

Brokering, mediating and translating rural development: land and agricultural reform in the southern Cape

by

Timothy George Balne Hart

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Supervisor: Professor Kees van der Waal

Co-supervisor: Professor Steven Robins

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Declaration

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Abstract

The anthropology of development has begun to focus on the analytical concept of brokers as crucial actors, and to investigate their presence across the 'development chain'. Development does not simply work through technical processes but through complex social processes of brokerage or mediation, invoking processes of assemblage, translation and representation of realities. This dissertation examines the agency of brokers and mediators to understand how development unfolds and is shaped through acts of mediation. It challenges the concept of brokers for being too broad, and not accounting for less influential actors who also mediate and perform broker-like roles and activities.

Since 1994 rural development interventions in South Africa have mostly been marked by the redistribution of large-scale commercial farmland. The assumption has been that commercial agriculture is the economic mainstay of rural areas and that land seekers want land to farm in order to improve livelihoods and social circumstances. Yet, many of the resulting projects have been economically unsuccessful due to misguided policy, bureaucratic inefficiency, bad planning and insufficient support. The generally accepted consensus amongst policymakers is that success simply requires the improvement in current state policy and agency practices. This oversimplification ignores the actors identified as brokers and their agency of mediation in influencing outcomes.

This dissertation explores the role and agency of brokers in rural development by examining the redistribution of farmland to a number of households in the village of Waldesruhe in the southern Cape and the subsequent promotion of honeybush farming. The study identifies brokers both in the village and in various government departments and the technology-providing science council involved. Waldesruhe, a former mission station and coloured rural reserve, provides a fertile basis for brokers and the development of brokerage capabilities used to mediate these two rural development interventions of land redistribution and honeybush production.

The study is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork that included extensive participant observation, workshops, formal and informal interviews, archival research and the analysis of policy and planning documents. In Waldesruhe in the Southern Cape, brokers and other mediators involved in a land redistribution and honeybush project had an influential effect on the outcomes of the interventions. Beneficiary brokers were, at times, able to mediate land redistribution in the favour of beneficiaries and manipulate officials. Artful brokers used their mediation skills to attract support and resources for projects and to shape them, while other, less influential actors also managed to mediate and influence the project.

These findings illustrate that development implementers and recipients have different ideas or logics about the opportunities and resources that development projects avail, and tend to reappropriate these for their own needs. Brokers and other actors are thus not neutral intermediaries and their agency affects development implementation and outcomes. The study shows that mediation needs to be recognised as an intrinsic part of the development process. Development needs to be understood as a social process combining many events, interactions, ideas and models that determine its outcomes, while mediation mitigates only some of these. The outcomes of brokerage and mediation are tempered

by the changing positionality and influence of the mediators, while neither the habitus of the actors nor the historical-political economy and structural constraints can be ignored when evaluating the outcomes.

Opsomming

Die antropologie van ontwikkeling het begin om op die analitiese konsep van agente te fokus as belangrike rolspelers en om hul teenwoordigheid in 'die ketting van die ontwikkelingsproses' te ondersoek. Ontwikkeling vind nie slegs plaas deur tegniese prosesse nie, maar ook deur die komplekse sosiale prosesse van bemiddeling of mediasie wat prosesse van samevoeging, vertaling en weergawe van realiteite behels. Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek die agentskap van bemiddelaars en mediators om te verstaan hoe ontwikkeling ontvou en gevorm word deur bemiddelingsaksies. Die studie bevraagteken die konsep van ontwikkelingsagente as te breed en dat minder invloedryke rolspelers se bemiddelingsrolle en -aktiwiteite as 'n reël nie in aanmerking geneem word nie.

Landelike ontwikkelingsintervensies in Suid-Afrika is sedert 1994 gekenmerk deur die herverdeling van groot-skaalse kommersiële landbougrond. Die aanname is dat kommersiële landbou die ekonomiese basis van landelike areas is en dat diegene wat grond soek verkies om deur boerdery 'n bestaan te maak om daardeur hul sosiale omstandighede te verbeter. Verskeie projekte was egter ekonomies onsuksesvol as gevolg van misplaaste beleid, burokratiese oneffektiwiteit, swak beplanning en onvoldoende ondersteuning. Die algemeen- aanvaarde konsensus tussen beleidsmakers is dat sukses slegs afhang van verbeteringe in die huidige staatsbeleid en die praktyke van betrokke agentskappe. Hierdie ooreenvoudiging ignoreer rolspelers wat geïdentifiseer is as agente en hul rol as bemiddelaars wat uitkomst beïnvloed.

Die proefskrif verken die rol en agentskap van bemiddelaars in landelike ontwikkeling in die herverdeling van landbougrond vir 'n aantal huishoudings in die dorpie Waldesruhe in die Suid-Kaap, asook die bevordering van die verbouing van heuningbos daarna. Die studie identifiseer bemiddelaars in die dorpie, in regeringsdepartemente en in die navorsingsraad wat tegnologie voorsien het. Waldesruhe, 'n voormalige sendingstasie en landelike kleurling-area, dien as 'n vrugbare basis vir bemiddelaars en die ontwikkeling van bemiddelings-vaardighede wat gebruik is om hierdie twee landelike ontwikkelingsintervensies vir die herverdeling van grond en die verbouing van heuningbos te medieer.

Hierdie studie is gebaseer op langtermyn etnografiese veldwerk wat intensiewe deelnemende waarneming ingesluit het, asook werkswinkels, formele en informele onderhoude, die ondersoek van argiefmateriaal en die analise van beleids- en beplanningsdokumente. Ontwikkelingsagente en ander bemiddelaars betrokke by die grond-herverdeling en heuningbos-projekte in Waldesruhe in die Suid-Kaap, het 'n beduidende invloed op die uitkoms van die intervensie gehad. Bemiddelaars uit die begunstigde groep was soms in staat om grond-herverdeling te bemiddel ten gunste van begunstigdes en om amptenare te manipuleer. Vaardige bemiddelaars het hul bemiddelingsvaardighede gebruik om te motiveer vir ondersteuning en hulpbronne en die omvang hiervan te bepaal, terwyl minder invloedryke akteurs daarin geslaag het om oorhoofs te bemiddel en die projek te beïnvloed.

Die bevindinge illustreer dat ontwikkelings-implementeerders en –begunstigdes verskillende idees en persepsies het oor die geleenthede en hulpbronne wat ontwikkelingsprojekte daarstel en dat hul dit opeis vir hul eie behoeftes. Bemiddelaars en ander rolspelers is dus nie neutrale tussengangers

nie en hul agentskap het 'n invloed op ontwikkelings-implementering en –uitkomste. Die studie toon aan dat bemiddeling erken moet word as 'n integrale deel van die ontwikkelingsproses. Ontwikkeling behoort verstaan te word as 'n sosiale proses wat verskeie gebeure, interaksies, idees en modelle kombineer wat die uitkomste bepaal, terwyl bemiddeling slegs sommige van hierdie aspekte kan 'versag'. Die uitkomste van bemiddeling en mediasie word deur die veranderende posisionering en invloed van die bemiddelaars getemper. Terselfdertyd kan die 'habitus' van akteurs, die historiese-politieke ekonomie asook strukturele beperkinge nie geïgnoreer word wanneer uitkomste geëvalueer word nie.

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Acronyms

ANT	Actor Network Theory
ASNAPP	Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CPRC	Coloured Persons Representative Council
CRLR	Commission on Restitution of Land Rights
CRR	Coloured Rural Reserve
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DLA-SC	Department of Land Affairs – Southern Cape
DLGHA	Department of Local Government, Housing and Agriculture (part of the HRCP)
DOA-WC	Department of Agriculture – Western Cape
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
HRCP	House of Representatives for Coloured People
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LRPP	Land Redistribution Pilot Project
LSU	Livestock Unit
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church)
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NGSK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk (Dutch Reformed Mission Church)
PPP	Participatory Project Planning
PRA	Participatory Rural Assessment
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RI	Research Institute
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAHPA	South African Honeybush Tea Producers Association
SAP	Smallholder Agriculture Programme
SC	Science Council
SLAG	Settlement Land Acquisition Grant
TLC	Transitional Local Council
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
USA	United States of America
WMB	Waldesruhe Management Board
WSFA	Waldesruhe Small Farmers Association
WTP	Waldesruhe Tea Project

Timeline

1860s	The farm Waldesruhe is purchased by a German missionary working in the southern Cape and used to hold Christian services for surrounding farmers, woodcutters and their labourers.
1869	The local NGK builds a church and primary school on Waldesruhe.
1872	Missionary gives Waldesruhe to the Dutch Reformed Church to be managed as a mission station. Residential Phase 1 begins around the church and on other parts of Waldesruhe.
1884	The local NGK builds a new church on Waldesruhe.
1909	Secular control and administration of missions loosely transferred from the missionaries to the Department of Native Affairs in accordance with the Mission Stations and Coloured Reserves Act 29 of 1909.
1963	The Coloured Rural Areas Act 24 of 1963 was gradually introduced on mission stations, mainly in the present Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces, to create a separate legislative framework for local government, land and mineral resources in what were declared as areas largely inhabited by coloured people.
1970	Waldesruhe ceases to be a mission station and becomes a coloured rural reserve in terms of Act 24 of 1963 managed by the Waldesruhe management board and is designated as a place of residence exclusively for coloured people.
1980	Residential Phases 2 and 3 are identified and planned.
1985–1986	Houses and amenities are built on Residential Phase 2 land.
1986	<i>Inkommers</i> arrive in Waldesruhe from the Eastern Cape and they and some Waldesruhe residents settle on Residential Phase 2 land.
1986–1987	WMB becomes custodian and owner of the <i>inkommergrond</i> .
1994	WMB is replaced by Waldesruhe TLC, which becomes owner and custodian of <i>inkommergrond</i> .
1995	Piet Osprey becomes aware of land redistribution sub-programme and discusses this with other residents and DLA-SC.
1996	Potato project is started for members of the WSFA.
1998 (June)	Minister of Land Affairs approves Waldesruhe land redistribution application.
1999 (September)	Transfer of Bruce Jones's farm (purchased by the state for redistribution) to Waldesruhe Small Farmers Association.

1999 (August)	Honeybush trial is planted in Ted McGregor's home garden but plants die by December.
1999 (September)	Subdivision of redistributed farmland begins and is completed by January 2000.
2000 (January)	Ted and Shirley's smallholdings identified as the site of the demonstration plot.
2000 (February)	Honeybush demonstration plot project planning takes place at RI.
2000 (May)	Author visits Waldesruhe for the first time.
2000 (July)	PRA and PPP sessions are started.
2000 (August)	Honeybush demonstration plot is planted and Derek plants experimental plot on his smallholding.
2000 (December)	TLC incorporated into the local municipal council and <i>inkommergrond</i> is now owned by the local municipality.
2001 (October)	Experimental honeybush planting has first harvest.
2001 (December)	Demonstration plot on Ted and Shirley's smallholdings is officially closed by researchers.
2002 (March)	Derek reports experimental honeybush planting experiences problems and plants dying.
2002 (October)	Experimental honeybush planting has second harvest.
2003 (December)	Derek stops his experimental plot and removes honeybush plants.
2004 (July)	Author resigns from RI and moves to Gauteng.
2005	The local municipality starts looking at implementing Residential Phase 3 development and some people needing land for housing settle prematurely on the land allocated to them before services and housing are provided.
2005 (March)	Honeybush project officially terminated in Waldesruhe.
2005–2006	Author works in Waldesruhe occasionally using it as the site for research projects.
2007 (January)	Author takes up residence in the village to conduct PhD ethnographic research.
2009 (December)	Author concludes ethnographic fieldwork and terminates residence in the village.
2010–2011	Residential Phase 3 development is underway, and services and housing are provided.

List of names (pseudonyms)

Abrams, Cyril (author's neighbour)

Abrams, Gert (beneficiary of land who misunderstood the redistribution process)

Albaster, Gerhard (beneficiary and original WSFA member who lent land to Henry King)

Andrews, Jessica (local agricultural development officer from 2005)

Badenhorst, Cecilia (widow of neighbouring large-scale farmer and mother of Franz)

Badenhorst, Franz (established local large-scale farmer)

Dippenaar, Eric (brother-in-law to Derek, Paul and Mike and friend of Michael Josephs)

Dippenaar, Ethel (pensioner and only resident who produced Deed of Grant)

Foster, Alvin (*inkommer*)

Francis, Margarete (*inkommer*)

Fredericks, Lucia (non-beneficiary and co-member of the chicken layer project with Verna)

Gabriels, Clement (husband of Natasha and a beneficiary known to have previously planted vegetables at a small-scale)

Gabriels, Natasha (initial WSFA secretary)

Harris, Stefan (beneficiary known to have previously planted vegetables at a small-scale)

Holtshausen, Kurt (son in law to Piet and cousin to Marc)

Holtshausen, Marc (original resident interested in land redistribution and cousin to Piet and Kurt)

Jacobs, Neil (father of Derek, Mike and Paul and a beneficiary)

Jacobs, Derek (original member of WTP and beneficiary who initiated experimental honeybush planting)

Jacobs, Mike (beneficiary and brother to Derek)

Jacobs, Paul (beneficiary and brother to Derek)

Jones, Bruce (owner of the farmland finally identified for redistribution)

Josephs, Michael (non-beneficiary and local resident respected by others as a farmer)

King, Michael (father of Verna September)

King, Henry (cousin of Verna September living outside of Waldesruhe)

Koekemoer, Justin (beneficiary and monthly migrant)

Lourens, Chris (original member of WTP who had honeybush nursery structure on his property)

Lourens, Craig (original member of WTP)

Lourens, Martin (uncle to Craig)

McGregor, Errol (deceased in 1993, husband to Shirley and father of Ted and father of the minister in the Eastern Cape)

McGregor, Shirley (beneficiary and wife to Errol and mother of Ted)

McGregor, Ted (beneficiary and WTP chairperson)

Osprey, Piet (father of Jeffrey, cousin of Marc Holtshausen)

Osprey, Jeffrey (son of Piet and chairperson of the TLC during the land redistribution process)

Quinn, Jeremy (father of Paul and non-beneficiary)

Quinn, Paul (son of Jeremy and non-beneficiary)

September, David (husband of Verna September, brother of Paul September and monthly migrant)

September, Paul (husband of Sara September, brother of David September and weekly migrant)

September, Sara (wife of Paul and sister-in-law of Verna September)

September, Verna (co-member of the chicken layer project with Lucia)

Smith, Damien (beneficiary accused by Ted of burning the demonstration plot)

Voster, Daantjie (guide and land redistribution beneficiary)

Chapter 1

The awkward encounter of discourses and practices of land rights and agricultural development

Development workers strive to enrol villagers in the policy models that sustain project intervention. But their institutional role for the project should not be seen as a bounded worldview. On particular occasions, aid workers are able to reflect critically about development institutions and their roles within them, and choose to enrol in recipients' trajectories. In turn, recipients are less locked into a lifeworld than they are into temporarily attempting to turn development rationales to their own ends.

— Rossi (2006: 29)

Introduction

Using the analytical concept of broker, this dissertation investigates why and how development actors' agency of mediation altered the planned intentions (implementation, shape and outcomes) of two sequentially implemented rural development projects in the former mission station and coloured rural reserve (CRR) of Waldesruhe¹ in the southern Cape of South Africa. The first project started in 1995 and involved the redistribution of a single white-owned commercial farmland to 30 self-selected households as part of South Africa's land reform programme. The second project started in mid-1999 with the trial planting of honeybush (*Cyclopia spp*), a naturally growing fynbos species used as a herbal infusion, much like red bush or rooibos tea (*Aspalathus linearis*). It was rolled out in the form of a demonstration plot from August 2000 to provide agricultural technical support to redistribution beneficiaries and other interested farmers in Waldesruhe by way of introducing a new commercial crop with a local niche and export market potential. Different actors in the development configuration (the various development agencies involved) and beneficiaries have different ideas about the successes and failures of each project and the reasons therefore, ideas that provide us with an understanding of how success and failure are made.

To tease out the challenges and contradictions that became evident in the practice of implementing rural development policy in Waldesruhe, I use the concept of broker as an entry point. As Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (2002: 19) emphasise,

broker does not refer to a concrete status or to any official, or informal position in an institution, or to an emic notion calling on conceptions which exist at a conscious

¹ I use a fictitious name for the village and informants to protect the confidentiality of the informants and the actual field site of my research (see the section on ethics in Chapter 2).

level, in the awareness of the persons involved. No one gets promoted to the status of broker, nobody defines himself [or herself] as a broker.

This concept allows me to explore acts of mediation, including the transformation, translation, distortion and modification, of ideas and processes, by a multitude of actors, and the effect this had on the two projects in one field site. It also enables me to critique the concept and suggest that it is too narrow and excludes less influential mediators.

Included in the study were actors from the village, various state departments and the research team responsible for the honeybush project (including myself as an employee of Research Institute (RI), a research institute located at one of South Africa's science councils).² These actors performed acts of mediation to make sense of their encounters, the awkwardness of practice and the unexpectedness of its outcomes, in order to achieve their own professional goals, and in so doing attempted to translate project reality into policy and programme representations. Different actors viewed the two development interventions as either successful or unsuccessful. One outcome of this was increased support to land beneficiaries by at least one state agency; another was the closing down of the honeybush demonstration plot project. Acts of mediation effectively hide the challenges of practice and seemingly ignore (or even subvert) the lessons evident from practice. Only by participating as an organisational 'insider' and project team member from 2000 to mid-2004 and returning to conduct ethnographic fieldwork as a part-time resident in the village from 2006 until 2009 was I able to make sense of some events that shaped the implementation of rural development policy in Waldesruhe and the sustained support it was still receiving in 2010. To understand the social complexity of what is termed development, locally, nationally and globally, I had to retrace the history of the mission station, the CRR and the land reform project. This history flowed into the honeybush technology diffusion project and along with actors mediated the intervention. Engagement in Waldesruhe for a decade allowed me to observe different actors and the effect of interconnectivities across the development chain first-hand.

During my first year of fieldwork in Waldesruhe in 2000, as a 'participant insider' at RI, I realised that policy, state agency and the ideals of the science council, with their principles of partnership and participation with the beneficiaries, along with their models designed by experts and meticulously planned projects, did not manifest coherently in practice. Here was a group of land reform beneficiaries who had been granted farmland through South Africa's first farmland redistribution model — Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) — on the basis that they had been previously denied the right to own

² I use 'RI' to refer to the specific research institute at which I worked and 'SC' for the specific science council at which RI is located. I use the terms 'research institute' and 'science council' as general references.

farmland and wanted to farm.³ However, some seemingly had sufficient land at their disposal before acquiring land through SLAG but were not actively using this beyond small-scale vegetable production and grazing for investing in livestock. Furthermore, few actually began to farm the newly acquired land and even fewer seemed interested in producing honeybush as a commercial crop. This lack of widespread interest in farming and in the honeybush demonstration plot project by the beneficiaries did not deter the RI or the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (DOA-WC). The honeybush project continued until March 2005 and the DOA-WC stepped up support for beneficiaries from 2002 onwards.

