visible in their economic participation in the income generation for their households. Researchers therefore need to remove the "cloak of gender's naturalness, essentialism and inevitability" (Martin 2003:344) and view gender as an historical situation rather than a natural fact.

Generally, the hegemony of gender orders within private spaces constrains women within limiting notions of femininity (Mail & Guardian 27 Nov 2006). However, positing the local gender orders in the valley as characteristically limiting negates the power some women possessed to resist the constraints of patriarchal ideals. In the valley, women were talking as if patriarchy did not exist, that it had somehow been flipped over, inverted, to allow the ball to be in their court - a reality that they claimed however was not true in some cases, where women acquiesced to male dominance and their ideals of patriarchy or where they became oppressed under the heavy hand of an abusive husband. Hondagneu-Sotelo demonstrated that patriarchy is a "fluid and shifting set of social relations in which men oppress women, [where] different men exercise varying degrees of power and control, and in which women resist in diverse ways" (1992:393). Exploring the constraints of patriarchal relations in migration among Mexican women, Hondagneu-Sotelo says that because of these variations, women in the same culture or in similar circumstances may encounter different types of patriarchal obstacles. In this sense, the diverse historical and social contexts in which women practiced in the DRV offered different types of gender relations and therefore different constructions of

patriarchy or women's empowerment. With this argument, gender hierarchies are then best understood contextually and as multi-levelled.

Gender was a site of struggle in the valley. In terms of gender relations, women related the various perceived male deficiencies such as lack of ambition, and irresponsible and indecent behaviour, to women's subsequent increasing role in community and economic activities. There was a certain locally defined antithesis between women's protest and action versus male passivity. Women felt men would not fail if they did not allow themselves to be undermined by the structural unemployment in the valley. If men were breadwinners and did anything to prove they were responsible to bring in money for the household; if men attended church and protest meetings and had a capacity to resist succumbing to alcohol abuse, then claims of women's strength might have been different.

The multiplicity of gender relations and the different layers of domination are explained in resistance literature. Resistance studies explicate the dynamics of a world in which multiple gender hierarchies can make people simultaneously powerful and powerless relative to others. Resistance literature showing the strategies or "weapons of the weak", particularly debated by James Scott (1985), emphasises different perceptions of power within gender relations. Scott's in-depth study into power struggles in a Malaysian village details how groups of serfs and peasants use strategies such as foot-dragging, false compliance and sabotage to subvert the efforts of dominant groups. This type of 'resistance from below' was political in nature, and led to a 'symbolic inversion of the social order.' While in this case, men or women in the village acted as the oppressed group based on their perceptions of different power struggle, in the valley we find that women I spoke to symbolically inverted male domination through their words and social actions. Women had perceptions of not being oppressed. They painted men as being downtrodden by circumstances they were incapable of rectifying. Resistance literature can help to move beyond the dichotomy of the structurally dominant group and the powerless, the oppressed and the oppressor, and attempt to understand coexisting hierarchies of power and this agrees nicely with some contexts in the valley where, like women, men were also seen as agents.

To understand weapons of the weak, they need to be examined at both structural levels and perceived measures of power. Miller highlights how studies of resistance recognise the importance of perceptions of power "because such perceptions do not necessarily correspond to objective measures of power ... these perceptions, however, strongly influence people's attitudes and behaviour" (Miller 1997:50). Women's perceptions of power influenced their attitudes towards everyday life and their relations with their male counterparts. It is, however, highly important to remember that many women in the valley faced structural disempowerment, where levels of poverty and women abuse were significant and had a bearing on their

romantic sentiments of strength. Behind the walls of their homes, the private notions of how a woman should be and act made some women perceive their strength differently and placed them in disempowering contexts they felt ineffectual to resist.

In order to understand why women were silent about their private lives and how they 'survived' constraints in the valley we get some clarity from Naples (2003), who deconstructed the dynamics of narrative, empowerment and resistance for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Seeking to understand the methodology through which survivor discourse is generated, Naples attended to the sites of the material and discursive practices in which survivors come to voice their experiences. He defined those sites in terms of class, race, gender and features of history and identity (Naples 2003:1152). Likening women's empowerment discourse in the DRV to survivor discourse, my ethnographic details revealed ways in which women shaped their expressions of difference, and exclaimed and circulated their claims to empowerment and strength. Their expressions generated new gender relations and circulated within and around certain social [public] spaces such as protest marches, *Tik* meetings and entrepreneurial spaces. These spaces were organized by social relations of class and norms of gender and 'appropriate behaviour' and socially acceptable work, but were also transformed and resisted through women's articulations.

Being on guard, Abu-Lughod warns against the propensity to view resistance through rose-tinted glasses and as the only agentive performance. She reminds us that forms of resistance and agency are not 'independent' of, but happen *within* systems of power (1990:50). She iterates that oppositional agency is only one form of practice and is performed not necessarily as a means to an end. In the valley I don't think women intentionally did work that flew in the face of gender ideals. They did what they did because it suited their situations. Naming specific and various forms of Bedouin women's resistance, Abu-Lughod explains how women used silences and secrets to their advantage. Bedouin women embraced and resisted the system of sexual segregation in their society when it suited them and mothers successfully blocked marriages their daughters did not want. These subversive discourses referred to men in terms of lack, "the lack of the womb" (Abu-Lughod 1990:46), almost idiomatic for women's claims in the valley which alluded to men's lack of nurturing and empathetic concerns for the youth. Abu-Lughod found that women's capacities to invert ideals of male autonomy and social precedence manifested in their songs, jokes, folktales, silences and secrets, and she suggests that "social domination also works at the level of constructing, delimiting, and giving meaning to personal emotions" (Abu-Lughod 1990:47). Personal emotions of empowerment were expressed by women in the DRV in narratives of entrepreneurial creativity, and "taking the place of men as breadwinners" helped to define some men in terms of lack.

What is importantly present in Abu-Lughod's paper is a dissection of the modern political and economic context that came to change the way Bedouin women challenged the legitimacy of male domination in their society. Women resisted new restrictions on movement that exaggerated the ideological schism between male and female identities and thereby illustrated agency. The author claims that practices of resistance by women in the Awlad Ali Bedouin society teach us about the complex interworkings of historically changing structures of power and how women make sense of changes around them.

In the wake of social change and transformation, similar practices of diversion or subversion were reflected women's articulations and activities that showed their strength. In some cases, women in the valley resisted gender norms and ideals by entering previously male dominated spaces in order to strategically seek out, negotiate and challenge normative perceptions of power associations. There were widely held representations of entrepreneurial women in the valley as 'women of steel', or 'women with guts.' What these articulations sought to relate were the renovated roles of women in the DRV reacting to changes. Women felt that their and other women's involvement in the community and their efforts to support the household income needed to be considered a strength of the valley's women; that they were rising above men and resisting gender ideals of men being 'better than women.' Like the Bedouin women, some women were able to create an ideological schism to refashion or contest gender norms in the valley. Overall, they called to mind the power women felt they had in their claims that they were equal to men²⁰.

Van der Vliet (1991) gives an interesting perspective into how women negotiated traditional Xhosa ideas of marriage to make meaning of transformations in their society. Their ideological constructions of the modern marriage were manipulated for strategic ends that said something about who they were as women. The 'competing cultural scripts for marriage' (Van der Vliet 1991:219) presented various options for women who resisted and accommodated ideas of 'traditional' Xhosa marriage to give legitimacy to their attitudes and behaviour. Van der Vliet found that women were able to "turn the traditional tables on men" by implying that the 'Xhosa man' behaved in a way that was morally inferior and that a man should consult his wife. Xhosa men would claim dominance in terms of the Christian vows of a woman to 'honour and obey' her husband. Through interviewing Xhosa couples residing in a Grahamstown township in the Eastern Cape, Van der Vliet found that women tended to use more modern attacks to refashion and contest normative ideas in Xhosa marriages. Women would claim "I am also a breadwinner, I am also an educated somebody" to counter and resist men's positions within the marriage. Like some women in Pniel, they would also appeal to traditional ideas and accommodate normative ideas to balance out this contest and to smooth out tension.

²⁰ The perceptions of strong women in the valley came from the women themselves. My intent was to let the women speak for themselves, and in doing so reveal their own subjective representations and the way they view themselves. I feel this is a particular strength of my thesis. However I agree that there is plenty of room for research to uncover the male perspective on women's participation in economic pursuits and their contributions to family incomes.

Neither men nor women were passive participants in these processes. They were embroiled in practices of gender politics. The ethnography narrates how some Xhosa women deployed strategies from both modern and traditional value systems to achieve their goals and negotiate their positions within relationships, thus making their resistance to tradition inseparable from their accommodation of it.

Hewamanne highlights the inseparability of resistance and accommodation. Women working in the new garment factories in Sri Lanka collectively expressed their difference from others by engaging in oppositional practices and used symbols of modern status to redefine themselves. Her monograph, *Performing 'Dis-respectability': New Tastes, Cultural Practices, and Identity Performances by Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zone Garment Factory Workers* unveiled how the garment girls negotiated their identities as rural or urban women. Their resistance, agency and respectability were embedded in their everyday expressive practices and performative acts of personal narratives, jokes, gossip and material display. Hewamanne's article narrates how women changed in their moral and social dispositions as they migrated out of the village into urban spaces and encountered global flows (Hewamanne 2003:76). In her study, the garment girls exhibited mannerisms and aesthetic appearances that countered that of other women in the village. The monograph highlighted the ways and means women strategically used behaviour, speech and appearances to shift their identification in the specific power relations and social changes they faced and moved back and forth between these identifications as the situation demanded (Hewamanne 2003:71). The counter practices and performances of both van der Vliet's Xhosa women and Hewamanne's garment girls underlines women's gender actions and political practices as they seek to understand modernity and change, but also how women were able to re-order culturally normative expectations prescribed for women. However, women were consciously or unconsciously assessing whether normative expectations were worthy of resisting or not, depending on what they or their community would get out of the subversion. The implications of this were presented in the case of Dollie who knew the drawbacks of her socially – 'illegitimate' activity, but who took the opportunity anyway to re-define the norms and imply that she was respectable and responsible nevertheless.