Was this an encounter with bad policy and poor project implementation that many scholars state are the main obstacles to South Africa's land redistribution? Thus, was I participating in impractical land reform policies and beneficiary selection? Bad honeybush project planning (in which I played a role)? Unsuitable models for land use? Incorrect, insufficient, inappropriate or unwanted support? Or even a lack of visible or tangible change in the agrarian structure (see Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon and van den Brink 2009; Cochet, Anseeuw and Fréguin-Gresh 2015; Cousins 2013; Cousins and Walker 2015; De Wet 1997; Greenberg 2010; Hebinck and Cousins 2013; James 2007; Weideman 2006)? In other words, was I encountering technical and instrumental challenges and the inadequacy of policy and designed models, plans and officials to change the status quo or was there something more socially complex at work?

In order to operationalise this thesis, I draw on various theories and analytical concepts from anthropology, particularly the actor-oriented approach, ideas about brokerage and activities of translation or representation, and the sociology of science and actor networks. The focus on brokers in contemporary development situations (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002) is a powerful step forward, as it highlights not only acts of mediation by numerous actors but also embeds the notion of translation, explored by Latour (1996, 1999, 2000, 2005) in actor network theory (ANT), into contemporary development scholarship. This combination of mediation or brokerage that includes translation, as Lewis and Mosse (2006) and co-contributors emphasise, enables a deeper and more meaningful understanding of development processes and actor agency that influence project encounters, implementation, shapes and outcomes. These theories and concepts add another feature to understanding the development problematic — why planned social change either does not occur or manifests in outcomes different to those initially intended by planners and agents, seemingly does more harm than good, is often resisted outright or reappropriated by intended beneficiaries, or has unplanned outcomes and consequences for most actors involved. The combination of these theoretical tenets also helps us to understand what happens on the ground in development projects and how this influences ideas about project failure and success. It also made me question the use of the concept of broker.

³ The SLAG model focused on eligible households each being allocated R15 000 by the DLA. This money was pooled so the state could purchase the identified farmland. Remaining funds were transferred to the bank account of the legal entity that represented the beneficiaries in each case. They could use this money as the executive members thought fit.

My core interest is on the agency of people I term influential brokers and less-influential mediators, to understand how development unfolds, is shaped and is made successful or unsuccessful by their mediation. Contemporary literature suggests that brokers are key players, mediators with influence at various levels of the development chain (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002). However, several scholars indicate that development involves acts of mediation between groups or individuals about access, spaces of intervention, the uptake or dissemination of development models and resources, and the various social, cultural and economic terrains involved (Behrends, Park and Rottenburg 2014; Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; James 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015; Olivier de Sardan 2005). They suggest that others also engage in broker-like activities although they might not be so well connected or their circle of influence is smaller and at a lower level within the development chain. Before exploring the concept of brokerage or mediation and before outlining those theories from development anthropology that I use to delineate the development problematic to support my arguments, it is necessary to illustrate the mediated and bifurcated (or split) South African rural development policy from which the two projects that I examine arose. Other scholars found that the disjuncture of this national policy, and the nature of the South African state bureaucracy generally (Greenberg 2010; Hebinck 2013b), composed of interlocking state and market forces to fashion a hybrid 'redistributive neoliberalism',⁴ created the ideal context and space for the emergence of brokers and acts of mediation (James 2007, 2011, 2018; Piot 2010; van Leynseele 2018).

South Africa's rural development policy

South Africa's rural development policy of the 1990s considered the restitution and redistribution of farmland, supported by modern agricultural technologies (improved technical practices, mechanisation, crops, livestock, infrastructure and new products), as the backbone to economic and social upliftment in rural areas (ANC 1994). This policy was bifurcated as it attempted to combine two very different discourses in order to appease the assorted actors at the negotiating table in the early 1990s, each of whom was intent on gaining influence, addressing historical inequalities and accessing different development resources from the state and international agencies (Hall and Williams 2003; James 2000b; Weideman 2004; Williams 1993, 1996). These actors included the World Bank, bilateral organisations, South African government bureaucrats and ministers, and international and local academics (e.g. Lipton and Lipton 1993; van Zyl, Kirsten and Binswanger 1996a, 1996b). The one discourse is a populist, rights-based, redistributionist land reform discourse; the other a developmentalist technical discourse (James 2001) aiming to introduce and apply economically productive (viable) modern agricultural technical support (ANC 1994). The intention of the two-pronged policy was to create a commercial smallholder class of farmers while permitting farms of mixed sizes

⁴ According to Burger (2014), who follows Bernard and Boucher (2007), South Africa seems like a 'transfer welfare state' because the low tax base and high costs mean that income redistribution is not sustainable and unable to reduce inequality. Transfers are insufficient for and undermine investment.

that would function in the national and international market as part of a commercial farming sector that was to be the social and economic development fulcrum of rural areas in South Africa (NDA 1995: 4). Such ideas were largely supported by the 'assumption that the black rural population contains a substantial dormant peasantry waiting to be revived' (Beinart and Delius 2018: 1). The emphasis on agricultural technology only began to dominate from 1999 onwards but did form a large part of the 1992–1996 policy negotiations on rural development (James 2001; see also van Zyl, Kirsten and Binswanger 1996a, 1996b). Furthermore, motivated by the commercial farming lobby groups and the state, the *White Paper on Land Reform* (DLA 1997) required that redistributed farmland had to remain or become economically productive (Lahiff 2007), thereby implying that some of these farms were not productive at the time of transfer (MXA 1999). Indeed, the farm that was transferred to the 30 Waldesruhe beneficiary households fell into this category: it had been unused and fallow for more than a decade; and the only infrastructure it had were two storage dams and a ramshackle cottage.

Introducing modern agriculture is not a new paradigm in South Africa; it was a key factor in rural development during its colonial and post-colonial history, irrespective of the prevailing political economy (Cousins and Scoones 2010; Beinart and Delius 2018). The first mission stations in the 1700s and 1800s introduced modern agricultural technologies to provide food and, later, to reduce poverty (Catling 2008; Elphick 1982; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997; Shell 1989). In the 1930s and 1950s, various land conservation and productive agricultural technologies were imposed onto both the homelands (Beinart, Delius and Trapido 1986; Bundy 1988; Delius 1996; De Wet 1980, 1995, 2006; De Wet and Whisson 1997; Ferguson 1990; Yawitch 1982) and mission stations (Catling 2008; Robins 2008; Sharp and West 1984). These were largely state attempts at raising declining household subsistence levels. During the 1980s, in efforts to create a class of commercial smallholders, modern agricultural technologies were introduced into both the former homelands (in the form of the Farmer Support Programme in the Eastern Cape) and former mission stations or CRRs (as economic unit farming or *eenheidboerdery*).

Despite the lack of success of these efforts, the introduction of science, technology and innovation (STI) as large-scale farming technologies and practices was an increasing feature of the post-1994 administration in most rural areas. This is evident from the 1995 *White Paper on Agriculture*, the 2001 *Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture*, the 2004 Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme, the 2009 Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the 2011 Recapitalisation and Development Programme and the roll out of the Agri-Park Programme since 2016. Yet tangible results have been minimal in the former homelands (Beinart and Delius 2018) and CRRs (Kleinbooï 2013).

What is new since 1994 — at least until the gradual introduction of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy in 2006 that resulted in the state owning redistributed farmland and leasing it to interested users — is the endeavour to combine a populist, property rights-based ownership and redistributionist farmland discourse with a more economically and technologically oriented developmentalist discourse. Since 1995, these two very different discourses placed different demands on different actors, but especially on the beneficiaries. The state desire for rapid land redistribution at any cost between 1995 and 1999 (MacDonald 1998), in the form of the Land Redistribution Pilot Project

(LRPP), suggests that land redistribution can be seen as less demanding on beneficiaries' time than the agricultural support provided to some of them in an *ad hoc* manner by various state and non-profit agencies at the time. All potential land redistribution beneficiaries had to do under the LRPP was to demonstrate a history of farming or a desire to farm, attend a few meetings, form a legal entity and develop proposals for assistance. This was often carried out by a handful of local representatives (implying brokers).

By its very nature and complexity, the introduction and adoption of (often new) agricultural technical support demands access to resources, greater commitment and the participation by beneficiaries to acquire new skills. It also requires some selective reappropriation as many technologies are not suitable to smallholder farmers. Thus, it demands more time than redistribution, which could be left in the hands of a few local 'representatives'. Simultaneously, agricultural support (requiring brokers) can be at odds with the perceived interests of redistribution beneficiaries because their socio-economic and political economic histories and current realities are very different from the understandings of policymakers, planners and experts diffusing agricultural technology (Beinart and Delius 2018; Faku and Hebinck 2013; James 2001), creating disjunctural encounters (Mosse 2005b) in which brokers emerge temporarily and for different purposes (James 2007, 2011; van Leynseele 2018). The emergence of brokers and subsequent mediation is particularly opportunistic when the only means of legally accessing farmland or land in rural areas is to represent oneself and others as a group of farmers or one interested in farming. Brokers and acts of mediation (described above) come in at this point to assist these individuals and groups in representing themselves appropriately and convincingly towards the state (James 2007, 2011; van Leynseele 2018).

Despite the extreme contrast between (what can in simplistic terms be called) the redistributionist and the developmentalist discourses, policymakers and experts continued to assume and disseminate a belief that stretches back as far as South Africa's colonial period that farming is the primary, if not exclusive, driver of the rural economy (James 2001; Beinart and Delius 2018). The discourses further assumed that rural beneficiaries possess limited knowledge and skills with respect to commercial agricultural production but rather behave in a collective fashion. This communalist rhetoric was strongly represented by land NGOs at the rural development policy negotiations in the early 1990s, rooted in their assumption that all poor rural people seeking land shared interests, struggles and histories, and was adopted by experts and officials at the negotiating table.

Following Murray (1996), James (2000a: 146) argues that this communal rhetoric conceals the reality that the desire for land derives 'from a series of sharply differentiated historical experiences and may articulate widely divergent interests'. James (2000a, 2007) highlights and criticises the (mediatory) practices of policymakers, land reform planning officials and expert consultants who reconfigure history, misconstrue rural residents' livelihoods, profess the uniformity of potential beneficiaries and their challenges, and remain ignorant of the narrowness of their abilities to avoid poverty. This resonates closely with Ferguson's (1990) Lesotho experience. Besides land dispossession, increasing migrancy meant that for many 'the intergenerational transfer of agricultural skills and resources withered' since the 1950s (Beinart and Delius 2018: 2) and so too has the interest in farming as a route out of poverty.

Land reform beneficiaries are seldom a group that is egalitarian or cohesive; and while officials use these criteria as notions for granting land, they ironically challenge them when they propose new land use patterns and technologies (van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009; Fay and James 2009). These pressures create fissures that require mediation and thus provide further opportunity for brokers and other mediators to enter these spaces. Experts in the field find themselves legitimising projects in order to protect policy (Mitchell 2002), by crafting policy papers, realigning projects with policy goals, publicising progress, following acceptable approaches and including specific categories of people. Acts of omission, reinterpreting history, making problems appear susceptible to technical solutions (Ferguson 1990) and the inevitable deviations from planned project activities and subsequent outcomes also require the inputs of experts to provide stability and coherence. This creates a socially constructed distance between on the ground reality and policy representation.

Furthermore, policymakers and officials ignore the different meanings migrants and other rural residents attach to urban and rural places (James 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2007; Marcus, Eales and Wildschut 1996), in particular meanings about the purpose of land and agriculture (see also Beinart and Delius 2018; Hebinck and Cousins 2013; van Leynseele and Hebinck 2009). This situation, where the views of potential beneficiaries and officials and their agents diverge about the need for and the use of farmland, leads to one in which all actors (recipients, officials and their agents) at the development interface and interstices must constantly mediate their intentions and expectations to suit their requirements. Only when sense is achieved through mediation and translation can subsequent practices and outcomes of projects appear to conform to needs, projects and the rural policy discourse of the day. In South Africa, as elsewhere, temporary development brokers emerge 'at the interface between the project's beneficiaries and the development agencies' (Neubert 1996: 1), performing acts of mediation and all this entails at various times for various requirements — not only to muster support and resources for themselves or those they represent but also to make sense of prevailing inconsistencies that the implementation of development plans creates (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Jacobs 2014; James 2007, 2011; Mosse 2005a; Mosse and Lewis 2006; Neubert 1996). At the interstices along the development chain, actors can be considered to perform selective and temporary user or consumer-like behaviour or employ 'tactics' with respect to enrolment and participation in developmentalist interventions in which they reappropriate the ideas, resources (funds, people and artefacts) and practices (strategies) of development for their own means, along the lines theorised by Michel de Certeau (1984).

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau (1984) explores and illustrates the ways in which people reappropriate or reuse mass culture for their own purposes by altering cultural artefacts, language, rituals and laws in everyday life. He highlights the 'strategies' of powerful governments, organisations and institutions that produce environments, products and rules, in contrast with the 'tactics' of the less powerful actors whom he describes as 'consumers' and, more actively, as 'users'. Users tactically and selectively reappropriate existing cultural rules, products and practices in ways that influence but are never completely regulated by the strategists. Unlike planned 'strategies', 'tactics' are reactive, defensive, opportunistic and seized momentarily in psychological spaces (e.g. 'the project', 'the plan') and physical ones (e.g. villages, organisations and field sites). Certeau's ideas can apply to

mediation activities in development environments in which developers find their projects, plans, regulations and resources, or elements of them, reappropriated by recipients in ways more suitable to their needs. This often leads to ambiguous project processes and outcomes — to realities that are understood in different ways by dissimilar actors in diverse positions. This was the case in the Waldesruhe land redistribution project. As I show in this dissertation, brokers and others are able to facilitate activities of reappropriation of land redistribution models by means of mediation, thereby influencing the outcome. Some do the same with the honeybush demonstration project but are seemingly less successful in getting more resources. Key actors are brokers and others who mediate for specific purposes. As Olivier de Sardan (2005: 172) points out, development actors, ranging from officials to agencies and beneficiaries, find themselves at the interface of strategies and tactics. Here they muddle their way through contradictory situations, demands and expectations while attempting to be part of the plan or keep the project intact.

This section, like much of the literature, uses the terms brokerage, mediation, translation and representation in order to draw attention to certain actors and their acts. These concepts are crucial lenses for considering the theoretical approach to enable us to better comprehend the problems of development. It is thus indispensable to offer some working definitions. As Lindquist (2015) shows, ideal definitions are difficult to maintain in light of practical realities and continual advances in anthropological theory that may make concepts unstable or even alter their meanings.

Defining brokers and mediators

Broker is an analytical concept used by anthropologists to understand the activities, functions, positionality, status and extent of agency of certain individuals and institutions in a social milieu. The individuals or institutions themselves may not apply the term to themselves (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002). A crucial part of this dissertation is to contribute to our understanding of the informal roles and agency of brokers in shaping the process and outcomes of development. Of interest is whether brokers are mediators or intermediaries (see Lindquist 2015), whether mediation (the act of transforming, translating, distorting and modifying meanings of ideas and processes) is only done by brokers or also by other actors. If so, how do we distinguish between brokers and mediators?

The lay notion of mediation as conflict resolution is not the understanding used here. Neither is the notion of mediation as how journalists use media to create notable or newsworthy personalities (Boyer 2012; Gürsel 2012) of use here. Within the context of development, I rather think of mediation in terms of translation, namely the acts of ensuring 'mutual enrolment and the interlocking of interests that produces project realities' (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 13). Translation, bringing diverse, even opposing perspectives together with the appearance of cohesion, is made increasingly possible with the tendency of dominant narratives (policy ideas, proposals and plans) to invoke development clichés or metaphors (Cornwall and Eade 2010; Mosse 2005a: 230), which I expand on below. Rottenburg (2009) reveals an interesting and interwoven tale of activities of representation, as he refers to translation, as models and ideas travel from origin to destination and back again along a continually expanding chain of development. Plans are translated as they move from central offices to those in the

beneficiary countries and regions. Data from field sites is oversimplified into charts, tables, figures and limited narratives. In this way complex field data is (re)presented and simplified for the requirements of financial donors and development agencies for their tasks of monitoring and determining progress. In Rottenburg's work, a whole line of actors is involved in the transmission and translation of knowledge and facts, ranging from funders, consultants and anthropologists to country and district project managers and local fieldworkers. Rottenburg himself avoids the use of the words broker and mediator but his characters are all engaged in acts of mediation, which according to Latour (2005) includes translation and is the behaviour of brokers. This avoidance of the term broker is important, I argue: my work shows that indeed not all actors can be considered brokers, even if most mediate at some stage. Like Lindquist (2015), Olivier de Sardan (2005: 166) considers 'broker' a fluid and dynamic term. Instead of focusing on the actor, he argues we should see the 'process of mediation' because

brokerage is not an abstract function but one that is embodied in specific social actors, even though [*sic*] they are sometimes diffuse, exist as networks, or function only part-time. The itineraries and biographies of these brokers must be analysed in order to pinpoint their characteristics. What kind of competence is required? What is the required 'training' (travels, political activism, studies and other experiences)? How does one 'qualify', as it were, for this position? Is it possible to become a professional broker? If so, how? (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 176).

Olivier de Sardan (2005) sees two centrally important mediators in the development arena: development actors employed directly or indirectly by donors, and rent-seeking development brokers (in a sense self-employed middlemen or representatives of beneficiaries) trying to get a share of the development funds and other resources along with increased personal influence. While both types need to use the language of development and he sees both as mediators, he distinguishes between their agency. Thus, context and circumstances play a critical role in the characterisation of the broker and nature and extent of brokerage. Nevertheless, Olivier de Sardan considers brokerage and all it entails as vital to the development process.

Olivier de Sardan (2005: 166) considers development to be a chain, involving interfaces of different actors, 'that relies on mediation, which proceeds through a wide range of multiple, embedded, overlapping, intertwined mediations' and only functions if mediators are present (see also Rottenburg 2009). Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (2002: 17) describe the purpose of brokers as one of translating the 'discourses and actions of given actors in terms which make sense to partners situated far away at the other end of the brokerage chain'. Even Rottenburg's characters seem to be engaging in activities that the other anthropologists would attribute directly to brokers. These activities include performative acts of inscription and translation by various actors to secure resources for themselves and others. This suggests to me that the concept of broker might be used and defined too narrowly in contemporary anthropological literature on brokers in development. Many people act as middlemen, mediating across different social worlds or networks, but are not necessarily brokers with all the accepted characteristics of brokers as defined in the literature (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Olivier de Sardan 2005; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015). At least this

appears to be what Rottenburg is implying: his key characters or actors are located in various positions in the development network, ranging from consultants, project managers and field staff to anthropologists, development bankers and ministry officials.