Gender actions are generally designed according to specific relations and situations. They are often, but not always, done with a degree of accountability to culturally approved standards. When gender actions are done in specifically unremarkable ways i.e. they are conforming to normative performances, they go without scrutiny. It is when gender is displayed in opposition to the cultural norms that gender performances risk harsh assessment. Either way, West and Zimmerman (1987) deduced that gender performances do not always live up to normative conceptions of what it is to be a male or a female. All gender behaviour is at risk of gender assessment (West and Zimmerman 1987:136). The concept of gender performativity is therefore interacts directly with the politicized nature of gender relations.

Performing Gender in Entrepreneurship

The essence of being human, Leach argues, is to resent the domination of others and the dominion of present structures (Rapport and Overing 2000:5). Leach goes on to say:

Hence, all human beings are 'criminals by instinct,' predisposed to set their creativity against the current system, intent on defying and re-interpreting custom. Indeed, it is the rule breaking of 'inspired individuals' that leads to new social formations on which cultural vitality depends. Nevertheless, the hostility of creativity to systems means that its exponents are likely to be initially categorized and labelled as criminal or insane – even if their ultimate victorious overturning of those systems' conservative morality precipitates their redefining as heroic, prophetic or divine" (Rapport and Overing 2000:5,6).

Women's moments of agency, or their ways of doing entrepreneurship, can sometimes be unconscious. Fenwick (2002) explains how women attach different meanings and interpretations to entrepreneurship and craft their own meanings of success. She focuses on the discursive elements and contexts of entrepreneurship and deconstructs women's subject positions with respect to the norms and knowledge of their particular communities.

For anthropologists, entrepreneurship is considered a social and cultural process in which entrepreneurship is socially constructed and culturally produced and reproduced in social practices (Barth 1963; Stewart 2003, Bruni et al. 2004a&b). Considering how entrepreneurship is socially constructed must include understandings of how entrepreneurial practices incorporate complex transactions for capital, identity and power. These associations are negotiated and become entangled as women and men negotiate what is meaningful to them. Entrepreneurship then reflects assumptions about ideas of gender and power (Downing 2005).

By seeking to understand entrepreneurship as creativity that leads to new social formations, and re-definitions or labels being attached to women who set their creativity against the grain of the prevailing cultural system, we can make meaning of women's entrepreneurial processes in the valley. As Chapter Six shows, women's entrepreneurship was constructed and negotiated around social and gender norms. Women in the valley performed their various enterprises in line with respectable notions of womanhood, and at other times they challenged these cultural and gender prescriptions. Thus it was logical to explore women entrepreneurs as "individuals who created change in normative orders" (Stewart 1991:72).

Overall, entrepreneurial literature has neglected to concern itself with exploring the power relations comprised in economic structures (Bruni et al. 2004a: 409). My examination of women's entrepreneurship as challenges to normative gender orders that created ideological schisms in the power notions revealed.

Some women entrepreneurs I interviewed acquiesced to gender norms and therefore chose to remain invisible or silent on their agency (albeit consciously or not) while others spoke about their activities in tones of struggle and confrontation. Despite some women denying their gender in their entrepreneurial activities, Lewis (2006) concluded that presumptions of a gender-neutral social context fail to recognise that entrepreneurship is an inherently performative act. Fenwick reveals how some women's negotiations of entrepreneurial strategies are used to endorse activities that may otherwise be considered 'male' work. Women took up or resisted certain images to strategize their position as entrepreneurs and positioned themselves as 'different to the dominant' (Fenwick 2002:162). Fenwick explains that this is a process of negotiation, but that this process is neither autonomous nor rational: "as negotiators we are shaped by cultural discourse and choose among it symbols in ways that we do not acknowledge" (Fenwick 2002:162). What was apparent in the valley entrepreneurial context was how some women chose to be silent about how gender structured their entrepreneurial activities while others, like Dollie sought to emphasize their similarities to their male counterparts.

Fenwick asserts that the most visible (dominant) signs, symbols and codes of meaning "legitimate certain institutions and values and exclude others, by representing 'norms' and casting nonconformists as the 'other' to these norms" (Fenwick 2002:165).

Bruni et al's ethnography of Italian female entrepreneurs (2004a) calls attention to the multiple ways women position themselves in entrepreneurial spaces and discourses, using their agency to transform and confront gender norms and discourses. Their ethnography incorporates reflexive conceptions from women about their role as entrepreneurs. The authors presented a post-modern debate on 'senses of selves' and gendered identity inscriptions in daily routines of entrepreneurship. They did this through highlighting the different constructions male and female entrepreneurs put on their activities (and on themselves). Through describing the processes that positioned people as 'men' and 'women' within entrepreneurial practices, the ethnography revealed how individuals 'do' their gender through their activities. I like the 'senses of selves' Bruni et al (2004a) allude to. It reveals how entrepreneurs in the valley made meaning from their gendered activities that said something about who they were and was therefore very subjective.

Coming back to Fenwick's ideas about gender neutrality and silence in entrepreneurial acts, Bruni et al. (2004a) revealed how Italian women deliberately rejected certain assumptions about entrepreneurship as a

male performance and practiced alternative forms of entrepreneurship that inscribed their gender position. The story explains how two Italian sisters took over an engineering family business (previously run by their grandfather) and how they manoeuvred their responsibilities between the business and their home life. It pointed out how the sisters were able to balance work and their reproductive responsibilities by strategically bringing in a male to deal with the business and design aspects of the engineering firm. The sisters performed their gender role by being reluctant to be recognised as businesswomen, so to build up assumptions that they were secretaries. By not being identified as 'entrepreneurs' by others, they were able to shed responsibilities and have more time available to their home life and children. When it suited them, the sisters would move between different spaces of signification as housewives or working women to breach the normative boundaries of the symbolic gender order, according to the occasion (Bruni et al. 2004a: 418). What is also interesting about this article is that the conclusion confirmed the existing equation between entrepreneurship and masculinity. Both men and women performed their roles as entrepreneurs parallel to masculine practices. However, in many cases, this specific performance was a strategic move in order to align one's image or identity "with the broader symbols of entrepreneurial action" (Bruni et al. 2004a: 426).

The personal testimonials of women and ethnographic observations from the field helped to construct the portrait of women entrepreneurs in the valley. They highlighted the social and gender embeddedness of women's entrepreneurial practices in the valley. They helped uncover the practices, meanings, values and images women chose to take up, ignore or resist in their entrepreneurship. Above all, women that resided in the DRV painted a picture of themselves as valuable contributors to their households and what was evident was the diverse portfolio of activities that these women participated in to make a living for their family and to look after the welfare of their communities.

What was evident in that was that while the women may have had different place-based opportunities and constraints for their entrepreneurial strategies, there were similar approaches to their agency in their strategies. For them, pursuing different activities was not simply about acquiring money or an income, but also caring for the community, cleaning and maintaining a home and being involved in religious activities.. In sum, women demonstrated strong social and economic agency in their entrepreneurship.

Anthropologists stress the role of norms and traditions that may inhibit entrepreneurship but also make known that entrepreneurship can be performed in spaces and social contexts that sustain certain expectations of women. Stewart (2003) argues that entrepreneurship takes place within societal norms and therefore has to be legitimated: "disembedding from societal norms itself carries costs in lost legitimation, and risks (such as witchcraft accusations) attendant on nonconformity" (Stewart 2003: 385). Legitimizing and reinforcing their entrepreneurial positions can help women to identify and harness certain moments of agency where

they can re-define themselves and actively challenge the prevailing gender and societal discourses. Taking into account all of the above, entrepreneurship is what Downing (2005) calls a dramatic process.

In the various stories heard about women doing entrepreneurial activities, there were different definitions of what or who an entrepreneur was and there were different types of entrepreneurship that held different levels of social legitimacy in the communities of the valley. Some activities were considered socially acceptable and others were not. In the end, what seemed to be most prevalent was that if your activity was considered to be supporting their dorp and in some way showing you were a responsible member of your community, you were held in high regard. What materialized in the ethnographic pieces were some negotiations and struggles around this general perception. In some manners, women were able to negotiate moral and social boundaries and conventional norms of women's work and prove above all that they were responsible people.

The challenges to men-dominated spaces showed how a woman and women at her shebeen refined and reworked concepts of respectability and male-spaces in a way that allowed them to remain respectable despite their socially negative professions (Campbell 1998:704). As the narrative of Dollie demonstrated, she was keenly aware that her entrepreneurship contained elements that were considered disrespectful by other people in the community, especially middle-class women. Her anti-dorp-supporting marked her agency and was a counter-discourse to accepted entrepreneurial practices. Like the garment girls, her entrepreneurship was a contesting narrative about class and gender.

It is clear that entrepreneurship in the different villages was embedded in specific ideas about respect, male incompetence and local household and community relations. Assessing the impact of gender on entrepreneurship highlighted what women did in light of challenges facing them and their communities. Shebeens were sites of struggle, not only for women who felt they were unnecessary evil, but also for women who used them as entrepreneurial spaces and sites to subvert middle class values and ideas of the ideal respectable woman. Shebeens were examples of counter-hegemonic trends in women's work. Women's performances represented "a break from the alienating hegemony of the dominant culture and society" (Hewamanne 2003:72). The manners in which women in the valley practiced their entrepreneurship exhibited agency, but also led to new social formations and rule breaking through their innovative reactions to the world around them. For a woman to run a shebeen in Kylemore was considered disrespectful and was a stigmatised form of work. Selling liquor tainted women's moral identity but women claimed that shebeen running was a strategy to care for their household and community needs, and thus legitimated Dollie's 'disrespectful' enterprise. For Dollie, the shebeen was an opportunity to show her resilience and strength, for other women, the shebeen was a failure in that they claimed it was contributing to the social and youth crisis

in the community. This ambivalence is understood as performance and negotiation. To understand women's entrepreneurship in the valley is to make sense of such paradoxes.