Brokerage or mediation has become increasingly necessary as the development chain has lengthened with development's progressive intertwining in the era of globalisation. Bierschenk (2014: 85) uses the concept of 'norm entrepreneurs' to capture brokers who attempt to introduce new norms (such as governance, accountability, rights, equality, often originating in the global North) through translation into local settings:

the norm socialization carried out by norm entrepreneurs resembles a process of negotiation and translation that does not progress in a linear fashion. The transfer and implementation of norms are determined not only by the duration and the intensity of the norm socialization, but also by the different world views, institutional affiliations and actor interests involved.

Brokers are thus not simply messengers or organisational representatives but perform mediations and attempt social engineering. Goffman (1959: 17) saw social actors as performers and the 'impressions' provided to others during their performance are in accordance with the actor's intentions, although they may be subconscious at times. Brokerage and mediation on the other hand is conscious. We can consider some development experts as having this role as they attempt to get farmers and others to adopt their new technologies, beliefs and practices. In days gone by missionaries strongly represented norm entrepreneurs with their intent of modernising and Christianising the local populace (see Chapter 3). While I do not employ the notion of norm entrepreneurs in this study, I note it as one of the many types of purposes for which brokers seem to emerge in development activities involving the transfer of Western norms and standards.

Lindquist (2015), following Boissevain (1974), considers the broker as a certain kind of middleman, a human actor who benefits from mediating second order resources i.e. those not directly controlled by him or her. In fact, access to such resources is typically acquired through membership, and in some cases leadership, of actor networks. A patron, in contrast, directly controls access to valued first order resources (in the sense that they belong to him or her) and usually engages directly in patron-client relationships, without the use of a middleman. Lindquist (2015: 2) also differentiates the broker from a third kind of middleman actor, the 'go-between or ... messenger, who does not affect the transaction' or activity at hand but rather simply passes on a message as received, without any (conscious) distortion.

Latour (2005: 39) makes a similar distinction when he distinguishes mediators from intermediaries where the former intentionally 'transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry' while the latter 'transport[...] meaning ... without transformation' and thus do not intentionally influence the encounter. Intermediaries are thus simply messengers. In his actor network theory Latour (2005) posits that there exists an endless number of mediators across intersecting networks, making continual acts of mediation necessary. Latour (1999) sees no need of privileging particular brokers and interfaces, since the actual activity of producing and

protecting representations is dissipated through multiple actors in the various networks and chains of translation. The longer the chain the greater the dissipation of agency; because of its narrow focus, privileging certain actors achieves a reduced understanding. While in this study I illustrate people who act as brokers, I bear in mind Latour's warning that they should not be privileged but should rather be seen as illustration of how the combination of mediators at different positions influences project processes, shapes and outcomes. In this sense I follow Olivier de Sardan's (2005) idea of distinguishing between the broker and the function of brokerage according to the circumstances. Some brokers catalyse processes while others, especially those I term mediators, try to follow these through but can encounter problems when they lack influence. Others mediate but never achieve sufficient influence to bring about change. Using ideas from actor network theory, Lindquist (2015: 10) equates mediators with 'brokers who ... are positioned at the centre of analysis and as a starting point for considering various processes of encapsulation and the production of social forms'. Thus, he suggests the focus should be on brokers' agency. I in turn extend this agency to all actors engaged in acts of mediation and associated translation. I use agency in the sense of what actors are able to achieve in respect of their contextual opportunities and limitations. There exist asymmetries of power and influence amongst actors that play out in diverse ways at different positions or levels in the development network. Mosse and Lewis (2006) identify brokers as actors with influence and networks who are able to muster support from other members and do this across networks. I draw on this idea to distinguish brokers from other mediators, namely those who are not central or do not hold a lot of influence but manage to mediate the development process in their own way for different purposes. The definition of broker and mediator is situational and fluid. To understand this fluidity and the shifts that take place, brokers and mediators must be recognised in terms of their actual practices, and responses to these practices, rather than their formal positions and roles. An important church elder and civic leader may behave as a powerful broker, but they can end up acting like a relatively powerless 'mediator', a person without significant influence. Similarly, a seemingly unimportant mediator can assemble authority and end up appearing to be a powerful 'broker' through the accumulation of influence and leverage.

The complexity of development has become increasingly wide-ranging as more and more projects and programmes become linked to globalisation, so that theorists argue that development is intrinsically a study of the global (e.g. Bierschenk 2014). Clearly global interconnections shape South Africa's rural development policy and its implementation through the ideas of the World Bank and other international agencies (Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon and van den Brink 2009). Yet in this study, I focus more centrally on the local, the regional and to some extent the national. In this my guiding question is how we can better understand the problem of development through the agency of brokers and mediators as they influence development, its shape and outcomes. Clearly brokers and mediators are not the only relevant factors that shape development, yet they have a very strong influence and, as I argue, they shape the outcomes and translate these as success or failure. Ferguson (1990) unequivocally illustrates how important mediation effects of actors are in diagnosing the development challenges in Lesotho and in ignoring the reality of the Basotho. They are thus noteworthy of our attention in the social process of the conceptualisation of development, its implementation and its outcomes (Long 2001).

Problem statement

The global development project has been a conundrum for decades. Planned social change either does not occur, seemingly does more harm than good, is rejected or reappropriated, or has unplanned outcomes and consequences. Anthropologists have followed different paths and theories in attempting to frame and analyse this problem. In its most simplistic form development has been considered a black box or machine, the workings of which are technical, hidden and only scrutinised when things go wrong (Latour 1999: 304). The rest of the time the workings of the machine are ignored by most. Unfortunately, the failures of development or its unintended consequences often outweigh the successes. Anthropologists and other social theorists have increasingly shown that development is far from a simple technical activity but is in fact a wide-ranging social process, increasingly involving actors across the development chain — from the local to the global. The movement from the technical to the social specifically enables us to better grasp the ways in which success and failure are made (Mosse and Lewis 2006) and the limitations of technical and culturalist arguments (Olivier de Sardan 2005).

Olivier de Sardan (2005: 31) suggests that when anthropology takes development as its object, it reveals the true nature and real effects of development. It

affirms, from the very outset, that the social sphere is very complex, that the interests, conceptions, strategies and logics of the various partners (or 'adversaries') that development puts in relation with each other diverge. Conversely, the everyday life of development comprises compromise, interactions, syncretisms, and (mostly informal and indirect) bargaining. These are the kinds of notions — which, obviously, do not exclude power struggles — that must be explored in order to explain 'real' effects of development actions on the milieus they intend to transform. That implies breaking away from dualist explanatory 'patterns', structuralist frameworks and culturalist references alike.

In the setting of Waldesruhe, I analyse the development process and the outcomes (and how they are made) at the nexus of two projects representing the two discourses that underpin rural development policy in South Africa. I draw on the enhanced actor-oriented anthropological approach of Mosse and Lewis (2006). This approach draws on the Manchester School, particularly the foundational work of Long and his colleagues (Long 1992, 2001; Long and Long 1992), but strengthens the original actor-oriented approach by analysing the translation and assemblage that is undertaken by actors (multiple brokers and mediators) (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Mosse 2005a) and combining it with Latour's (1996, 2002, 2005) actor network theory (ANT). In ANT the actors are seen as part of overlapping and diffuse networks — nobody and no one thing acts alone. Mosse and Lewis (2006) apply this to development practice illustrating that no actor or agency, irrespective of size and influence, has total control over development implementation and its outcomes. Development and its effects become a combination of their mediations. However, this does not mean, as Mosse (2005a) implies, that all is lost; rather, reflexivity is required (see also Jacobs 2014). The point is that practice often constrains or prevents reflexivity.

What follows is a genealogy of the development problematic in order to show why I use the analytical concepts of broker and mediator to investigate the convoluted process of development in Waldesruhe, the contextualised agency of brokers and mediators, and the way success and failure are ultimately socially constructed. In such a genealogy it is necessary to consider some interlocutors who do not shape the argument of this thesis but have shaped the arguments of others from whom I draw to frame my theoretical and methodological basis in order to develop a solid argument. Thus, it is necessary to highlight the important role of structural, functionalist and political economic debates here because of their impact on development thinking. However, I largely exclude them from shaping my approach and analysis while acknowledging there is a relationship amongst actors, their agency of brokerage, mediation, networks, assemblage and translation, and structure, function and political economy. Development does not occur in a vacuum and my focus emphasises brokers, mediators, their fluidity, their networks and consequently their influence on development processes and outcomes and eventually how these are understood as being the results of translations.

The initial emphasis of development in the 1950s was on both large and small projects, primarily concerned with infrastructural development (dams, schools, clinics, government buildings) and technology transfer (particularly the agricultural sector), often easily subsumed within national development programmes in which the control of resources and the measurement of progress appeared both simple and logical. Project activities were clearly demarcated in terms of time and space. Project planners were clear about the goals to be achieved, the required resources, the means to implement and specific responsibilities, and the intended outcomes of the intervention (Gardner and Lewis 1996). Completed projects were analysed with the purpose of reducing their costs and improving the pace and effectiveness of delivery, rather than to consider how they improved social life and well-being (Pottier 1993c). It was simply assumed that the desirable outcomes would be realised if they worked well.

By the 1960s, the lack of economic growth in post-colonial Latin America led to the examination of the suitability of development. Neo-Marxists argued that the new and peripheral nations would only grow if they left the world-capitalist system and adopted a state-socialist system. Structuralists posited that industrialisation, modernisation and development would not be achieved because the process and historical context was different from that experienced centuries before in Europe. The proposed solution of state intervention to control the effects of trade on these countries did little to improve the situation.

In 1967 Gunder Frank presented his dependency theory on the development of underdevelopment. Focusing on Chile and Brazil, he identified chains of dependency from the early 16th century, reaching the international level when Latin America was embedded in a global system of exploitation and dependency with the rise of capitalism. Critically, he argued that in times when Latin America engaged less in the global economy, it showed more growth; but when its nations remained in the capitalist system, they were increasingly exploited. Rodney ([1972] 1981) extended the dependency debate to Africa, arguing that European intervention in African political, social and economic processes in the 19th century produced dependency and resulted in impoverishment. Amin (1974) made a comparable case in his analysis of the extraction of natural resources and primary products.

Wallerstein's (1974) world systems theory strongly resembled dependency theory in that he argued that a country's development depended on its historical basis, and its position and strength in the global system. He saw the world as consisting of core, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries but that they were not locked forever into a stage but could move between them. He thus differed from the other Neo-Marxists who argued for a linear progression. Instead, world systems theory posited that, as the global economy changed, some nations would advance economically while others would decline. While dependency theories attracted strong support in the 1970s, especially since they were rooted in experiences in the global South, by the 1980s they had lost all empirical credibility with the rise of the Asian tigers. Though their success seemed to support Wallerstein's idea of non-linear development, he was criticised like the dependency theorists for his focus on national-level development to the exclusion of local level development. National economic growth did not manifest in local level growth or development and a different approach was required to understand the failure of local development when national level economic development appeared to be good.

In the 1980s alternative forms to mainstream scientific and capitalist development emerged. These populist approaches celebrated local/indigenous knowledge and local capabilities of aid recipients to determine what aid they required, while simultaneously decrying global science and capitalism with their ideas of universal problems and solutions, which included the top-down transfer of technology and the disregard of individual and group diversity and local context (Pottier 1993b). These ideological perspectives were strongly associated with NGOs and activists outside of mainstream development and pioneered by the work and experiences of Chambers (1983, 1997) in Kenya and India (Mosse 1997) and activists in Latin America (Max-Neef 1982, 1991). More recently, Piot (2016) illustrates how, in West Africa, some mini-development projects can become sustainable when local knowledge, history, culture and the roots of problems are understood contextually and in terms of their local and global interconnectivities. Yet, while appearing more successful than larger scale projects, these small locally rooted projects too are not without their own challenges.

Alongside these alternative development perspectives of the 1980s, anthropologists embarked on a critical and deconstructive analysis of development discourse and development institutions, policy and practice. This shift in anthropological focus coincided with the weakening adherence to functionalist models within the discipline during the 1970s. The scholarship that emerged was influenced by a greater awareness of the significance of broad (global and national) political and economic interventions in shaping the structure of the small communities and villages that had been the historical focus of anthropology. Just as anthropologists and others became aware in the 1960s and 1970s that 'traditional society' could not be properly understood without realising that colonial ideology and administration had constructed much of what existed, so contemporary rural society cannot be comprehended without taking cognisance of the role and rhetoric of state and global development organisations.

French philosopher Foucault informed much of the critical scholarship that followed, which analysed the prevailing and 'limiting' planning rhetoric of development. Development came to be viewed as a historically positioned discourse of control, in which the global North (covertly) holds dominion over the global South, according greater validity to certain images of social reality and specific types of

scientific knowledge than others (Croll and Parkin 1992; Hobart 1993; Fairhead and Leach 1996; Mosse and Lewis 2006). In this approach, development agencies were attributed with overwhelming hegemony against which development recipients were powerless.

Ferguson's (1990) classic discourse analysis of rural development in Lesotho notes the fundamental characteristics of the development problematic. He shows how the World Bank represented the history of the Basotho as poor livestock ranchers and denied the significance of their migrant labour linkages to South Africa as a crucial livelihood component and source for cattle ownership and accumulation. This representation dismissed the political-economic nature and structural causes of poverty, current livelihood and cattle accumulation activities and the knowledge of the Basotho, in favour of high-tech agricultural production pathways (models and practices). The effect of this is that 'society is rendered technical' and only simple problems with expertly developed technical solutions become the order of the day (Li 2007; Mitchell 2002, 1998). In Lesotho the failure of projects was translated by implementers as the failure of the Basotho to grasp the intricacies of modern market-oriented cattle farming; the failure was thus framed in culturalist terms. Following Foucault's work on 'governmentality', Ferguson stresses that despite appearing to be apolitical, development is rife with politics in its nature and repercussions; and exactly because of attempting to be apolitical, much of its conceptualisation, implementation and outcome is in fact unintended. In his study of the World Bank project in Lesotho, Ferguson focuses more on the instrumental effects of the project (its intended and unintended consequences) rather than whether and how it failed or succeeded. By drawing on Foucault (see also Escobar 1991, 1992, 1995), the study marked a shift from realism to a post-structural or interpretivist approach. This meant a turn away from the focus on development economics and the expansive assortment of development institutions it reproduced, to the seeming hegemonic effects of development. Ferguson's analysis remains a landmark, turning towards the political effects of development. In contemporary South African rural development, with its blend of redistributive welfarist and economic functions, there is a significant need to appreciate this discursive focus, even if we note that it cannot remain an exclusive approach and that other factors are also important.

Drawing on Foucault, Escobar (1995, 2012) charts the ascendance of development discourse and associated activities as the means of Northern capitalist countries to ensure dominion over their primarily former colonial countries of the South. In so doing, the global North undermined indigenous ways of being. He considered development a form of cultural imperialism. For Escobar development was equally a challenge when it succeeded and when it failed because it set the conditions (Northern norms) under which the poor and poor countries could live.⁵ Escobar argues that the development era was set by the foreign policy discourse of US President Truman. This put in motion a development apparatus that strengthened American supremacy. Of course, Truman's policy must be understood in the context of the escalating Cold War and the desire for both East and West to stake their claim on the

⁵ See Bierschenk's (2014) discussion on norm entrepreneurs (referred to above) which suggests that the process of transferring external norms continues.

emerging postcolonial states (see Rostow 1960). Escobar's arguments must also be understood in the light of Colombia's experiences with the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as the Cold War escalated in Central and Latin America. Escobar believed in the need for 'alternatives to development' or post-development. He wanted more appropriate 'endogenous discourses' to guide local development as opposed to a global model set by the industrialised world. His work was quickly adopted by other scholars, such as Sachs (1992), Rahnema and Bawtree (1997), and Esteva and Prakash (1997).

Unfortunately, many post-development analyses fail to acknowledge the diversity and dynamism of development theorising and practice, and thus perpetuate a stereotypical image of the definition and implementation of development. Rigg (2003) notes the tendency of such theorists to talk about development as an exclusively Eurocentric modernisation idea that is rejected outright by locals. Yet this view of development would be a gross over-generalisation. As Olivier de Sardan (2005) and others have pointed out, many post-colonial countries aspire to ideas of modernisation and attempt to show their modernism and capture, albeit selectively, the 'benefits' of development. Willis (2009) in particular criticises Escobar's study because it is based primarily on ambitious development policies on food economisation in Columbia during the 1950s and 1960s but is presented in the 1990s without noting or accounting for the effects of 30 years of change in policy and implementation. As Pieterse (2009: 343) points out, the upside is that discourse analysis 'makes engaging contributions to collective conversation and reflexivity about development and as such contributes to philosophies of change, but its contribution to politics of change is meagre'.

One of the biggest challenges to post-development that Escobar (2012) and others fail to acknowledge is how people are increasingly drawn to development in its many forms, particularly in Africa (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Olivier de Sardan 2005). Appadurai (2004: 59) argues that anthropologists would benefit by focusing more on local imaginations and ideas concerning the future, as these shape cultural behaviour and subsequent public action:

In culture ... ideas of the future, as much as those about the past, are embedded and nurtured. Thus, in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor, the future-oriented locale of development could find a natural ally, and the poor could find the resources to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty.

So, while there was resistance in the 1970s and 1980s, there has been an increasing attraction to and reappropriation of development resources by local actors and agencies, as attempts are made by different actors to alleviate the conditions of the poor. This is despite the limitations of successful planned social change.

Olivier de Sardan (2005: 5) cautions against the *ideological* deconstructivism of Escobar and others because they privilege the local, while disparaging scientific and world-ordering knowledge, and thus portray a 'diabolic image of the development world [that] pays little attention to incoherences, uncertainties and contradictions'. Other scholars claim that the deconstructivist position 'describes every diversion or side-tracking of development as a popular resistance arising from the presumed

autonomy' of those in subordinate positions (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 4). Such a position ignores the complicity and collaboration of minor actors and institutions in development, in which some local actors appreciate and bend the rules, rhetoric and rewards of development interventions (see Certeau 1984), while powerful state actors strengthen their local autonomy and authority by paying homage and patronage to neoliberal donor regimes (Rossi 2006). Power asymmetries exist and actors mediate their positions within these as well as they can.

Discourse deconstruction effectively diminishes the agency of the different development actors and fails to recognise that the effects of development, contingent and otherwise, are not necessarily the result of overt political strategies devised by powerful development agencies (Ferguson 1990: 18). It does not explore the link between the rhetoric and 'mobilising simplifications of policy and politics', on the one hand, and the world as understood and lived by development actors on the other, reverting us back to the 'anonymous automaticity of the machine' (Mosse 2004: 644). Thus, development discourses continue to create simple, universal and manageable social worlds (Pottier 1993a; Mosse 1998a) and in so doing

divert attention from the complexity of policy as institutional practice, from the social life of projects, organisations and professionals, from the perspectives of actors themselves and from the diversity of interests behind policy models (Mosse 2005a: 6).