Women spoke of gender relations and male control that was particularly linked to being a religious woman or composing one's behaviour and acting with restraint. Being responsible to your household, community and 'policing' the youth also embraced ideas of respectability. Women considered themselves as *ordentlik* when they pursued certain entrepreneurial activities that incorporated specific moral ideas of women's work. These definitions of *ordentlikheid* were defined in relation to men, but also became blurred for women when they entered the spaces of 'the economic man' by doing certain entrepreneurial activities (Barth 1963). The paradoxes of entrepreneurship in the valley became important indicators of women's moral aspirations of *ordentlikheid* juxtaposed against their economic objectives to "keep households' heads above water." The story of a woman who ran a shebeen in the village of Kylemore to "make sure her children were fed" illustrated how women entrepreneurs were responding to constraints of poverty and unemployment, but at the same time how some of them had to destabilize their sense of respectability in order to reach this aim. 'Women of steel' was a constructed symbol of agency among women in the valley. What was clear is that women entrepreneurs laid claims to respectability by appealing to their role as women; as wives and mothers, drawing on an implied inherent association between these roles and a state of dignified or 'disrespectful' womanhood that their businesses implied. However, as Joan Scott contends: "to maintain that femininity predisposes women to certain [nurturing] jobs or collaborative styles of work is to naturalize complex economic and social processes, and once again, to obscure the differences that have characterized women's occupational histories (Scott 1988:47). Some feminist scholars show how women appropriate, resist, reformulate (and also perpetuate) dominant discourses according to their positions within a socio-economic matrix, rather than passively replicating social expectations.

A conceptualisation of practice brings to life the gender-mediated and calculated performances of women's actions and words in the DRV. In using the theoretical underpinnings of *livelihoods as practice and performance*, chapters five and six revealed that women were active and powerful agents in the valley. They developed their own tactics to deal with social and economic change in their lives. It demonstrated how women's economic activities were couched in diverse social constructions of gender, class, and place and how multiple power relations were represented and reconstructed in community and individually-based strategies. The study acknowledged that each woman was situated within a community and region that had distinct options and constraints that were shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and geographical forces. Women in the valley also chose and negotiated different strategies for different reasons. What surfaced in this thesis were the political and intangible ways of 'doing' that structured women's claims of empowerment.

Empowerment

Social representations of women in the valley as 'strong women' were borne out of their militancy on issues concerning youth – issues that were both spoken about and acted upon. The 'failure of men' in the valley has been constructed around behaviour and attitudes of men which some women claimed to exist, and which were abstracted from particular political, economic and social processes. These processes related to South Africa's political transition out of apartheid and the constitutional discourse of equal rights for men and women. Some women claimed that they had to assert their equality by proving they were as, or more, successful than men. Economic changes and new labour patterns shaped the trajectory of women's livelihood practices in the DRV. Some women labelled men as 'lazy' in that they lacked agency to creatively negotiate their structured situations of unemployment. The implications of such representations for women's perceived notions of empowerment and men's diminishing social capacity were significant. Empowerment in the valley became a site of struggle and a justifiable or romanisicized claim.

Empowerment in this study is not used according to the conventional meanings and catchphrases associated with 'development-speak'. Rather, the term empowerment refers to processes and practices that enabled women to challenge the dominant prevailing ideologies and assumptions about gender and other ideologies in which they lived. In the valley, women's subversions of dominant ideologies and expectations enabled them to legitimate certain activities and discourses of women's empowerment and strength that were not formerly considered to be the norm in the DRV. Empowerment as articulated by women showed their gusto and resilience in the face of disempowering structural relations and conditions, but also spoke to their collective experiences and contestations of modernity and the role of the male in their communities. Women re-negotiated power relations through their narrations on work and life in the valley and sometimes translated their talk into locally flavoured entrepreneurial activities that showed their creativity and resistance to norms in the valley.

This study recognises that empowerment is, first and foremost, all about power. Davids et al (2005) recognized that empowerment needed to be defined in a way that takes power, and the distribution of power, into account (Davids et al 2005:21). Empowerment relates to changing power relations, and particularly in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives. Van Driel (2004) and Cheater (1999) set about investigating what role the difficult and elusive concept of power has to play in the meaning-making processes of empowerment. They use the ideas of Foucault (1980) who acknowledges the contrasting descriptions of power and the idea that power is vested, even created, in discourses of empowerment and development. In an article written by van Driel, where particular attention is paid to the deconstruction of the notion of power, empowerment is not seen as a "property or product that can be transferred from one person or group to the other" but rather it is argued that "empowerment is a concept

that refers to complicated processes and relations that can mean many different things for different people” (van Driel 2004:42). Understanding and construction of empowerment are subjective to the person redefining or perceiving the redefined power relations. This implies that empowerment is something that can be claimed and socially legitimated in different contexts.

Issues of women’s ability and perceptions of power are inherent in the concept of empowerment. Van Driel has defined power as having two central aspects - control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial, and the self), and control over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). She says “if power means control, then empowerment is the process of gaining control. In whichever order change occurs - genuine empowerment typically includes both elements, and is rarely sustainable without the other” (van Driel 2004:42). Control over ideology is a particularly interesting idea to pursue. While van Driel does not take this argument to any empirical level of analysis, I attempt to understand the processes by which women claim empowerment through harnessing ideas of respectability and female dominance in the valley. Control over and negotiations of ideals of patriarchy and respectability in the valley showed how empowerment meant ‘power within’ – taking into account the ideological developments that led people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy and participate within decision-making or other power spaces, rather than be bought into these power processes without any sense of control over the process (Davids et al. 2005:21). People are therefore seen to perceive their empowerment where they become conscious of the power within them to choose to, and be able to, overcome power imbalances or constraining conditions.

Women seem to be relegated to a category ear-marked *for* empowerment. Such processes of empowerment coming ‘from above’ tend to silence the contradictions, local indigenous knowledge and ways of doing, and local constructions of empowerment that shape women’s own experiences of power. Women in the valley make meaning subjectively and on many levels. However, to capture women’s meaning-making processes, feminist research is sometimes problematic. Questioning and extending feminist thought in this direction can illuminate more general issues such as the nature of power and equality and the extent to which specific research methods advance certain agendas. These are significant practices to document because they delineate the boundaries between local and global influences and reinterpret powerful catchphrases like empowerment.

Women’s claims to empowerment in the DRV constituted negotiations of standard empowerment language or practices of empowerment ‘from above’ that mutually benefited their claims of control and strength ‘from below.’ The disjuncture is revealed in the ways women as target groups for empowerment in the DRV embodied or claimed their empowerment in contrast to a pre-defined checklist or prerequisites of power inherent in popular empowerment discourses. Such disjunctures begged the question of how empowerment

and its trappings were contested or resisted; or psychologically and ideologically internalised. Holding that true power can never be bestowed: that it comes from within, one can argue that the psychological shape which empowerment can take is manifest in how target groups or individuals *claim* their own empowerment. Kabeer (1999) names manifestations of empowerment and agency as negotiation, deception and manipulation. Thinking in this way, one can understand the ways women give voice to their poverty and experience their own empowerment and disempowerment psychologically and linguistically. These statements point to ideational schisms inherent in women's claims of empowerment.

In essence, when extracting the quality of empowerment, it proved valuable to look at the articulations of empowerment in the light of certain conditions. Women claimed their empowerment through subjective narrative. Their articulations and tactics were highly context specific. 'Women of steel' remained a symbolic social construction of their involvement in their communities and their responsibility to their households and community mobilization. In the valley, the metaphors and idioms of 'women of steel' had achieved some degree of acceptance. The fuzziness of empowerment is clarified through its specific use by women in the valley to refer to changing notions of gender relations, resistance to prevailing ideologies and specific claims to strong womanhood. It was a term recognized from the bottom, as an idea of womanhood. Claims of empowerment emphasized women's altruism, their philanthropy, and demonstrated their resistance to gender norms as gutsy women. Empowerment in the valley was constructed to move beyond victimhood where one woman made sense of the conditions in the valley and responded to them by running a shebeen and helping her community and taking responsibility for the children and welfare of the household.

However, it is pertinent to remember that empowerment is false, and like agency, is never entirely inevitable. The romantic nature of empowerment in the valley was revealed in the ambiguities, ambivalences and discrepancies between women's words and actions. Some women were romanticizing their perceived positions of power by denying gender violence. However, these claims pointed to ambiguous situations where women were victims of gender abuse – claims to being strong were supported by women saying "that's why they hit us" – men were perceived as weak, debilitated by their lack of employment and drinking habits and were deemed as ineffective in doing what was necessary to get out of their situations of unemployment and making a difference to their communities. Kabeer says that a romantic or false sense of empowerment is not necessarily false because people perceive their needs and interests. Women's needs and priorities in Chapter Five were context specific and relevant to them. These were shaped by individual histories and everyday realities, by their material and social contexts of their experiences and by the vantage point of their own reflexivity and subjectivity (Kabeer 1999: 441).

In this sense, the concept of empowerment and its manifestations were therefore true to the person claiming them. Women in the valley placed themselves in empowering situations that came to define their organizational powers, livelihood choices and social practices. These contexts helped them to forget their victimhood and face up to their disempowering conditions. What remained was a picture of women collectively and individually reworking and negotiating a complex bundle of socially negotiated social representations that informed the ways in which they tactically strategized their livelihoods. Women negotiated their social terrains to help socially legitimate their claims and redeem their asocial actions.

In investigating practices and performance, women were assumed to take on a more active role in negotiating and speaking about the intricate power relations and material realities that enveloped their lives. To uncover and understand these processes and practices was to reveal how women in the DRV were creatively determining their own realities. In order to capture the ideas of empowerment in the valley, I sought to understand empowerment as an idea of womanhood from 'the bottom up' through capturing metaphors and idioms used when women spoke about empowerment.

Livelihoods as everyday practices

'Sustainable livelihoods' was first used in the early 1990s as a development concept. Chambers & Conway (1992) defined livelihoods as comprising people, their capabilities and their means of living. Means of living included food, capital, income and assets. The authors made a distinction between tangible assets, which are resources, and intangible assets, which are considered the claims to capital people make. These assets are structured by material and ideological conditions (Chambers & Conway 1992; Carney 2003; Pratt 2006). To frame livelihood processes of women in the DRV I was interested in the intangible assets of their livelihoods; their claims to power and negotiations of everyday conditions that defined who they were. Behind their articulations of strength resided social influences and power plays that defined their 'moments' of agency.

Viewing women's practices as tactical performances showed that they required specific ways of organizing, negotiating and manipulating circumstances and strategies to live in the valley and define their success as women. Their liaisons pointed to the instrumentalities of their practices and the organizational powers of some women in the valley. Their practices were sites of struggle through which women worked to empower themselves by re-ordering gender hierarchies, reshaping their identities as 'women of steel' and building relationships with their communities. Their various manoeuvres took place within local level practices of everyday life that were linked to outside influences and national and global processes; global processes that were oftentimes locally appropriated in tactical and unintended ways (Ferguson 1990). What needs to be understood are the ways in which "global symbols and globalized information were interpreted from a local

vantage-point and contribute to shaping that vantage-point” (Eriksen 1995: 300). Eriksen calls this ‘the self-construction of place.’