Nevertheless, not all discourse deconstruction of the project that is development should be avoided. Gardner and Lewis (2000: 15) contend that it should be included in ethnographic studies:

The task of deconstructing particular aspects of development discourse can have a directly practical and political outcome, for to reveal what at first sight appears to be objective reality as a construct, the product of particular historical and political contexts, helps problematise dominant paradigms and open the way for alternative discourses.

Using discourse deconstruction as a methodological approach provides the means to analyse the encounter of ideas and relationships in development spaces (Apthorpe and Gasper 1996; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Mosse 2005a; Olivier de Sardan 2005). Critical discourse analysis encouraged the movement towards understanding the 'what' and 'workings' of development (Mosse, Farrington and Rew 1998). As Alvesson (1993: 33) notes, the engagements of anthropologists involved in development during the 1960s and 1970s and the closer they were to the authorised concerns of project managers and programme directors, the less the interpretative power of their analyses. This brought about problems in answering the analytical question of, 'what is this thing (project, programme, network) and how does it work?', while attempting to provide a practical answer to the instrumental question 'how can we make this work better?' (Mosse 1998a: 23, italics in original). The latter was a constant question for me during my first two years in Waldesruhe, while later the former questions of 'what it is and how does it work' became predominant. Only by understanding the 'what and how of development' is it possible to consider improvements.

Alvesson's studies of the functioning of organisations, including development institutions, in the 1990s (Gellner and Hirsch 2001; Mosse 2001b; Wright 1994) established

that development projects are not bounded entities or static, equilibrium systems formed around uniform consensual goals and ideas, but rather [political] processes of organising and making meaning (Mosse 1998a: 21).

Within these organisations it is clear that much mediation, including translation, takes place (Gellner and Hirsch 2001; Mosse 2011). The broader effect of this renewed focus was an emphasis on the internal workings of development organisations and their personnel (Lewis and Mosse 2006; Mosse 2011) and, subsequently, the extent of their influence over the implementation and outcomes of development. This focus became coupled with actor-oriented approaches (Lewis and Mosse 2006).

Almost parallel with critical discourse analysis of the 1980s was the actor approach of Long and others at Wageningen University (Arce and Long 2000; Hebinck and Verschoor 2001; Long 2000; Long and Long 1992; Long and van der Ploeg 1989). This approach aimed to understand the social interactions (encounters at the development interface) between recipients and development agencies. Long (2001: 14–15) describes this approach as

an ethnographic understanding of the social life of development projects — from conception to realisation — as well as the responses and lived experiences of the variously located and affected actors.

This statement emphasises that development interventions are social, not purely technical, and the associated social constructions must be comprehended from conceptualisation to closure. Since the complete project is socially induced through the behaviour of actors, good or bad conceptualisation (by one or more sets of actors) alone will not conclude success or failure (Latour 1996) but in my experience may influence outcomes to some extent (Hart, Booyens and Sinyolo 2019). It is thus necessary to follow the entire pathway to completion or termination, as the case may be. Long (2001) emphasises that it is vital to grasp the formal and informal actions, roles and experiences of actors at all levels involved during the entire project (e.g. planners, officials, researchers, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries). This necessitates studying 'upwards', scrutinising those who have the authority to omit themselves (Cooper and Packard 1997; Mosse 2011), as well as studying 'downwards'. This was the position I found myself in during this study and one of the strong motivations for initially adopting an actor-oriented approach.

The actor-oriented approach illustrates the manner in which ideas and understanding about development are mediated and produced in practice and how the processes of development and the encounters involved have contradictory importance for the multiple actors. James's work (2001, 2007, 2011) in South Africa shows that locals and development agents are political actors, habitually chasing different agendas, whilst mediating seemingly similar development encounters in specific contexts. All wanted land reform, but different groups wanted this done differently — some for residence, some for economic means and some for both. She introduced the importance of brokers and mediators and their activism in South African land reform (2007, 2011). The practical focus on actors in empirical studies improves our comprehension of the functioning of government officialdoms and development agencies,

and in particular why differences exist between their formal goals and objectives and the outcomes that ultimately emerge. These differences are largely a result of the strategies, tactics and practices of actors situated across the hierarchy of development agencies and the associated improbability of transmitting the original instrumental prescriptions of policy and project design into the reality on the ground (Lewis 1998; Lewis, Bebbington, Batterbury et al. 2003) through heterogeneous individuals over increasingly extended spaces, where they encounter diverse local actors with diverse opinions about what the outcomes are and how they should be achieved. The connection between policy and its practice is never the careful execution of pre-planned actions, all with anticipated (or at least pre-specified) outcomes, but instead is a messy melee in which there is little control over processes and implementation and where the ensuing results are uncertain. For the proponents of actor-oriented approaches, the concept of development intervention requires deconstruction, in order to appreciate it as 'an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process' (Long and Long 1992: 35). Thus, Long and his colleagues do not do away with discourse deconstruction but use it in combination with the actor-oriented approach to deepen their understanding of how projects work and why outcomes differ. They thus raise awareness of actors who are specifically involved in mediation at the confluences of dissimilar social or world views, epistemologies and power (Long and Long 1992). Such actors are integral to development and abound across the development chain, bringing their cultural expectations and translations into play (Rottenburg 2009). These mediators are crucial to mediating roles, relationships and representations in development, for they, like other social actors, manage both strong and weak links, as they 'steer or muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning "bad" into "less bad" circumstances' (Long 2001: 14). As Rottenburg (2009) demonstrates, this is not always successful and circumstances may become worse.

Despite highlighting the extensive routes of policy prescriptions, the heterogeneity of actors and mediators involved and the differences in outcomes, the actor approach has not been without criticism. Olivier de Sardan (2005: 12) suggests that the 'field-based method of rich' descriptions and 'case-focused dynamic analysis' has gradually become repetitive and narrow in scope because its key concepts remain unchanged since the mid-1980s and there is the appearance that fieldwork is used to give credence and support to these concepts.

The much invoked and over-used key concept of 'development interface' tends to compartmentalise identities and is an insufficient metaphor for the multiple and diverse types of strategic adjustments, exchanges and reinterpretations which are included in interventions (Heaton Shrestha 2006; Rossi 2006). Rather than viewing interfaces as the straightforward clash of opposing logics that operate at different scales, Rossi illustrates that the relationship is one in which actors have at their disposal a sequence of circumstantially determined shifting positions. She demonstrates in her study in Niger that it is through minor acts of translation, instead of clear opposition to governing orders, that locals transform the neoliberal system of governance to their ends. In Nepal, Heaton Shrestha (2006) illuminates that identities are not simply obstacles that need to be bridged but are often more effective when maintained and reproduced as modernities. Development discourse and organisations create an environment for identity formation in which Nepali project workers are able to create professional identities that enable them to overcome differences in history, gender relationships,

ethnicity and class, which contrast with those of local villagers. On the one hand dissimilarity must be overcome and, on the other, it must be emphasised and strengthened to ensure that transcendence is possible.

The sustained use of 'negotiation' by Long and others as a key concept inadequately describes the host of diverse events which are found in development spaces and which may change over time. It fails to highlight many of these changes. In a nutshell, mediation captures the diverse events. Diverse and often obscure events that exist in development spaces may stretch from the conscious adoption of strategic positions and perspectives to unconscious and perhaps biased inclinations, all of which effect the acquiescence or conciliation that tend to reinforce or remove social and organisational borders (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 10) and thus ultimately effect outcomes. These boundaries include those that exist between government officials and the governed, donors and recipients, extensionists and farmers, managers and field staff, project planners and implementers, or natural and social scientists. Desai (2006), Rossi (2006) and Heaton Shrestha (2006) provide well described cases in which identities are determined and reinforced by conscious and unconscious decisions and representations, similar to Bourdieu's (1984) idea of the effect of habitus.

Gledhill (1994) criticises actor-oriented approaches for underplaying and even ignoring broader issues of structure and power. The concern here is that if actor approaches centralise actor strategies in their analyses, they may well ignore wider causal factors. However, Long and his colleagues initially wanted to overcome the limitations of the overbearing claims to structural dependency, but not at the cost of downplaying the structural effects of the wider political economy. This position is made clear in Long's early work (1977). Later, Long (2001: 13) argues that the intention was never 'to separate actor and structure' but instead to explain the different development responses and outcomes observed in the 1970s and 1980s despite often similar prevailing structural conditions. Actors, historical political economy and structure are intertwined, making actors' agency crucial (van der Ploeg and Long 1994). Olivier de Sardan (2005: 11) acknowledges that actor approaches do not infer simple reductionist expectations but actually encourage attention to issues of context and structure, highlighting both combined and individual consequences, thereby making arguments to the contrary inadequate if not obsolete. Given their long role in anthropology's engagement with development, actor-oriented approaches offer a valuable point of entry to exploring the ideas of brokerage, mediation, networks, assemblage and translation (Mosse and Lewis 2006), especially when combined with Latour's ANT, which helps me to understand the prominence of networks, mediations required to establish networks and to hold them together, if only for a limited period or specific purpose, such as acquiring land and other project resources as was the case in Waldesruhe. Actors are so central to development, as it is about and involves actors and actants, that they cannot be ignored.

Latour (1996, 1999) argues that the success of policies, subsequent models, projects and programme plans cannot be assumed. Actors are necessarily part of networks that are by nature overlapping and diffuse. He highlights the fact that all actors are equally capable of producing interpretations and that more powerful actors are capable of producing powerful and performative interpretations with scripts into which others are recruited for various lengths of time: 'They prove

themselves by transforming the world in conformity with their perspective on the world' (Latour 1996: 194–195). Mosse and Lewis (2006: 14) apply Latour's argument to development and its projects. No actor or agency, irrespective of size and influence, has hegemonic control over development implementation and its outcomes. Authority is constrained because the constituents of the development project chain — policymakers, officials, managers, planners, field staff, technicians, consultants, experts, and residents — are normally thinly connected and power and agency is dissipated throughout the development chain. Given the distances involved and their positionalities in the system, actors function with enormous independence from one another, and their interactions include mediation of diverse interests (Mosse 2005a: 10). Thus, the authority of policymakers, project planners and managers is assuaged by the degree to which their views and directives are translated by other actors in the development milieu to meet their own aspirations, intents and purposes. Thus, we are encouraged to go past 'development as concealed power' so we can 'throw light on the complexity of practice' (Kothari and Minogue 2002: 13).

Invoking a metaphor of translation, a key component of Latour's work (see also Mosse and Lewis 2006; Rottenburg 2009), we can examine how apparently cohesive ideas about development are created and seemingly protected, despite the fact that there is a disconnection between the policy ideas and practice. Mosse and Lewis (2006) suggest that translations and representations of success deny the need to investigate the complexity of development, drawing us back to the 'black box' we strive to penetrate to illustrate its social complexity. They argue that, as the visions of development have become more grandiose since the 1950s, there is in fact less clarity and transparency about how the development configuration, comprising of complex actors and institutions, actually works in practice. However, theories of actors, brokers (powerful actors) and mediators (less powerful actors) and notions of mediation (enrolment and translation) add another feature to understanding the development problematic. The combination of these theoretical tenets helps us to understand what transpired as development in Waldesruhe and how this influences ideas about project failure and success, without ignoring the effects of history or contemporary political economy and structure.

My concern as an anthropologist of development focuses on actors' agency, particularly those who engage in mediation (Maurer, Nelms and Rea 2013, cited in Lindquist 2015): how they shape the landscapes they occupy (van Leynseele 2018: 885), the intentions, implementation and outcomes of development interventions through their purposeful efforts of 'generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations' (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 13). Over some decades populist and other concepts — full of political meaning and emphasising the broad questioning of earlier development paradigms, and offering alternatives to the existing development paradigm, such as 'sustainable development', 'grassroots', 'poverty reduction', 'empowerment', 'participation', 'poverty reduction', 'good governance' 'sustainable livelihoods' and 'partnerships' — were quickly subsumed by mainstream bilateral agencies and national governments and reframed into motivating metaphors to elicit support for their development agendas (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Cornwall and Eade 2010). These agendas were now scaling out from projects to programmes despite limited successes of the former. These motivating metaphors have become increasingly successful in attracting support because they engage in reality construction for institutions (see Rottenburg's 2009,

2014 idea of a meta-code), appear to combine an unquestionable moral authority with a down-to-earth reasonableness that is seemingly hard to reject and enables actors to appear to be on the same page even when their ideas differ and they may well be in opposition (Behrends, Park and Rottenburg 2014; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Cornwall and Eade 2010; Pottier 1993b; Scoones 2009). These concepts have become part of rural development terminology and rhetoric and have suffered from this process of translation, which is nothing less than the 'mutual enrolment and the interlocking of interests' that create the realities of project interventions, as opposed to their being produced by careful plans (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 13). The concept of mediation, including transforming, translating, distorting and modifying meanings of ideas and processes, enables the study of the creation and conservation of seemingly cohesive fields of development, while, in contrast, the actor-oriented approach typically emphasised the 'brokering of an almost endless multiplicity of actor perspectives, strategies and arenas' (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 14). The idea of unified fields of development is vital for this study which examines the nexus of different actors from different institutions at one particular field site and how it is shaped by their encounters and the interconnections that take place along the chain; the point of departure being the national rural development policy and the unification of the fields it involves, such as poverty alleviation, participation, farmers and agriculture, need for technology, and social and economic upliftment. These are fields in Bourdieu's (1984) sense and require understanding their associated rules by influential mediators.

Viewing development as a dynamic combination of global, national, local and cross-cultural socio-political exchanges, as opposed to simplistic bounded activities, has been a major step forward in anthropological theory about development, as has the shift away from the overbearing influences of technical and economic actions to discourse and social processes. Such insights about the contemporary form of development mean that it is now unrealistic to detach interactions within development spaces from those interconnected with 'state apparatus, civil society, or wider national or international, political, economic and administrative practices' (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 1). Focusing upon and understanding interconnectedness throughout the development chain is crucial to comprehending development as a complex social process and thus the events and outcomes shaped and produced by actors.

At the time of data analysis, interpretation and writing this thesis, several international studies emerged that focused on ideas about what is termed neo-institutionalism (with its roots in the work of Max Weber) and involved a shift away from the demand placed on good governance by international aid agencies in the 1990s and first decade of this century (Bekker and Bromberger 2016). For example, a study by Booth and Cammack (2013) focuses on multi-level collective action to address the provision of basic services, as opposed to the democratic idea of top-down and bottom-up arrangements. Levy (2014) emphasises the requirement for aid agencies to integrate inclusive economic growth into governance institutions. Levy argues that over time, this integration will result in sustainable democracy, similar to strong democracies in the global North. A third study, by North, Wallace and Weingast (2013), proposes a framework, using the nation state as the unit of analysis, in which institutions are key drivers of change but may function differently based on different circumstances. Patron-client relationships and notions of rent seeking, and acceptance of this by aid agencies become the order of the day. For Bekker

and Bromberger (2016), this framework and the emphasis of working within existing governance institutions, despite their evident challenges, provides an appropriate point of departure for improved long-term and positive development outcomes. The World Bank (2017) is also adopting a focus on integration with local institutions and working with rather than against power asymmetries. While cognisant of these emerging global development debates and providing an ethnographic and reflective interpretation of the institutional/organisational dynamics in my case study, I consciously focused on those typically ignored and who find themselves at the bottom of the development chain, and I unpack their encounters, starting from the local level.

Hebinck (2013a) illustrates that the contemporary South African rural development landscape is extremely dynamic and consists of social, economic and political practices, processes and imbalanced relationships that are seldom acknowledged by many actors. There is also an ignorance of the agency of development actors, ranging from officials and service providers to the beneficiaries themselves (De Wet 1997; James 2007; Murray 1996). The implication of this situation is that policymakers, planners, implementers and their experts are unable to constructively engage with the historical and daily realities of those they propose to assist. Hebinck argues that rural development in South Africa is far from the neat and straightforward process (implementation of a time-bound project or package of services) conveyed by policymakers, planners, implementers and experts as professed by the state, the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and its post-2009 replacement, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). Thus, the political acts inherent in development indicate that it is unlikely to unfold neatly, linearly and according to scripted plans. Waldesruhe provides a good illustration of this unlikeliness due to political acts of mediation.

James's (2000a, 2007, 2011) work in Mpumalanga province illustrates how political acts are not only confined to the actions of the developers and officials but also extend to the beneficiaries, and that all categories of actors engage in acts of mediation that give rise to brokerage. Some years earlier, Murray (1997: 187) noted that participation in the land redistribution process was controlled by 'many institutional intermediaries' resulting in numerous contradictions, including

the massive financial costs ... of bringing projects to fruition in the short term, without resolution of the need for long-term support; the divergence between nominal and actual beneficiaries; political and institutional conflicts, both inside and outside the state; and routine incompatibility between the diverse aspirations of beneficiaries and the 'business plans' required by bureaucrats and suppliers of credit.

According to Murray, much of the evident contradictions are at least partly due to the influential activities of intermediaries, who would best be categorised as mediators in the sense used by Latour (2005) because they are not simply messengers. As I will show in future chapters, Murray's ideas are equally applicable to the unfolding of development in Waldesruhe. Also highlighting the many mediators, van Leynseele and Hebinck (2009: 181) indicate that land reform processes in South Africa '... are located in multiple, semi-autonomous institutional environments, where the interfaces between social actors lead to the production of various modernities that bring together fragmented notions of "custom",

“tradition” and “progress”. These mediations and translations effectively make our understanding of the development process and its outcomes more complicated, as they imply a lack of change over time and subsequently what custom, tradition and progress mean to different development actors. Further mediations are required to make sense of these complications.

Most policymakers, officials and rural development scholars in South Africa are interested in improvement of development operationalisation and outcomes. However, there will never be improvement if there is not deeper understanding of what happens within the development process and how it is transformed, specifically where, why, when and how it happens (by whom). In other words, we must understand the continually shifting dynamics involved in development, their creation, creators and effects. To go beyond Olivier de Sardan’s (2005) distinction between brokers and brokerage we must focus on all creators, their creations and the outcomes of these and how these are mediated. Ultimately, following Mosse (2005a), and because of the mediation that transpired in Waldesruhe, I am interested in understanding not if projects fail or succeed but, more importantly, how failure and success is created and why this is the case. My experience is that it has less to do with neat development discourses, project plans, development packages and technology alone and more with actors, their behaviours and other factors (finances, human resources, desires, motivations and obligations to organisations and other parties) that mediate these in specific settings and produce the multiple realities we observe. Actors translate discourses and create plans to represent the discourses in order to obtain the resources that are made available through development packages or projects. Such mediation occurs within recipient and development agency institutions. Sometimes, these manifest in conflict and diversity, destabilising project activities and also the different networks. The overall effects of these diverse social encounters lead to multiple translations of success and failure by actors in the same organisation or field site. Many of these influential actors are construed analytically as brokers or, as I prefer to distinguish them, ‘mediators with influence’ in their multiple networks. Because brokers and brokerage are a conceptual starting point, the next section discusses the history of the analytical concept of brokers in political and development anthropology and its usefulness and limitations for this study.