According to Baumgartner and Högger (2004) livelihoods should be conceptualised as multifarious and are pursued in local economies and distinct localities. Livelihood negotiations, constraints and prospects are bound within the resource capacity of these localities, and the social, class, gender, and political discourses within the locality. An approach that seeks to understand the locality will recognize that every woman is situated within a household, community, and locality which have distinct livelihood options and constraints. These options and constraints were shaped by global, social, political, cultural, economic, and linguistic forces and relations that functioned in various ways across the different communities. “A livelihood system is therefore much more than the economic precondition for physical subsistence. It is a multidimensional ‘whole’, embracing all forces and constraints which determine a family’s life in its entirety – it is the life-context” (Baumgartner & Högger, 2004: 36). By harnessing the concept of life-context, Baumgartner & Högger allowed me to bring in once more the importance of looking at the *practice* of livelihoods. The livelihood practice is a life-realm in which women constantly manoeuvre their social position, their gendered identities and legitimate their strategies accordingly.

As intimated in previous chapters, women’s various practices were sites of struggle wherein people negotiate, tactically, diverse ways of making do and understanding the world around them. The livelihoods framework is critiqued by Du Toit (2004b), who supports Murray’s (2001) argument that although the SLA and its operationalization as a development tool has shaped too many quantitative explorations of livelihood profiles across the globe while qualitative and relational understandings of social processes and the dynamics of race, class, gender and other aspects of social identity are lacking (see Du Toit 2004b: 995). A more realistic understanding of livelihoods, revealing social constructions, re-interpretations, conceptions of empowerment and resistances to power and constraints was needed.

Conclusion

Practice frames much of my interpretation of this study. It involved a discursive analysis of how subjectivities were regulated through positionality, knowledge construction, voice, and authority, with gender prominent in the analysis. These theoretical strong points suggested that in order to analyse women’s livelihood tactics and claims of empowerment I needed to recognise them as politically mediated and as performed. More so than others, practice theories are able to pinpoint the fluid relationships between structure and agency. In contrast to the views that livelihoods are determined by capital and structured by access to capital – livelihoods as practice gives people who are performing their livelihoods more authority over their lives. Practice theory helps to define women’s livelihoods as practices that were not naturalized but performed in relation to power mediations and structured and gendered conditions. As Butler says: there is no gender identity prior to the expression of gender, rather, that gender identity is constituted by the

repetition of performative expressions (Butler 1990: 24-5). In the valley, through women's repeated expressions of moral strength and agency, their gender identity was aligned with a generally accepted notion of 'women of steel.'

The ethnographic evidence presented called for an interpretation of the taken-for-granted processes that are conventionally overlooked in more economistic or developmental livelihoods analyses – that is the multitude of gender role-plays and performances of people in negotiating their livelihoods. Livelihood practices and articulations of empowerment were processes that were fluid, dynamic, contextual and multi-layered. They had a political dimension that was often hidden, were situated within existing power arrangements in the valley, but not confined within its borders. The various practices were considered as active and creative responses to women's structured lives in their bids to make a living or bring about social change.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Are they women 'women of steel'?

Ethnographic enquiry demonstrated that women's various practices in the DRV were sites of struggle.

Women's experiences differed and were socially marked by their gendered responsibility to their churches, communities, households and youth and entrepreneurial development. Their involvement demonstrated their strength and resilience and helped them to claim empowerment. These claims showed how women attempted to subvert and accommodate social and moral ideologies. Articulations that men were idle and loafers while women were productive and showed concern further buttressed women's entrepreneurial prowess and business sense, which they considered a strength. This showed they had 'guts' as opposed to men who, in their opinions, had no sense of responsibility and no guts to go out and find work. Narratives such as these revealed how women struggled and resisted as well as affirmed local ideals of gender and respectability.

Women's everyday practices were sites of struggle against perceptions of men's passivity. Women exerted 'moments' of agency in the valley through configurations of this locally defined discourse of empowerment. These configurations sometimes contradicted the disempowering discourses and spaces that constrained some women. The implication of this was interesting. It divulged some denial of harsh circumstances that some of them often claimed men were inflicting on them. However, the women that were challenging the odds of poverty, gender abuse and lack of employment showed that they did have the strength and social power to balance their claims of empowerment. The theoretical interpretation of practice in this investigation enabled the study to capture women's perceptions and the influential fields that shaped them. Women's practices fitted ideological discourses under conditions of struggle and resistance that led them to seek and contest possibilities and opportunities innovatively. The empirical analysis of women's involvement in community and entrepreneurial activities revealed the subtleties of their politicised everyday practices. These were reinforced by words they chose to express their life experiences.