The waxing and waning of brokers in anthropology: the rise of the development entrepreneur

Brokers and their activities have had a long history within anthropology, initially in the realm of political anthropology and now in the study of development and globalisation (Bierschenk 2014). This has resulted in a renewed focus on brokerage and brokers, their roles, agency and effects on development, where they can perform as assemblers of people and resources (Koster and van Leynseele 2018) and generally as entrepreneurs as they seize the opportunities that development makes available. As van Leynseele (2018: 870) points out, the renewed focus on brokerage in development affirms the significance of realising that spaces of mediation are ‘entry points for unravelling more complex wholes by ethnographically exploring the practices that constitute connections.’ While my interest is in the agency of mediators in development and how they both shape the development context and influence the translation of outcomes, it is useful to trace how the analytical concept has changed over time and

become more nuanced and embedded within development and globalisation, thus development on the grand scale.

In the late colonial period village headmen and other traditional leaders were placed rather unwillingly at the juncture between the people they ruled through traditional governance systems and the colonial government (Gluckman, Mitchell and Barnes 1949; Fallers 1955) — caught in a predicament between different value systems (modern versus traditional) with little room to manoeuvre. Their positions can be described as those of brokers. Kuper (1970) and Mair (1968) critiqued the view that these leaders had little agency, arguing that this was a neo-functionalist understanding. Mair (1936) pointed out that being a headman was not an isolated position but had to be understood in the wider context of all institutions that define a traditional leader's sphere of influence. Thus, colonial powers relied on chiefs who in turn used their traditional influence to mediate their situation and position in the colonial order. Further, there were situations where colonial administrators and officials had to defend the institution of chieftdom for their own as well as the chiefs' benefit. Mair thus shifted the focus from structure to actor, an approach further pursued in work on patron-client relationships in the anthropology of the 1960s.

Initial patron-client studies by Wolf (1956, 1966) in Mexico and Geertz (1960) in Java advanced the concept of the cultural broker to explain transitioning political influence and the need to broker relationships between village groups and the city or nation governance groups. Cultural brokers were generally village insiders who were multilingual and comfortable in operating across these two social worlds (Jacobs 2014). Wolf describes them as Janus-like figures — facing in two directions simultaneously, thereby able to 'stand guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole' (Wolf 1956: 1075–1076). Geertz focused on the *kijaji* (Javanese Muslim leader) whose respect and authority was derived from his connections and relations with Mecca, the centre of the Islamic world. Initially a teacher and scholar, he became 'drawn into new forms of translocal relations' with the ascent of the Indonesian state, which made him an amateur politician (Geertz 1960: 247). Geertz's interest in this ethnographic exemplar was to consider the space between anthropology's primary village-based studies and political science's concentration on higher-level elites (Lindquist 2015). My interest is slightly different as I am interested in how these influential brokers, and less influential actors, mediate and jointly affect development through their agency and thereby shape its process and outcomes.

In Italy, Silverman (1965: 173) pointed out that brokers had historically performed functions crucial 'to the basic structures of either or both systems [villages and cities]', while ensuring their own exclusivity and autonomy in this role, thereby stabilising their monopoly by being the links between these two systems. After 1945 the new state took over many of these functions and along with the increase in literacy and education, brokers' roles diminished and were in fact taken over by patrons who had usually dominated the economic terrain. The hypothesis, in accordance with modernisation theory, was that brokers

emerged in an early stage of the development of the nation-state, only to later become unnecessary with the process of integration of local and national levels of society (Lindquist 2015: 4).

While this is rather evolutionary in approach, even in development anthropology ideas have emerged that the brokers fulfil the role of a weak state (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002). However, it is more realistic to see brokers emerging when there is rapid transition, change and the need to ensure some form of stability and coherence (James 2007, 2011, 2018). It is not so much about weak states but about uncertainty and rapid change, as Bailey's and Paine's work suggests.

Bailey (1963, 1969) and Paine (1971), as well as Boissevain (1965, 1969, 1974), were transactionalists interested in the strategies of people in environments of social limitation. Bailey and Paine attempted to move the focus on brokerage beyond Silverman's inequality, and focused on the nature of the transaction. Bailey's (1969: 167) work in India revealed brokers as spanning communication gaps in a 'situation of encapsulation'. For him they appeared when the state was strong, as opposed to when the state was weak. Paine's work in the Arctic focused on brokerage roles and claimed they were situational. He argued that brokerage is understood as the control of the diffusion of values. This idea sounds strikingly similar to Bierschenk's (2014) ideas about norm entrepreneurs. Boissevain (1974: 148), in the Mediterranean, recognised the broker as 'a professional manipulator of people and information who brings about communication for a profit'. He emphasised that their centrality in networks, availability to nurture social relationships, and access to and jurisdiction over first order resources were crucial in becoming effective brokers (154). Moreover, he suggests that the broker started off as a patron, or at least brokerage was one of the roles of the patron (Boissevain 1965). This differs somewhat from Silverman for whom political fracture and change resulted in the broker's emergence at a time of weakness only to be replaced by the economic-oriented patron when stability resumed. The broker's control of communication channels was his asset and ensured his autonomy and his demand. His standing was what others believed his assets and influence to be (Boissevain 1974: 159). Boissevain claimed that 'brokerage is business', an entrepreneurial position that has been adopted about brokers in development. As Lindquist points out, the transactionalists' concern with formal relationships blended the political and economic into everyday settings, acknowledging the entrepreneurial nature of politics as opposed to its assumed stability. If mediation in the form of manipulation rather than as conflict resolution was the brokers' role, as Boissevain states, they were frequently detested and distrusted. The notion of brokers' political power became crucial as anthropology focused more on interpersonal relations in complex societies extending across broader sociocultural boundaries.

By the 1980s, the debates on power between the transactionalists and Marxists brought about a shift in attention on the broker as a crucial interlocutor (James 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015). Cohen and Comaroff (1976) acknowledged it was necessary to differentiate between the broker and the patron but argued that the broker's role represented one of power, as he makes himself indispensable (see also Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002) through 'the capacity to construct and purvey meanings concerning a variety of relationships and interactions'

(Cohen and Comaroff 1976: 89). They emphasised that political relations were the mediation of 'boundaries of meaning rather than transactions within coherent systems of meaning ... and a more sophisticated understanding of power' (Lindquist 2015: 6). These ideas extend to current thoughts about development and globalisation (Bierschenk 2014). During this decade, Kettering (1986: 4) identified characteristics of a system she called clientelism and emphasised that

brokerage is a role that can be played by someone who is a patron, a broker, and a client: he can play two roles at the same time as patron-broker or broker-client, or one role at a time. The duality of their role as patron-brokers or broker-clients, however, sets brokers apart from ordinary patrons and clients, who have direct, personal relationships and operate within one milieu: they do not cut across physical, social, or political distances.

This functioning in one milieu distinguishes the ordinary patrons from the brokers in this study as brokers cut across multiple physical and social environments. Reflexive debates within anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986) also removed attention away from the broker. By the 1990s post-structuralism placed the emphasis on how power effectively ordered and fashioned individual biases. Consequently, questions and ideas about agency became side-lined.

While these shifts were taking place, two interesting texts about brokerage in development settings emerged. The Dominican Republic study by Gonzalez (1972) moves the positionality of brokers from the political arena adopted by the transactionalists closer to that of development. She describes a class of brokers who are directly involved in development aid and who adopt the language of development. These entrepreneurs are well-educated, well-connected and able to converse with World Bank and USAID officials as they directed development aid towards Santiago de los Caballeros - the second largest Dominican city. While they behaved and acted like Americans, they were equally capable of conveying third-world, anti-American and anti-imperialist sentiments. Gonzalez describes the relationship as being so complex that it became problematic to discern the patron from the client. The Americans wanted to give aid and the Dominicans wanted aid, while the brokers facilitated both by using their networks for their own purposes. All these actors wanted the relationship, making it difficult to determine who was dependent upon whom, obscuring the exact meaning of patron and client in the situation. Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (2002: 18) note a similar situation in many villages in Senegal and Burkina Faso whereby donors have to be registered on a waiting list.

Lentz (1988) reinforces this idea of positionality in development activities in her research in Central America. Her study highlights the ability of migrant Amerindian villagers to mediate and transform an externally driven development project so that it met their requirements. On the one hand, migrants' mastery of 'development speak' or the rules of the field was crucial to the Adenauer Foundation establishing a community centre. On the other, migrants used this mastery to prevent the implementation of a cattle project, closer to the interests of the non-migrant villagers. Migrants were able to skilfully manipulate local institutions to achieve this process, reinforcing Boissevain's earlier idea about brokers as manipulators. Crucial to Gonzalez's and Lentz's studies is the evidence that brokers are not necessarily individuals operating alone but are part of networks, need to know the development

language (lexicon) and can be found within and outside of the developmentalist configuration. They also confirm some earlier understandings about brokers: their moral ambiguity as human actors who are able to move across social boundaries but whose loyalties and motivations are increasingly called into question. These understandings have extended to the reinvigorated ideas about brokers in development in the global South (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; James 2007, 2011) and new ones have been gradually added over the previous two decades (Neubert 1996; Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; James 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015; Mosse and Lewis 2006)

Those anthropologists who have contributed to the renewed debate, and draw on Latour's ANT work, attribute the following activities and criteria to brokers (see Bierschenk 2014; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015; Mosse and Lewis 2006):

- (1) they form or are central to networks that may or may not extend along the development chain from the local to the global, but they are present and active at the fissures of development activities along this chain;
- (2) they arise in situations of inequality and rapid change and attempt to bridge the resultant fissures through acts that are more often construed as mediation rather than negotiation;
- (3) their bridging of different social worlds brings together (presumed) different logics and realities (e.g. the official and the peasant, the extension officer and the farmer) to make representations and meaning about the world, but these relationships are tenuous, unofficial and temporary;
- (4) they are assemblers of second order resources (people and things, actors and actants) that are not their own;
- (5) they often engage in acts of representation and the translation of ideas and facts, in order to assemble and gather support;
- (6) they link development agencies with beneficiaries or vice versa;
- (7) they can include members of (potential) beneficiary groups, village or settlement leadership, development agencies (ranging from funding to implementing agencies) or they might be individuals outside of these groups but who bring them together;
- (8) they can be individuals or institutions (such as interest groups, associations or NGOs), yet they still retain some degree of autonomy, even when they are extensions or representatives of a group or organisation;
- (9) irrespective of their positionality, they perform as brokers for some type of immediate or future tangible or intangible reward which they are willing to share as long as they get what they want out of the relationship;
- (10) their capital and thus value lies in how others perceive them, their networks and their ability to provide stability in continually and rapidly changing environments; and
- (11) they have at least a fair understanding of the basic language, terminology and communication technologies used in development, which enables them to decode and recode ideas.

The broker almost resembles Sahlins's (1963) notion of the 'big man' in that it is not one of formal authority, and the system in which the broker performs is one of 'open status competition' rather than one that is preordained. However, the big man system is publicly recognised, while that of the broker is not directly acknowledged or at least not labelled as such, with the exception of those studying mediation and brokerage activities. However, brokers' ability to attract resources enables them to attract followers and support much like the Melanesian big man. To a large extent they influence the 'economic' and social transactions involved in development through their mediation. However, the big man did not work across different social worlds.

Recently Koster and van Leynseele (2018: 6) argued that brokers are mediators with agency. They have agency in terms of acquiring or assembling and dispensing resources, and shaping the development environment, and also in respect of portraying success and failure (Mosse and Lewis 2006). A revitalised brokerage lens with its acts of mediation, assemblage and translation seems to provide a useful way through which to understand certain aspects of rural development in South Africa, particularly how it is shaped in ways that are different from the expected outcomes and the manner in which success and failure are translated by different actors. After 25 years, land reform as a driver of rural development in South Africa has become a conundrum, particularly the component concerned with the redistribution of farmland combined with high-tech agricultural practices that is perceived as the main driver of socioeconomic upliftment in rural areas. Since 1994, rural areas and their resident populations have been involved in a period of rapid transition. This transition has been brought about by new rights and freedom of movement but also by a particular form of rural development which combines the egalitarian and redistributive tenets of the 1996 constitution, neoliberal individualism and the power of the market with a highly bureaucratic, interventionist transfer welfare state (Burger 2014; James 2011). These different elements create tensions and gaps that are not filled by the state. Few redistributed farms have managed to replicate the standards of production that existed prior to redistribution and even fewer have managed to exceed previous levels of output. In fact, the majority have been considered dismal failures.

James (2000a, 2001, 2007) equates the many failures with the existing rural development paradigm. She notes that this was the outcome of a negotiated process that enabled the pre-1994 'rural-as-agricultural' model to prevail and to even co-opt supporters from the redistributive camp into the high-tech agricultural developmentalist camp (James 2001). This model and subsequent support could only have been achieved through mediation, translation and representation. This is especially so when one considers that a well respected report at the time presented the many divergent needs of land seekers (Marcus, Eales and Wildschut 1996) which placed the need for agriculture fairly low on the list. Secondly, and often using ideas of selective history, links between the urban and rural economies and social worlds have been ignored in favour of notions of the 'agrarian question' (Bernstein 1996). In this play on Leninism, rural people are defined exclusively by their connection to land as a productive resource for the root of their class identity (James 2000a, 2001). Class diversity is overlooked in rural areas, as are historical and contemporary means of production. Rather than exhibiting class and livelihood diversity, rural areas are assumed to be populated by a single class of primarily agricultural land users or labourers who are distinguished from urban contemporaries by their means of production.

Thirdly, this paradigm involved a process of historical reconstitution, in which the broader historical past was reduced to an ahistorical past, or a compliant historical present, producing not only class distortions but misconceptions about a united communalist struggle against apartheid and ideas of 'betterment', 'villagisation' and 'unit farming'. Every rural dweller was assumed to have experienced the same history and reacted to it in similar ways. Yet, as Hebinck and van Averbek (2013) note, the diverse and heterogeneous experiences and reactions to apartheid-era land reforms in the Eastern Cape refute these claims of a similar past, similar reactions, cohesiveness and unity.

Many previous attempts at understanding land reform and redistribution outcomes of rural development policy have largely ignored the presence of brokers or actors engaged in acts of mediation, including assemblage and translation of development resources, intentions, approaches and outcomes. Exceptions to the mainstream commentary has been Nauta's (2006) work on a land redistribution NGO, James's (2007, 2011) work on restitution and redistribution and van Leynseele's work on restitution (2013, 2018). James (2011: 318) illustrates how brokers emerge in rapidly transitioning development settings as mediators between the intersection of the spheres of the 'state, market, and patrimonial/patriarchal-style political authority', and why understanding their agency is appropriate as South Africa struggles with its contemporary model of rural development. She notes their instrumentality and provides strong evidence of their performative roles in filling the holes left by the departing neoliberal state and shaping the course of development and its outcomes (2011). She recently highlighted brokers' roles in mediating indebtedness in South Africa within the informal microlending sector, illustrating their presence and significance in development and the economy more broadly (2018). Her work and the general revitalised debate and focus on brokers provide a strong foundation for my argument that the implementation of South Africa's rural development policy, an outcome of mediation, assemblage and translation, deserves to be understood in terms of the roles and agency of mediating actors and acts commonly attributed to mediation. These in turn produce the outcomes, the success and failure of which are understood through further mediation.

Drawing heavily on Latour's ANT, Mosse and Lewis (2006) argue it is through translation that actors, as part of different networks, engage in various attempts to retain a semblance of logic and coherence in development settings, which are messy, complex and often incoherent, producing inconsistent outcomes. Translations and ensuing actions can be retranslated. The manner in which this transpires is noteworthy for development agents because it forms the foundation for evaluating policy and project outcomes and their connections. As Fairhead and Leach (1996) argue, when development interests appear to coincide and their support seems secure, the more secure and authoritative the policy models appear. Thus, support is given to policy models not because they are the greatest, not because they achieve what they intend to, but because they can be translated to meet the requirements of numerous and diverse actors. This is the performative field of brokers and mediation. Mosse and Lewis (2006) argue that the translations of unanticipated outcomes legitimise and give credence to policy models. Therefore, drawing on their ideas is extremely valuable and relevant to understanding how development outcomes are understood by development agents in the South African context.

In this dissertation I argue that in the context of the rural development projects in Waldesruhe, the broker is a mediator rather than an intermediary. He or she transforms messages and facts to suit requirements, whether these be personal, those of the community or group or those of the agencies involved. Most studies tend to look at brokers within the community, non-government organisations or within bilateral agencies and at the points of disjuncture. A specific intention of this thesis is to show that not only do brokers exist within the recipient group and the development agency simultaneously and that they are replaced over time and for different reasons at the same field site but, more importantly, that the results of examining the agency of brokers and mediators in both situations in the same project informs us about how they shape development and the makings of success and failure. Yet we must heed the cautions of van Leynseele (2018: 885) who succinctly points out that anthropological studies that focus *only* on the disjunctures between development schemes and their practices (Li 2007) or outcomes (Buscher 2013) actually 'misses the point that forms of brokerage impact and shape the very landscapes to be occupied by these brokers'. With this in mind I focus on the agency of mediators within both the village and the development institutions and how their interactions shape the process, projects and their outcomes, as opposed to simply focusing on one or the other or on the points of disjuncture.

Finally, the recent debate on brokers appears to have excluded the brokerage role of the anthropologist as participant observer and development actor. Rottenburg (2009), like Whisson (1985), sees anthropologists (or at least their anthropologist avatars) in a mediator-type role, looking out for themselves while also trying to mediate what they consider best for the people receiving the development intervention and trying to make sense of it in various locations. Whisson considers anthropologists to be collaborators, partisans, advocates and brokers, seemingly contradictory roles that can be enacted by the same individual at different times and places, as his own experience highlights. He suggests that these roles often overlap and that the anthropologist must be prepared 'to go into the world of politics, power and persuasion' (Whisson 1985: 137). To him, this cannot be avoided when anthropologists perform as consultants or employees of development agencies. Interestingly Whisson does not consider questions of translation and representation, which seem to enter mainstream anthropology in the mid-1990s via the sociology of science. In certain chapters I illustrate how the anthropologist's agency cannot be ignored and how I performed as a mediator in different ways in a specific development field site over a decade. Along with other development actors, anthropologists may invoke translation and thus act as mediators in the attempt to perform their official functions and self-perceived functions to fulfil self-identified obligations — obligations perhaps to members of the community or themselves rather than to their employer organisation.

Motivation for the study

In January 2000 I started working for RI. My first role was to coordinate the planning for a honeybush demonstration project. Over a period of four and a half years it was to be the project in which I had the longest contact with a single village, participants and team of researchers. This was a flagship project of the RI-based smallholder agriculture programme (SAP). After compiling the project plan with my 15 team members (all others being agricultural and natural scientists), my role and that of a colleague was

to introduce this plan to various interested farmers at five field sites along the southern Cape, which runs between the Bot River and Port Elizabeth. These included four former CRRs and one farm. Sites had been preselected in 1999 in consultation with farmers and some trial plantings had been attempted at most sites. After introducing the demonstration plot plan and activities for the next four to five years, my role was to mediate this technology transfer process between the researchers and the farmers. By December 2000, Waldesruhe was the only site that was still showing any interest, despite clear divisions amongst the original project participants.