When I first heard the phrase "I am a woman of steel" I struggled to fully grasp the extent to which this metaphor resonated with some very brave and proud women in the valley. Little was understood about this claim and I felt that my research needed to comprehend the grounds of their claims. It was apparent that these women were situated within certain constraints in the valley. Conditions impacted on their lives, perceptions and social actions. Studying how women responded to these conditions revealed more about their perceptions of who they were and how much power they could exert. The very fact that women were responding to conditions in creative ways formed the basis of my interviewees' empowerment argument. Their struggles against structural unemployment, normative ideologies of gender and respect, and rapid

economic, development and social transformations in the DRV were not one-dimensional. They took many forms. What was apparent was that through practices of resistance, appropriation, negotiation and manipulation, some women shaped the oppression that larger forces imposed upon them, and in doing so painted a picture of themselves as 'women of steel'. Despite many awkward and imposing situations in some women found themselves, they claimed to have the ability to rise above some adversities. They spoke about their 'able-ness' in specific relation to the passivity of some men. The words women chose to use revealed the ordinary and everyday conceptions and practices of gender and agency in the valley.

Practicing livelihoods was a political manoeuvre and revealed the ways in which women subverted and affirmed gender discourses and ideologies. It allowed women to negotiate around normative ideologies to legitimate their entrepreneurial activities. Women were unmaking and remaking their social and gender relations through their various articulations of empowerment. The theory of practice grounded what women articulated in fluid political manoeuvres. Women straddled between sentimental empowerment and structural disempowerment.

Questions about the road ahead

Empowerment is not something that can be done to someone by someone else. Changes in consciousness and self-perception are one's own, and when they occur, can be the most explosively creative, energy releasing transformations, from which there is often no looking back. They can tap powerful reservoirs of hope and enthusiasm among people who have been used to viewing themselves and their worlds in purely negative terms. External change agents may be needed as the essential catalysts that start it off, but the momentum of the empowerment process is set by the extent and the rapidity with which people change themselves. What this means is that governments do not empower people; people empower themselves. What governments' policies and actions can do is to create a supportive environment or act as a barrier to the empowerment process (Sen 1997: 3).

Despite their energies and agency, many women in the valley faced obstacles. There was a need to overcome constraints in order to tap the productive potential they felt they had to enhance their contribution to the development of the area. This said, partnerships need to be encouraged with government actors, and especially with a local stakeholder such as Boschendal whose initiatives seem to hold the future of the valley. Another crucial goal to promote is the establishment of an enabling environment for aspiring and practising women entrepreneurs in the valley with supporting institutions. Enabling actors should aim to provide women with development agencies for the services they require. They need to address empowerment in an integrated and complementary manner. Ongoing community research is needed to identify opportunities, needs and interests of the women in the valley. Access to resources and network support structures remains crucial. But for argument's sake, let's ask what would it help if women were to

be supported with small-scale enterprises and the larger picture remains the same, with insufficient education and opportunities for participation in a larger economy?

What emerges from this study is that women accessed their own resourcefulness and relied on their church and community networks to successfully practice their entrepreneurship and care for their communities. These ways women made do in the valley need to be seen as critical local strategies that could benefit from being recognised by municipal and development agencies and actors in the valley. Boschendal's initiatives to empower women 'from above' need to recognise women's practices and strengths 'from below'. The initiatives need to buttress these with training and access to financial services so that interventions may become sustainable. Making other women aware of how they too can enter entrepreneurship 'with a local flavour' will be to their benefit.

Literature in South Africa falls short of celebrating women's localised feelings and experiences of empowerment. In terms of South African literature, a focus on diversified communities is mostly neglected. It could be of value or interest to local developmental players to include local interests and needs of women in their development planning and executions.

Final Reflections

To make sense of my findings I had to ask myself what I felt were important issues that came up. What made me feel excited was that the women I encountered were genuinely trying to respond to the challenges they faced in the valley. They were taking the initiative and doing something to solve problems. They were generating income, and thereby helping their families and communities in the process. I personally think this is awesome and something that needs to be acknowledged supported and encouraged. But this attitude on my part is shaped by the fact that I am gainfully employed, productive and looking in from the outside – i.e. I am secure and don't face the conditions they do. Would my feelings be the same if I were one of the jobless men married to one of these women? Perhaps I would be resentful of the success my wife was achieving while I was jobless. Surely this would amount to jealousy and would involve issues of self-esteem.

This is understandable I think, as men were 'expected' to be the breadwinners while now, not only are they not, but their failures are being shown up by successful or entrepreneurial women. The negative aspect which is highlighted by women, and that comes out strongly in this study, is the fact that many men were idle. They were seemingly not making an effort to take the initiative, to make a plan, or to do something to generate an income. Because of these 'failures' some women harboured negative perceptions about men. The first superficial reaction on my part was to go on the defensive and say "are you really sure this is the

situation – are men doing nothing while women are doing all the work?” My observations in the field tended often to support what women said.

Above all, the study recognised that one cannot disembody ‘moments’ of agency and oppositional practices from the structures that bring them into being and shape their very existence. Kabeer argues that structures shape the individual resources, agency and achievements of women but they also define the boundaries within which women of different communities, classes and life experiences are able to pursue their interests, “promoting the voice and agency of some and inhibiting that of others” (Kabeer 1999:461). Women who were a part of this study in the DRV need not be seen as passive actors bounded within possibilities, but rather as agents who, like the Kabalian men, Xhosa wives, Italian women entrepreneurs, and garment girls, participated in rule-breaking that led to new social formations and perceptions of women.

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