Waning interest at other sites had to do with a number of factors that emerged during 2000. In some sites there was no interest from leadership factions or no coordination of interest amongst potential participants. At another, the interest was for a different technology, viticulture, which was prominent in the area. The farmer believed that there was no need to experiment or conduct further research on viticulture, as the honeybush project was doing by demonstrating different cultivars at different sites. Furthermore, there were no accurate figures relating to the costs and rate of return on planting different honeybush cultivars. This farmer wanted a tested and tried crop. A third group split up over access to the demonstration plot and the fact that half of those involved had found employment during the course of the year. By January 2001 another site was being managed by an organisation that had been formed out of the original honeybush project team members who had been based at another research institute in the same science council.

Despite my long involvement with Waldesruhe, there were a host of questions around social dynamics that interested me about the continued, albeit haphazard participation of the residents and the willingness of RI to continue working with them. At the time they were the only group of potential participants who were also part of the land redistribution pilot programme. Did this make them feel obliged to stick with the project in some mediated fashion? Participation in the honeybush project and attendance of technology transfer sessions waxed and waned, even amongst those who enrolled and seemingly embraced it. Despite this the RI team continued to push for honeybush cultivation at this site where we had never seen honeybush growing in the wild. There was clear factionalism in the village and amongst the beneficiaries, but this seemed to be mediated by two or three people and their contacts (networks). After the first year I started to identify the farmers in this purportedly agrarian village of Waldesruhe. This led to questions about diversity of livelihoods and what type of support, if any, farmers required. This was followed by questions about the purpose of land redistribution and whether the (DOA-WC) was unable to support them or even fund our work. Did redistribution actually intend to achieve increased commercial agriculture with modern technologies or simply rapid land redistribution? I also began to question my role in the project. I was supposed to mediate the transfer of technology between farmers and researchers, but my inputs had little impact on researchers and the demonstration project process. At times I was expected to resolve conflict or disagreements between researchers and certain local residents. I thus started looking at the Waldesruhe project from an observer perspective, rather than as researcher bent on implementing development, and set about probing these and other questions. I focused on the multiple actors and their agency within the project site and within RI.

My focus on actors made me consider the ideas of powerful and less powerful actors. Certeau (1984) considers less powerful actors first as 'consumers' and later more actively as 'users'. These users purposefully reappropriate existing cultural rules, products and practices in ways that are influenced but never completely regulated by the more powerful state and other actors he calls 'strategists'. This enabled me to identify key figures in RI and in the village, who seemed to be able to muster support from others when the honeybush project seemed to slip a gear or two. They managed to turn seemingly negative situations into positive ones, and keep the various actors motivated and eager to participate in the project at crucial times, notably at points when RI considered withdrawing. While Long's actor-oriented approach became important, so did Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) idea of cultural capital that illustrates that 'social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds' via 'cultural products' of values, language, judgements, educational and knowledge systems, means of classification and the actions of everyday life (Bourdieu 1984: 471). The consequence is a 'sense of one's place' and self-exclusionary behaviour (1984: 141). These are the unconscious acceptance of social difference, hierarchical categories and one's place within the social order they create. The more cultural capital individuals have, the more powerful they are. However, environment and context, what Bourdieu termed fields, can influence this power. Fields can also include networks and one's position in these and the ability to draw on their resources, including social capital, are a base of cultural capital and power. These theorists got me interested in ideas of brokers and mediation, which was to later shape ideas about how brokers and mediators in Waldesruhe and RI impact on the outcomes of the honeybush demonstration plot and the land redistribution project. This was influenced by ideas of Mosse (2005a) and Mosse and Lewis (2006) and the agency that actors have in development projects and translating their outcomes. Furthermore, there is a paucity of ethnographic work about the nexus between land reform and agricultural technology diffusion, notably when this focuses on the actors as well as the institutions they are part of. It is vital to understand how these connections influence mediation and how brokers and mediators shape what transpires at the development site and the final outcomes.

The implementation of land redistribution and the subsequent agricultural technological support in Waldesruhe provides us with an early example of the complexity, diversity, successes and challenges in the diffusion of contemporary science, technology and innovation driven agricultural support amongst land reform beneficiaries. This combination of land and agriculture technology as a driver of rural development remains clearly relevant as the South African state continues to execute land reform and demands increasing adoption of commercially-oriented agricultural technologies as part of the process of acquiring land. In 2016 the DRDLR completed the rollout of its agri-park programme in 44 districts (Heimann 2017). Its creators consider it a district-based 'networked innovation system of agro-production, processing, logistics, marketing, training and extension services' (DRDLR 2017: 2). The programme involves at least nine state departments and their agencies. Yet recent debates have generally focused on the disconnect between policy and failed projects, rather than on gaining a deeper understanding of the actors and their performative roles. The current controversies surrounding farmland expropriation without compensation (EWC) as part of the redistribution programme suggest that deeper understanding remains necessary as this too will become a highly mediated process within

the rural development policy and implementation milieu, especially as EWC is a political act and has nothing to do with improving the pace or viability of redistribution.

The complexity of rolling out these ideas across the extended chains of development, even at the micro level discussed in this study, remain pertinent for future development work in rural and urban areas. The positions, activities, influences of brokers and other actors and the outcomes of these are seldom considered in policy-making and implementing circles. Not much has changed in the complex ways people react to policy interventions and project content, while many of the erroneous assumptions noted above endure (Hebinck and Cousins 2013). This study is thus a contribution to recognising the agency of brokers and mediators across the national and local-level development chains, how they influence and shape the project process, and their role in the creation and understanding of success and failure.

Research questions

In summary, the key problem this thesis engages with is the resilience of development in light of the continually limited successful outcomes, planned, contingent and otherwise. We see an embracing of development with increasing growth in global development interventions rather than reflection and revision by development agencies. Recent theories and analytical approaches in anthropology consider the focus on brokers as useful for deeper understanding. The key points I wish to investigate in this dissertation are as follows:

- 1) The analytical concept of broker (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002), as an entry point for the study of development, enables us to identify key actors along the development chain and networks. These actors are mediators and the more influential ones we may term brokers.
- 2) Brokers' agency as mediators, along with other contextual factors in the overall development configuration, is crucial to understanding the development process, its shape, the outcomes and the subsequent translation of these into success or failure.
- 3) The concept of broker as presented in the literature is too narrow as it excludes actors who do not necessarily meet the attributes of a broker — such as being leading or influential members of networks positioned at key junctures — but still (often quite successfully) mediate events and ideas for their own or other people's or organisations' benefit, thus shaping the development process.
- 4) Brokers are better understood as mediators who affect the exchange between groups rather than intermediaries in Latour's (2005) sense who simply convey messages. Brokers are a specific type of mediator, influential for a certain period of time, in certain positions and places, and with the ability to get others to buy into their ideas, but are not exclusive in this role as other, less influential mediators also affect the process and are relevant development actors.

The main research question of this dissertation is how the agency of brokers and mediators enables us to understand how development unfolds, is shaped and made successful or unsuccessful

by their actions? The dissertation poses five questions to guide the analysis of mediation and its effects on development and its outcomes in Waldesruhe:

- 1) Are former mission stations such as Waldesruhe fertile places of brokerage and mediation?
- 2) How do mediation, translation and representation shape land redistribution?
- 3) What do brokers and mediators achieve in development agencies?
- 4) How did the mediation and translation of honeybush technology unfold in Waldesruhe?
- 5) How does translation determine project failure and success?

Significance of the study

In South Africa, as elsewhere, development models often fail to manifest in the intended outcomes of policy makers, planners and experts. There have been several calls to explore the social context of development projects (see Pottier 1993a) and the behaviour of actors as a means of illustrating why this is the case (Mosse 2005a). The renewed interest in brokers has led to a demand in understanding their origins, agency and how, as social actors, their mediation (and that of others) influences the process, shape and outcomes of development interventions at the level of the project, despite mediation often occurring elsewhere along the development chain.

The relevance of this study is its potential to offer new insights and confirm or disprove some existing ideas about development and brokerage from a micro-level perspective. As a study of two small sequential projects in one village, focusing on the agency of the villagers and officials and that of the organisations involved, it provides insights that are not necessarily evident in bilateral and multinational studies. In this way it contributes new insights to scholarly knowledge and policy. While much of the complexity and social nature of development is not new to anthropologists, it is a component that policy stakeholders (including scholars) often overlook. The thesis thus informs them about the complexity of development, the role of brokers and the significance of mediation in development and at the interstitial spaces of development. Globally, mediation ensures co-option and thereby ultimately resilience of development as we know it i.e. primarily top-down social engineering. I have three primary reasons for carrying out this study. First, it contributes to discussions about rural development in South Africa and illustrates that the technology push approach is limited in its outcomes; instead, it is necessary to acknowledge and pay more attention to the roles, requirements and intentions of actors, especially brokers and others who mediate. Simple cause-and-effect evaluations do not explain purposes of diffusion, adoption, adaption and how and why development is made successful or unsuccessful. Secondly, the data and arguments presented here should provide clarity about brokers and their agency and that of other actors in the development chains. The evidence presented provides insight into the relationship between brokerage, mediation and development. Finally, this research adds to our existing knowledge about development and the place of mediation within the social process of development.

Delimitations

The data collected during this study concentrates on Waldesruhe residents and RI personnel who were directly involved in the honeybush project; draws on those who were directly involved in the land

redistribution process, as residents in the village — including beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries — and as state officials and their agents engaged in the process of land redistribution; and relies on people with historic knowledge about life in Waldesruhe as mission station and as CRR. It is thus a micro-level case study that does not extend far beyond the development chains and their interstices from the village to the government and the village to the SC. While it considers the interconnectedness at the global level, it does not discuss this in great depth as the project funding stopped at national level. The information does not permit extrapolation beyond those interviewed and the archival and other data accessed, but it does enable us to make some generalisations based on the interconnectedness of the agencies involved and the position of the science council as a national agricultural and rural development agency with connections to the government of South Africa and international development agencies.

Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2 describes the methodology applied in the study. It explains the different types of ethnographic techniques used in the fieldwork and specifically in the interactions with informants, and discusses the ethical issues the research raised.

Chapter 3 considers the first research question, namely whether mission stations such as Waldesruhe are fertile places for brokers and mediators in light of their history. It then provides the background to the study by describing the fieldsite: it traces Waldesruhe from being a mission station to being declared a rural reserve, to becoming a land redistribution location. It traces the livelihoods of the residents, the function of agriculture, and the prominence of external livelihoods and patterns of migrancy. It thus describes the context into which the land redistribution and honeybush demonstration projects were placed, thereby allowing insight into the reasons for discord in the village and the emergence of brokers at certain times.

Chapter 4 looks at the second question as to how the SLAG intervention was mediated, shaped, translated and absorbed by 30 households in the village, in conjunction with the officials involved. The process was mediated by one particularly influential resident whom I construe as a broker. Various translations and representations were made in order to secure assistance from the Southern Cape Department of Land Affairs (DLA-SC) who overlooked and accepted major discrepancies so as to increase the pace of land redistribution in the southern Cape. The process was largely centred around brokering a deal through consensus and realising political satisfaction for the DLA-SC. Several additional local actors emerge as skilled mediators, their expertise honed over years of living on the mission station and the CRR, through migrant experiences and through the land redistribution experience. It was thus available when the beneficiaries encountered RI and the honeybush project. The chapter demonstrates how the land distribution process led to new rifts and hierarchies within the community between those who were allocated land and those who were not, and how these influenced the honeybush project.

Chapter 5 turns to the honeybush project specifically to examine how brokers, notably those located within RI, used their mediation skills to attract support and resources, what factors enabled this

and how it was mediated by organisational interests. I examine how the science council considered honeybush to be an important crop for smallholder farmers in the Western Cape and for itself to be seen as a leading actor in the National Agricultural Research System (NARS). Honeybush was presented as a miracle crop which would lead to the enhanced use of redistributed farmland and rural development, and the associated socioeconomic benefits of job creation, reduced inequality and improved local livelihoods. The chapter examines the close encounters of beneficiaries and researchers, especially around agricultural technology support. It analyses in particular how neat plans and frameworks appear to have had no real place in ensuring planned intentions.

Chapter 6 examines mediation and acts of translation in detail to understand how mediators use their positions to present project outcomes as successful or as failed. Actors who inhabited different positions in the projects understood encounters with land redistribution and honeybush technology in very different ways, leading to contested realities. The chapter thus illustrates how positionality and need determine success and failure.

The concluding Chapter 7 offers a short summary of each chapter and then presents a direct answer to the five research questions. While acknowledging the role and existence of brokers, whom I regard as influential mediators, I also challenge the idea that they are the only effective mediators. Less influential actors are able to mediate within the limits of their agency and in so doing shape the character of the project and its outcomes. Consistent mediation across the two projects also impacts on the consequent outcomes and translations. I note how the group and individual agency of mediation helps to explain what manifests as development in Waldesruhe and why. Actors and their mediation along with other factors determine the shape and outcomes of the development projects in Waldesruhe. I examine the ways in which mediation determines and helps us to understand the outcomes from the viewpoints of different actors at different positions. Mediators bring different actors and logics together without making such connections stable or permanent. I note how development projects relate to policy. Policy is not a blueprint for action and therefore should not be gauged as such. It is a means of marshalling support for central ideas and resources to fund projects derived from these ideas. This is good policy. Projects are required to sustain policy not by turning it into reality but by reinforcing the policy representation. Influential actors, which I refer to as brokers, collude through acts of translation to ensure this happens. The chapter concludes with some ideas for further research based on my experiences and findings in the course of this study.

Conclusion

This is a study of the performative nature and effects of brokerage and mediation in rural development in South Africa, with an ethnographic emphasis on the village of Waldesruhe and the internal and external actors involved in two sequentially implemented development projects. While construed as a technical process by experts, development is in fact a highly complex social process in which meanings are made and remade by various actors to acquire support and resources or to make sense of complex and conflicting experiences and events. Globally development is resilient to its weaknesses, growing and continuing to reproduce itself in different and more complex ways. Brokers have a special role and

function in development as they are often central figures in networks and perform in order to obtain development resources for some reward. They are found at the interstices of development chains and bring different actors and logics together without making such connections stable or permanent. To do so would remove their necessity. Mediators are actors who perform similar functions as brokers but who are not necessarily pivotal members of networks. They often follow brokers and mediate in order to make sense of the conflicting positions they find themselves in, either directly caused by brokers, when brokers are not around or in order to convince brokers to support them. Invariably acts of mediation influence how evaluations of success and failure of development project outcomes are made and understood by different actors.

It is not my intention to credit or discredit rural development interventions such as land reform and agricultural technology or the actors involved. Rather I am more interested in revealing the complex social (as opposed to technical) nature of rural development, which is a process of mediation in which the action and agency of actors is crucial, yet generally overlooked. Furthermore, actors are positioned differently at different interstices and places in the development chain. Given its hierarchical nature, this means that despite brokers and mediators having agency, the effectiveness of this agency differs due to fluidity and is dependent on changing informal roles, acts and positionality along the chain. Brokers and mediators are one of many influencing factors playing a role in the outcomes of development projects, but it is a very significant one worthy of our attention, especially as development chains are transnational and continuously criss-cross the globe. Similarly, networks continually reconstitute themselves or are replaced by new ones with new ideas and interests in the process of the social reproduction of development.

Chapter 2

Practising ethnography in Waldesruhe and beyond

[Anthropology is engaged in] the reconception of fieldwork as the observation of current history in the making.

— Moore (1994: 4)

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Okely (1992) considers the anthropologist's previous experiences as important when these directly influence the identification of the study site, the subjects, the fieldwork experience and the subsequent analysis and final writing. This is true in my case, as I was engaged in several development projects in and around Waldesruhe from 2000 to 2006, which form part of the data on which I draw for this thesis.

From 2000 to 2004 I worked for RI, a research institute located at one of South Africa's science councils. Amongst, others, I functioned as an anthropologist on the honeybush demonstration project that had its longest presence in Waldesruhe. Here RI fieldwork included extensive participatory workshops as well as participant observation. When residents lost interest in the honeybush project, this progressed to 'hanging-out' with beneficiaries, their families and other villagers and observing daily life. This enabled quite private and informal conversations, which provided me with information that may not have been forthcoming in the public participatory workshops. In 2005 and 2006 I returned to Waldesruhe to work on research projects for different organisations while employed by a different science council. This work enabled me to continue to observe the agricultural activities of local residents and other actors along with changing land use patterns. In 2006 I found accommodation and began living in Waldesruhe from 2007 as a PhD researcher in order to explore questions about brokerage and mediation, embed myself into the local social setting and to deepen my understanding of the land redistribution and honeybush projects and local impressions of these projects.

For the PhD research in the village, I used ethnographic research practices, relying on participant observation, informal and formal interviews with a range of residents. I compiled several life histories both with land reform beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. I conducted the research in Afrikaans or English, depending on the preference of the research participants and former colleagues I was interviewing. I also conducted archival research at two local museums in the district in which Waldesruhe is situated, and worked through the municipal records, minutes and planning documents on the village and its management structures from 1980 up to the year 2000. I obtained access to project plans and other information about the land redistribution project from the DLA-SC and conducted several interviews with officials. In terms of the honeybush demonstration plot project, I deepened the knowledge of the project I had gained from my work experience with follow-up interviews and assistance from former RI colleagues.

The benefit of drawing on 6 years of work in development projects in the area and 4 years of PhD research enabled me to observe and trace change in the social, cultural, political and economic life of Waldesruhe from the mission period, through the apartheid era as CRR and, from 1994 as a transitional local council (TLC) and from 2000 as a ward within the local municipality .

This chapter allows me to address some of the research challenges I encountered during my research, for example I had two different field sites — the village and the research institute — although the village is the primary site as this is where most of the encounters between development agents and villagers occurred and where many observations of these interactions took place. Li (2007: 28) argues that single sites are not isolates, ‘complete unto themselves’. Following Massey, she points out that ‘what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus’ (Massey 1993: 66 cited in Li 2007: 28; Bebbington 2000 makes a similar point). So, while I consider the study to be multi-sited (two distinct cultural settings and where they interacted and encountered one another), my interest is really about what had and was taking place at these two different sites and how this influenced the unfolding of the development projects at Waldesruhe. I consider the study to be multi-phased in that there were two distinct and different periods of data collection.

During the first four years my relationship to RI and the honeybush project was that of a ‘participant insider’ who was ‘studying down’ to understand the Waldesruhe residents and their interest in the honeybush project but also gradually ‘studying up’ to understand the honeybush project as it unfolded within RI. My (official) relationship in the village, as anthropologist employed by RI, was to mediate between the needs of the farmers and those of the RI researchers and RI as an organisation itself. This was largely an instrumental function. As my research role changed when I left RI and became a doctoral candidate, so did my relationship to various sites and with the different actors. After leaving RI, my interviews with former colleagues and other researchers became more formal, in the sense that I now had to set up appointments and focus on specific themes. On the other hand, the fact that I now lived in the village (rather than in a guest house 45 km away) created a more informal and neutral relationship with the villagers, as I was able to pop in to people’s homes and had time to engage in often long discussions with residents as I walked around the village. Residence in Waldesruhe also allowed me to cross-check information within days rather than weeks, as was previously the case.

Entering the field as RI researcher

In January 2000, I began my employment at RI as a senior researcher in its SAP. I was employed by the programme manager in response to the finding of a 1999 external review of the science council that it needed to draw more strongly on the expertise of social scientists. When I came in, the SAP’s research teams comprised only natural scientists, biometric statisticians and agricultural economists. Some research institutes drew on the irregular sociological expertise of non-governmental organisations (NGO). However, the review had encouraged the organisation to appoint anthropologists. One of my first assignments was to plan and support a honeybush technology transfer demonstration plot project in Waldesruhe. The project team comprised of soil scientists, horticulturalists, plant

pathologists, entomologists, biologists and various agricultural technicians. Our only common links were a desire to work with smallholders and the fact that we had been trained in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (see section on data collection below). My previous experience as a rural researcher and managing director of a NGO was a primary reason why I was tasked with this aspect of the implementation.

To understand my role in the honeybush project, it is helpful to sketch my background. After graduating with an Honours degree in social anthropology in early 1992, I worked as research consultant for a number of organisations. I was trained in several community development tools in vogue in the 1990s, amongst them objective oriented project planning; the logical framework approach; the cause and effect problem tree analysis; project cycle management; and PRA. I designed survey instruments, conducted formal and informal semi-structured interviews, facilitated workshops, and wrote, edited and presented reports to the management and donors of these organisations. My fieldwork was mostly located in rural KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. It focused on informal settlements, areas that fall under traditional authorities, farmworkers, and Griqua settlements. During the political violence before and after the 1994 elections, I learnt to negotiate access and exit from a number of difficult research sites. By 1998 I had taken over the management of a rural NGO that provided business and entrepreneurial skills to rural dwellers. Here I first got involved in working with smallholder farmers in the Western Cape.

By the time I joined RI in 2000, I had written numerous funding proposals, progress reports, research reports and raised funds from a wide spectrum of national and international donors. I had practical experience in designing research, using different methodologies and instruments, leading research teams, working with consultants, managing staff and planning research programmes and negotiating access to diverse research sites. I had experience in implementing development instrumentally! As part of my Master of Philosophy (MPhil) coursework in 1998, I had been exposed to the evaluation ideas of Rossi and Freeman (1993) and designed process evaluation models, and had explored Mosse's (1998a) ideas of development as a social process and how to monitor development process activities (1998b). With these tools and this range of experience, I wondered, how difficult could it be to assist agricultural experts to transfer technology to smallholder farmers who had apparently been eagerly waiting for decades for this technology and a well-designed support system (Beinart and Delius 2018; van Rooyen and Nene 1996)? How wrong my assumption was to be!

The planning of the honeybush project was termed participatory but included only about 15 scientists and technicians from two Cape Town-based research institutes, affiliated to the same science council as mine. Ironically, the planning of the five-year project did not include any local residents from the proposed five field sites. The project coordinator and I were supposed to get the buy-in from

interested farmers during the local PRA⁶ and participatory project planning (PPP) exercises⁷. The planning process for the implementation took about seven days of discussions and after a month a very specific project plan was presented to the team. It was structured similarly to a logical framework template and covered an initial period of four years, extended to five to enable evaluation. It was a technocratic document consisting of objectives, activities, indicators and a few assumptions. After RI accepted the plan, my role changed to PRA facilitation, participatory planning, and monitoring and evaluating the honey bush demonstration project process.

My first visit to Waldesruhe, two months after the planning of the project implementation, took place one overcast Friday afternoon in May 2000 when Daantjie Voster, our local guide, promised to show us wild honeybush in the mountains above the village. After quick introductions to several beneficiaries we drove up the mountain behind the village to identify local honeybush plants. The beneficiaries present were Sara September, Derek Jacobs, Chris Lourens, Craig Lourens and Ted McGregor, all of whom formed the Waldesruhe Tea Project (WTP). We drove up and down numerous access roads and cut across a few commercial farms (mostly for cut flowers and dairy). Twenty minutes later we were hiking into the forest. An hour later, as thick mist descended, we had still not seen any honeybush plants. Within another hour we had lost Daantjie and it had started to rain. Finally finding our way back to the pickup, we returned to Waldesruhe, where we met Piet Osprey, the chairperson of the Waldesruhe Small Farmers Association (WSFA). He was somewhat disheartened to hear that we had not in fact found any plants. After a short meeting about the WTP constitution, we took some soil samples at Ted and Shirley McGregor's plots. But none of the beneficiaries seemed perturbed that we had 'lost' Daantjie on the mountain, yet more so that we had failed to find a honeybush exemplar. Over the next four years that I worked for RI, we never went looking for wild honeybush again, and I never saw any in Waldesruhe or the surrounding area during my ten years there. In fact, Daantjie was the only person who had seen wild honeybush, as recently as 2000; about five local residents claimed to have seen the plant decades earlier; and two households recalled harvesting, fermenting and drinking it as a herbal infusion during the 1950s and 1960s. They reported losing interest when black tea became more readily available from the 1960s. Both Ted and Kurt Holtshausen reported drinking honeybush as children.

This anecdote illustrates two reasons why I assumed, during the project implementation planning process that the RI chose this group for its honeybush demonstration plot intervention. First,

⁶ PRA is a research tool whereby community groups and researchers co-generate information about a particular site and the challenges the community wants resolved. It relies heavily on visual forms of data capturing and display. The function of the researchers or experts is to observe and listen and then to suggest possible solutions based on the local knowledge provided and their observations.

⁷ PPP uses the information and decisions obtained from the PRA exercises to enable experts and community members to conceptualise and develop a plan for implementing the solutions to the challenges or those required for addressing the needs within the context provided by the PRA's.

there seemed to be an organised and cohesive farmers' association, of which seven households (not all present on that first day) had indicated commitment to the project to produce honeybush as a commercial crop and had formed a sub-structure for this purpose — the WTP — at the behest of the RI.⁸ On that first day, I was impressed by their willingness to traipse around a wet and misty mountain, but was to note over the ensuing years that enrolment, commitment and participation were fluid processes, governed by factors not immediately apparent that afternoon. Secondly, given the farmers' interest, I was under the impression that honeybush played a significant role in their historical food culture and that some possessed recent local knowledge about the plant and its preparation. The discussion on the back of the pickup was quite lively in this regard, talking about families who had drunk the tea and processed the plant in the past. Only later did I find out that of the beneficiaries I met that day, only Ted and Daantjie had imbibed honeybush. Daantjie was not a WTP member and, like many other farmland redistribution beneficiaries, was an inactive member of the WSFA in that he was not interested in farming his land. I returned to Waldesruhe again in July 2000 to facilitate the PRA workshops and remained active as a honeybush project team member, visiting the village approximately every six weeks for 3–5 days each time. In June 2004 I resigned from RI and took up employment in Gauteng.

Entering the field as a doctoral candidate

In 2005 and 2006 I conducted a case study on potato production in Waldesruhe. In 2006, after consulting my doctoral supervisors, I discussed with several residents my intention to develop my research for RI into a doctoral dissertation. To deepen my understanding of the honeybush project, however, I would need to live in the village and participate in their lives in various ways. There was no objection to this and one of the members of the local NGK arranged accommodation for me at the pastorie. He and his family, as my immediate neighbours, are best described as my host family. This suited me as they were not land reform beneficiaries and were able to give me a broader perspective of the village and the various undercurrents at play in the community. More importantly, they became close friends and looked after my belongings in between my visits and introduced me to their family, friends and a mix of other residents. Residence in the village brought me into closer contact with everyday village life and enabled me to reflect on the previous four years when I worked there in an

⁸ As we see in Chapter 4, the DLA-SC demanded the creation of a farmers' association before providing assistance to potential beneficiaries and the RI had followed likewise, suggesting the tendency of government and its institutions to assert authority (Scott 1998) over beneficiaries despite presenting the latter as autonomous and equal and presenting their relationship as one of partnership. See Lie's (2015) discussion of 'developmentality' that draws on Foucault's (1991b) ideas of 'governmentality' and their applicability in development settings, suggesting that these ideas explain why beneficiaries might go along with development. However, Rottenburg (2009) points out that ideas of partnership, autonomy and formality are used simultaneously, creating contradictory practices requiring translation or representation.

official capacity and compare the empirical data generated then with the data I was accessing as a PhD candidate and resident.

From 2005 to 2009 I made several visits to Waldesruhe. Some were no more than ten days in duration, but about twice a year I stayed there for up to eight weeks for extensive ethnographic work. Visits occurred at different times of the year to witness various social and seasonal events; this enabled a deeper understanding of how residents experienced development before and after land reform and subsequent to the termination of the honeybush project. Residence gave me access to village and agricultural social life and to informants living in the surrounding area who had historical and current ties to village residents. The range of engagements and people I spoke to afforded a more detailed and nuanced perspective of local social relationships and interactions than those elicited during my work for RI. By proving myself a trustworthy counterpart over time, multiple residents were prepared to give me their private opinions about the land redistribution and honeybush projects. In this way, I was able to reconstruct events prior to 2000, during the periods when I was not present or that I had not noted while working for RI.

Residing in the village was a crucial part of the overall research process. It presented me with the occasion to test and verify my comprehension of the honeybush project process, actor behaviour and continuing effects of land redistribution and struggles around land in the village. Importantly, it also allowed me to consider my own views and experience of the project through the reflections of others on the process and its outcomes. Issues previously deemed unimportant to project outcomes, such as the different social groupings and actors in the village and in RI and the influence of brokers and their origins, emerged as crucial to my understanding of what had manifested and what was manifesting then as rural development.

Research methodology

Ethnographic fieldwork is generally considered to be central to 'anthropology's fundamental methodological values[,] ... the taken for granted, pre-theoretical notion[...] of what it is to do anthropology' (Stocking 1992: 282) and practise as an anthropologist. Ethnography involves the very personal encounter of the ethnographer in the lives of those being studied (Davies 2008). Fieldwork involves data collection that can be both qualitative and quantitative (Bernard 2006). However, the emphasis is usually on the former and the anthropologist is required to leave the desk and go out into the field — a village or nowadays often an institution — and immerse themselves as much as possible into the field site and those who inhabit it from time to time. Participant observation is the principal method anthropologists apply to 'understand how the cultures they are studying work, that is to grasp what the world looks like to the people one is studying' (Delamont 2004: 18) in their 'natural' environment on a daily basis and how they make sense of this world. In many cases this requires some form of residence in the field — either living there on a semi-permanent basis for extended periods, or working in or visiting the site regularly and engaging with different actors. Davies (2008: 77) explains the practice of participant observation as involving

a single researcher spending an extended period of time living among the people he or she is studying, participating in their daily lives in order to gain as complete an understanding as possible of the cultural meanings and social structures ... and how they are interrelated.

In an increasingly globalised and interconnected world, the use of ethnography and fieldwork has become problematised (Marcus 1995, 1998), particularly with regard to the ambiguity of its purpose in a changing world that is assumed to be unlike the supposedly bounded field sites encountered by Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown in the early 20th century. Gupta and Ferguson (1997b: 4) describe this quandary as follows:

On the one hand, anthropology appears determined to give up its old ideas of territorially fixed communities and stable, localized cultures, and to apprehend an interconnected world in which people, objects, and ideas are rapidly shifting and refuse to stay in place. At the same time, though, in a defensive response to challenges to its 'turf' from other disciplines, anthropology has come to lean more heavily than ever on a methodological commitment to spend long periods in one localized setting.

Furthermore, other disciplines have been troubled by anthropological research, methods, concepts and this notion of 'the field' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 15). This is something I found at RI and at the science council where I currently work. The concern in these two settings is twofold. One is the high financial cost of the time in the field and the concurrent unavailability to do office-based tasks. The other is the more methodological question of the objectivity of anthropological data (see Mosse 2006). Some non-anthropologists are concerned by the fact that ethnographic data is collected by a single individual and is 'grounded' in their experience, their sense of 'the field' and their understanding of being in 'the field'. This is linked with the fact that anthropologists seldom use surveys or deep statistical analyses. This unease regarding anthropological research methods showed when I must have been asked 20 times about my research methods within my first three weeks at RI.

One primary and enduring criticism of ethnography is that there is a limited purpose to conducting it:

After all, ethnographies present snapshots of cultures that are context-specific and subject to social changes; indeed by the time ethnography is 'written up' the social world it seeks to represent inevitably will have changed (Jones and Watt 2010: 26).

Anthropologists understand this problem and are well aware of the concerns it raises (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b; Mosse 2005a, 2006). Indeed, one can argue that these snapshots provide deeper, 'thicker' and richer insights than simple surveys. Chambers (1992, 1994) criticized the time it took to analyse survey statistics when he promoted the rapid rural appraisal approach in the 1980s. My own experience of 10 years of fieldwork in Waldesruhe possibly substantiates Jones and Watt's claim: for various reasons it has taken me ten years to write up this thesis. However, during this period I wrote several articles and book chapters, starting as early as 2005 and continuing until 2012. My ethnographic

embeddedness in the village also allowed me to rapidly produce a report on potato production in 2006 and a book chapter in 2010; and that an article based on my doctoral research was published within two years of the completed fieldwork (Hart 2012). This suggests that Jones and Watt's criticism is rather generalised. In addition, the length of the time spent in Waldesruhe and the trust and credibility I built up there amongst households and extended families as an RI employee meant that I was able to return at short notice afterwards and easily find accommodation and a place in the community for my doctoral research. There is thus something to be said about the benefits of working at a particular field site for an extended period, including observing change over time and carefully understanding this change.

Without the period of residence in Waldesruhe from 2007 to 2010 this thesis would have been very different because the knowledge and data collected through RI would have, first, been very different in focus and, secondly, very 'thin'. As an RI employee I had no time to collect life histories, explore social nuances and social patterns beyond those that were overtly evident and related to recent farming and honeybush in particular. There was also no time to give the history of the village, its inhabitants and the land redistribution process more than a cursory review. During the first year of working in Waldesruhe for RI, a number of workshops enabled our RI research team to share meals and have informal discussions with beneficiaries, farmers and their wives. Yet by the end of that year and going into the future, no further social interactions of this nature took place — everybody seemed too busy. Residing in the village for my doctoral research, in contrast, meant I could meet new families and their friends, engage with them socially and develop a better understanding of residents and their relationships; and work in the fields, plant with farmers, milk cows, participate in community events, occasionally attend church services and forum meetings, and engage with the ebb and flow of Waldesruhe. Over the 10-year period I was able to observe the physical, social and economic change of the actors and the village first-hand, allowing me to reflect on the changing social world in the village and also to some extent in RI. I have a large collection of 'ethnographic snapshots' — my interview notes, field notes, reports, summaries, meeting minutes, workshop outputs, kin diagrams, public minutes of meetings by governance institutions in the village, planning proposals, notes on private discussions, photographs and records of collective experiences — not all of which are included here. These snapshots are particularly important in showing both rapid and gradual changes in the area. They are very useful to understanding and theorising about social phenomena and concepts.

The study draws on my experiences as a 'participant insider' (Mosse 2005a) in RI specifically and the science council more broadly, which in those days was specifically tasked with agricultural research, technology development and transfer to smallholder or emergent farmers. This position afforded me the opportunity to study not only the beneficiaries and villagers but also my RI colleagues, and granted me access to information that others might not get (Cooper and Packard 1997; Mosse 2005a). Goffman (1959) suggests that life is a theatrical stage in which actors have different personas: on-stage and off-stage. Working for the RI, conducting research for the RI in Waldesruhe, residing in the village and maintaining relationships enabled me to identify and explore these different social personas on different stages, identifying brokers and mediators and official and informal roles, positions and encounters, which were not strikingly evident through studying only one setting (stage). Thus, I was able to bridge the divide between public and hidden transcripts and identify the 'weapons of the weak',

revealed by Scott (1990). As a participant insider I not only questioned the role of the science council and my own role as researcher in a rural development process, but also the discourses and practices of rural development. I gradually moved to critically question and reflect on the international development problematic and current notions and processes of mediated rural development policy making and practice in South Africa since 1994.

Selecting participants

Having spent four and a half years working in Waldesruhe in a RI development project meant that I had interviewed numerous people and collected field notes and other necessary documentation. However, much of this data was insufficient for the PhD research questions on brokerage. I extended my research by increasing my informants through a snowball or referral process whereby one informant would typically provide me with the names of one or two more people they thought I should contact. In this manner the selection technique was simultaneously purposive and opportunistic (Saunders 2012). I discounted a few of the referrals because, after I had found out more about the persons, it seemed unlikely that they would add more to a particular theme of interest. Otherwise I screened referrals informally and then arranged for longer interviews. Unfortunately, two people from outside the village who had long worked with the village leadership and would have been key informants had died before I arrived there in 2000. Once I lived in Waldesruhe, I was able to examine the physical environment of the entire village and the use of the commonage areas and the redistributed farm, something that had not been possible during the period I worked for RI. In 2006 I spent a day walking around Waldesruhe in the company of one of my neighbours. It took about 6 hours to traverse 2.33 km² ('Waldesruhe' as identified in the 2011 census of South Africa), largely due to the hilly terrain that makes up much of the area. I realised how impractical most of the commonage was for tilling, or for housing developments. I saw that housing in the original settlement had been rather haphazard and located on the steep slopes, while the church and more recent state housing developments were located in the flattest part of the village. Many influential families in the village or the NGK lived on the largest parcels of land along the main road or next to the church. In July 2000, there were approximately 120 households with around 700 inhabitants in Waldesruhe (internal RI information). By August 2008, a local municipal official stated, the local municipality serviced 186 households with approximately 750 residents. The official Census 2011 put the population at 1 235 individuals in 308 households with an average household size of four, figures considerably higher than in 2000 and 2008. Census 2001 does not provide access to ward level figures, so it is difficult to determine which of these figures are accurate. However, it is unlikely that there was an influx of 122 households between 2008 and 2011. It is more likely that a new housing development in the village led existing households to split due to overcrowding, thus raising

the number of households in the area.⁹ The increase in overall individual residents cannot be explained and through my observations I consider the 2008 figures to be more accurate.

For my PhD project investigating the development projects in Waldesruhe, RI as an institute became one part of my field, and my former colleagues part of my informants. During my time at RI, I engaged with my colleagues at the formal project and committee meetings and strategy planning exercises through participant observation of their work in Waldesruhe. Mostly, however, I engaged with them in informal conversations (and even gossip) during our long journeys to and from field sites, during meals and when back at RI, informally reflecting on our various projects.¹⁰ Once I had left RI, my engagement with my former colleagues took place mainly through formal interviews. During my PhD research, I also interviewed a number of international development actors on South Africa's rural development policy in an international context.

In whole I talked to more than 70 people, and developed 15 life histories of residents. Thirty-five were male villagers who spoke to me about agriculture, land reform, sport and politics; ten were female residents who enlightened me about village history, social structures, kinship relationships, and diversity of livelihoods. The remaining informants were drawn from government departments, NGOs, consultants and the RI.

Ethics

As a member of the professional Anthropology Southern Africa association since 2001, I adhered to its ethical guidelines and principles of conduct (ASNA 2005; also Ross 2005a, 2005b). The proposal I submitted to Stellenbosch University for this project in 2006 fulfilled the ethical requirements of the university and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, which were concerned specifically with issues of privacy and anonymity of respondents and preventing any social and emotional harm caused to them. RI gave the permission for me to use the data I had dealt with when I worked there between 2000 and 2005. It must be noted that, as a technology transfer project, the honeybush demonstration project legally did not require RI's ethical clearance: as long as participants voluntarily enrolled in the project, no harm was expected to result from participation. The project oversight committee of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, which provided funding for my doctoral research in 2007, also checked my ethical approach as indicated in my research proposal.

⁹ The change can also be seen in the percentage of households that had access to electricity and piped water: where in 2008 95% of households had electricity and 98% piped water, this dropped to 92.5% and 82.4% in 2011. The drop is possibly because residential sites allocated in 2005 as part of a new developmental area on the commonage began to be inhabited despite remaining unserved due to municipal and provincial housing and service delivery delays.

¹⁰ Much of this discussion flowed into the formal reporting on the projects.

All respondents were informed that I was using the data for doctoral purposes, and that the thesis might be published in its entirety or as smaller pieces. While none of my informants requested anonymity, I took the decision to provide each person with a pseudonym or a fabricated designation where possible. As such, I have kept RI's and Waldesruhe's proper names anonymous and do not include any of my previous publications that identify their real names in the thesis reference list. Clearly this might not prevent someone who really wants to identify these sites from doing so, as illustrated in Rottenburg's (2009) case. The current requirements for ethical research have thus lead to an increased involvement with the research ethics bureaucracy for approval of work on this thesis. In an epoch of access to information and interconnectedness, it has indeed become extremely difficult to keep ethnographic things confidential and there always exists the challenge that some interpretation might offend someone (Mosse 2005a; Rottenburg 2009). I trust that the strict integrity I demand from myself has helped me put in place the necessary measures to avoid such breaches.

For Bernard (2006: 25–26), the real ethical challenges in researching and analysing human behaviour lie not in ethical clearance committees but in being able to live with the consequences of the choices we make and the actions we take as part of the process. For Lambek (2010: 12) the challenge is more innate than 'a matter of smoothly following the rules ... [It is about] the exhilaration of selftranscendence, as well as the struggle with ambivalence and conflict'. Ethical considerations are central to our humanness (Lambek 2010). These considerations indeed arose strongly for me in that I had to put aside my own preconceptions and misconceptions and truly try to understand what people were trying to tell me while simultaneously critically analysing the data presented to me. There were times when I doubted my own analyses of the evidence until I managed to have it substantiated by other evidence, thereby confirming my analysis. Nevertheless, because this thesis is part of institutional processes for degree purposes and funding, it is required to fulfil ethical research protocols (ASNA 2005). I believe that as a researcher and anthropologist I have adhered to these during the various phases of fieldwork, data collection, analysis and writing up of the dissertation and have caused little, if any, harm.

There is the possibility that my habitus — my embodied history and perception of the social worlds I entered and my reactions to them — may have unintentionally indicated adverse reactions to what I heard and saw, that I failed to recognise these as locally acceptable, 'reasonable or common-sense behaviours' (Bourdieu 1990: 55—56). Despite living in the same country and using the same language, Afrikaans, Waldesruhe residents are to some extent rooted in a different history and possibly have different morals and values from me. However, my anthropological training and years of fieldwork experience had taught me to recognise my prejudices and acknowledge that I am a guest and outsider trying to be an insider for a limited period and for my own purposes. When I struggled to understand something, I sought direction from some of my key informants. The same can be said about my presence at RI, to the extent that social anthropologists can become insiders in natural science-oriented communities of practice. For example, on one occasion, despite being the acting manager of the SAP in 2002, my director called in a natural scientist to get an update about the status of the honeybush project although this person had less updated knowledge than I had about what was transpiring generally and at Waldesruhe specifically.

During my study, I inhabited, and learnt to mediate between, several overlapping worlds: as an anthropologist employed in RI's developmentalist environment; as an anthropologist encountering development in post-1994 Waldesruhe; as a part-time PhD candidate living in the village and working in the policy environment for a national science council. In their own ways, these different worlds and the experiences I gained through them are interconnected and influenced my encounters. While this thesis focuses on development ethnography, the forthcoming chapters show that the influences from these interconnected worlds cannot be ignored. While they did not shape the development outcomes, they certainly provided a veneer to certain edges.

Hastrup (1992) describes the field encounter not as the unmediated world of the other but rather as the world separating the one that anthropologists regularly inhabit and that of those they study. She implies that both the anthropologists and their subjects are mediators in a particular negotiated space — almost a separate world where their presuppositions, derived from other worlds, come into play. Thus, I was attempting to study mediation in settings where I and my informants were engaged in mediating our relationships with one another, particularly in Waldesruhe. Whisson (1985) notes that middlemen (or translators, following Wilson 1972), including anthropologists in applied settings, engage in communication and negotiation between those they study and those who employ them. According to him (Whisson 1985: 136–137), in such situations

the anthropologist ... must be committed to his task beyond the compilation of reports and the provision of knowledge ... [that the client can use]; beyond the constant display of academic virginity demanded by the AAA [American Anthropological Association] *Principles* [of ethics], and be ready to go into the real world of politics, power and persuasion.

Whisson (1985) would refer to me as a broker of the 'exotic kind', as opposed to an indigenous broker. Rather than receiving payment in coin or kind, the anthropologist is a broker who 'may be satisfied with a couple of learned articles and a book which can be used to obtain further research funds or tenure' (Whisson 1985: 136). It must be noted that if I was not a broker in the more recent definitions of this ethnographic exemplar, I was a mediator in the sense described by Latour (2005). Nevertheless, in both places and when analysing the data and writing it up, I consciously strived not to be influenced by my personal 'preconceptions, prejudices and assumptions about what constitutes reality' (Nyamnjoh 2012: 2) when it differed from my own expectations of reality. The account presented here is to some extent informed by my personal subjectivities and those of my informants. At times my disagreements with these different subjectivities are noted.

In both research sites I openly took notes on informal occasions and during formal meetings. Between 2000 and 2004 my RI colleagues involved in the project and the Waldesruhe informants were aware that I was collecting information on the honeybush project; I thus did not need to continually ask for consent. The same applied for the Waldesruhe residents after 2004, while I reminded my former colleagues that I was using the information for doctoral purposes. When I met new people in Waldesruhe, I informed them of what I was doing, though they had generally already heard who I was and addressed me as 'the researcher in the pastorie'. Whenever I interviewed a person for the first

time, I asked for verbal consent, even when communication was via the telephone. Electronic data collection was usually only done with people I had personally met beforehand.

Data collection

Originally I enrolled at Stellenbosch University for an MPhil, intending to use my RI experience and the research in Waldesruhe for a study on complementary project evaluation approaches in development settings. As part of my data collection strategy I set up a computerised system of process monitoring for the RI honeybush research team (see Mosse 1998b). This system was gradually adopted by my colleagues at RI from June 2000 until December 2001 and formed part of a 'living diary' of our encounters as researchers with each other, local project participants and villagers¹¹. I tried to get the honeybush project participants interested to keep notes and a diary, beginning at the first workshop, but nobody in Waldesruhe completed the diaries provided to record their interactions with the project team and other project experiences. They were interested in crop and agricultural techniques and their outcomes, not reporting on encounters. To compensate for this, I took field notes of all interactions with villagers and beneficiaries from July 2000 onwards. Despite changing the topic of the MPhil thesis in 2002, I continued to keep notes of my thoughts and experiences after visits.

Data was also provided through the PRA approach applied by RI in Waldesruhe from July 2000 to December 2001 as one means of data collection and to monitor the project. Most researchers had been trained in its use and had applied it in other RI projects. Using visual tools, group encounters and knowledge sharing, PRA provided a simple medium for information exchange between local actors and the research team. It was a fairly rapid method of data collection. Facilitation of and participation in the PRA sessions fluctuated. Attendant researchers ranged from one to seven and attending villagers ranged from two to fifteen; on occasion some were accompanied by their wives. Because of the small numbers of participants, these exercises were not very successful at building rapport between different groups (villagers, researchers and occasionally the local extension officer).

Despite its world-wide promotion by Robert Chambers (1983, 1994, 1997) and others and its use in development, PRA has many critics (Nelson and Wright 1997; Cooke and Kothari 2001; van der Waal 2008). The most serious criticisms are its attempts to seek consensus amongst diverse actors, its emphasis and reliance on public scripts in political spaces (Mosse 1994, 1996, 2001a; Hart 2008) and the inability to competently analyse social relationships and their effects (Mosse 1994). In Waldesruhe, the PRA exercises provided a rapid but limited understanding of local history, social dynamics, livelihoods and aspirations about using the newly redistributed land, all based on consensual information, publicly generated mainly by the land redistribution beneficiaries. Much of the PRA data

¹¹ This system was quite easily embedded into the project so that the project manager and smallholder agriculture programme coordinator could oversee what was happening at each site after visits by different team members.

was underutilised, despite it pointing to an historical lack of interest in collective farming by or in cooperation amongst the land reform beneficiaries, and limited agricultural activities in previous years.

Most of the PRA exercises were carried out too late to guide the project and inform the initial planting of honeybush in mid-August 2000. In addition, the project coordinator and various team members did not consider them or the knowledge they generated as 'vital'. In response, I increased my use of participant observation, informal conversations and dialogue to enable a deeper comprehension of the perplexing behaviour I was noticing on the ground. It became clear to me that thick ethnographic description was needed to understand the evident inconsistencies, particularly with regard to project enrolment, participation, workshop attendance and land use, but the social science knowledge I was employed to generate was largely ignored. When I complained about this, a RI SAP manager responded: 'in a perfect world we would use it, but time and financial constraints prevent us using most of it now'.

Generally, I followed a parallel research trajectory to that of the other RI researchers, attempting to answer questions that kept arising from my encounters and observations in the field. Why was participation and interest in the honeybush project in a continual state of flux? Why was there such irregular attendance of meetings? Why did other residents show antagonism towards the project and the redistribution beneficiaries involved? Who were the 'farmers' in the supposedly agrarian village of Waldesruhe? How diverse were their livelihoods? What did farmers in Waldesruhe 'really need' in terms of support? What had land redistribution actually intended to achieve — increased commercial agriculture with modern technologies or simply rapid farmland redistribution? What was my role in the scheme of things? I had understood that I was to mediate the technology transfer process between the researchers and the farmers, with the purpose of making this project a success. But what rather seemed required was an economic feasibility study and the keeping of financial records on the costs involved in establishing different varieties of honeybush at different localities and subsequent yields. I was expected to mediate conflict or disagreements between researchers and residents. Probing these questions and roles involved moving beyond the project plan and stated objectives. Methodologically it meant moving beyond the direct participants in the honeybush project to other land reform beneficiaries, village residents and other actors involved in the land redistribution and honeybush technology transfer projects. As this process was largely a parallel process to the set project, it consisted of an unsystematic collection of diary entries, scribbles on meeting agendas and loose note paper. In 2001 I began to type up and systematise the information and compiled a file that recorded my observations on the various village and RI actors and their roles in the project. Later fieldwork expanded this collection.

During my PhD fieldwork, I was much more meticulous with reviewing my interviews and fieldnotes. As I did not have the option of audio-recording conversations, I took detailed notes during interviews. Each day I had a set time to review my fieldnotes and type up interviews, conversations and observations. I followed up on any queries I had over the next days depending on the availability of informants. I shared my typed interview notes and case studies with village informants to ensure I had correctly understood them and made any changes if required. For interviewees who were not from

Walderuhe or surrounds, I followed up via telephone or email. Cross-checking of information continued through the writing of this dissertation.

Data analysis

During the fieldwork, I had limited time to engage in data analysis. This began in earnest in April 2011. Drawing on what Jones and Watt (2010: 162) refer to as the 'thematic analysis', I began to identify themes and framing them theoretically. What began to strike me is that none of my RI or Walderuhe informants had used key words such as brokers, mediators and translators. Obviously (see Chapter 1), brokerage is an analytical concept and not an emic term (see Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002). In fact, the expression 'mediation' only came up once in an interview with an international informant in regard to the rural development policy negotiations of the early 1990s. I was thus searching through my data looking for activities, documents and interviews that represented these concepts. This was easier to do with the semi-structured interviews since they followed specific (albeit open-ended) interview plans.

My habitus as applied anthropologist affected the analytical process, largely because I had developed my skills in multidisciplinary analysis and writing for the policy research environment and not in critical theoretical examination. Writing the dissertation thus required developing a more analytical and critical style.

Mosse (2006) identified that anthropologists tend to find it difficult to step back from their research to engage in analysis and writing. This is even more difficult for anthropologists who study the contemporary world, with its interconnectedness and inconsistencies. I strongly identified with this because of the strong and continuing relations I cultivated with various informants, so that I experienced a strong sense of detachment and dislocation when I left Walderuhe to return to home and to work. Analysing Walderuhe seemed particularly difficult at such a distance. I thus always endeavoured not to leave Walderuhe until I had cross-checked all information and clarified all queries.

Limitations and challenges

Two limitations of this research stand out. First, although the work relates to Walderuhe and RI, my findings cannot be generalised to all residents of the village, all land reform beneficiaries, RI as a whole, or everybody who was part of the honeybush project. However, I do illustrate a link between RI and the science council that provides some information about brokerage and mediation at different levels in these hierarchically structured entities, so that the findings are generally relevant with respect to context and timing of the research in both RI and the science council. Secondly, what unfolds in Walderuhe is not necessarily similar to other rural development projects, other former mission stations or other CRRs. In fact, other RI and science council projects that followed a similar demonstration plot approach to technology transfer ran in very different ways. Context and timing both play a role in the execution of development. However, given the increasing literature on the topic, it is very likely that brokerage, mediation and translation are crucial to the manifestations of rural development in South Africa, just as are structure and political economy.

The challenges to the research were of a very personal nature. A particular one was the loneliness I experienced when conducting fieldwork in the winter months. Because days were much shorter and colder, people spent little time socialising in the evenings and mostly kept to themselves. This meant that little life happened on the streets and I did not have many people to engage with. An additional challenge was the fact that I am a vegetarian so that I was rarely invited for meals in people's homes. I did, however, get invited for *braais* (barbecue) on weekends with the request that I provide my own vegetarian burgers or sausage. The last, significant challenge was finding sufficient time to work through, analyse and write up the fieldwork next to full-time work and family obligations, much of which had to be accommodated in vacation time.

Reflexivity

There is a reflexive component to this study, given the importance of the anthropologist in the ethnography, analysis and subsequent writing. I was a mediator studying mediation. This necessarily involved the interweaving of my personal experiences of and role in development in a particular organisation and village during the first decade of the 21st century. The ethnographic lens and focus moved from my colleagues and the villagers to include myself in an encounter in which I was an actor and mediator of knowledge, events and outcomes (see Okely and Calloway 1992). As an anthropologist, I found myself in the shifting roles of an instrumental practitioner, participant observer, participant insider and introspective ethnographer. These did not really occur in any specific linear order and often overlapped.

At times I found myself questioning whether I was engaged in participant observation or participant objectification and whether the latter was in fact possible. French philosophers Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 11–52) argue that the researcher's relation to the object of study is 'uncontrolled' to the extent that he or she thus projects an unanalysed relationship onto the unit of analysis. They base this on the reflection that participant observation is a fictional encounter or immersion in a foreign setting and needs to be combined with a 'gaze from afar' as the observers must remain as remote from themselves as from the people being studied. This exceeds the anthropologist's assumptions, prejudices and preconceptions of what constitutes reality. In his study of the French education system, Bourdieu (1988) was part of the system that he studied. Through continual reflection and careful analysis of his relation to the system, he contends that he was able to objectify it and the actors. He concludes that a considered enquiry of the field is only possible through participant objectification. During my analysis and writing up I have attempted to keep Bourdieu and Wacquant's arguments in mind, yet also saw it as a challenge. Being an "observer" suggests detachment from those being observed and thus the intention to be objective. However, when one is engaged as an actor (fully-fledged participant) in a project or institution, this distinction can become blurred and difficult to maintain. While I do not engage in continual self-scrutinization, I do note where conflict or disagreement occurred and leave the evaluation of the success of my attempts at being objective to the reader.

I started out as a committed instrumental practitioner, convinced that development could be achieved if it was conceptualised and implemented better (Mosse and Lewis 2006). Over time I realised

that development is much more problematic, less technical and more socially complex in nature, mediated in different ways by different actors. Various encounters during my work and studies shaped my thinking about development discourse and practice, in particular the new ideas on development policy, interventions and research that began to circulate in South Africa between 2000 and 2010. After attending an international workshop and colloquium with international researchers in the Philippines in 2001, I pushed the honeybush research project to become more structured along the lines of participatory technology/innovation development (PT/ID) so that we could better understand the opportunities and challenges experienced by farmers. When I gained more influence over resource allocation in the project in 2002, when I became the acting SAP manager, I pushed for deviations in the project in reaction to organisational changes and in line with what some of the research team believed to be the true needs of the farmers. Thus I used some existing resources to focus on soil health improvement on the redistributed farmland and sought further resources and collaboration to embark on a new project that would be guided, if not fully designed, by the active farmers in the village. These two examples illustrate that I was not completely unbiased in the performance of my duties and the public transcripts reflected this bias. I had an agenda that at times was scrutinised by superiors, and I was denied certain positions or roles because I was a social scientist.

The evolutionary shape and form of this doctoral study, particularly with regards to policymaking and project linkages, gradually shaped my encounters as a researcher in the science council. As numerous scholars are beginning to demonstrate, it becomes difficult to separate the field from home, while the relationships that bind researchers to their field sites become fundamental rather than obscured (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a; Marcus 1998). Thus, while I found it difficult to focus on the analysis and writing up of the account, I was influenced by the fieldwork experiences and my studies which shaped my perceptions of the policy research I was engaged in. Sometimes this caused conflict with colleagues and donors while at other times it was inspiring when one encountered 'like-minded' individuals.

In some of the following chapters I show that the project anthropologist's position is as influential to the unfolding of the development process, events and outcomes as that of the other actors in the social milieu that is development. As the ethnographer, I interpret the experiences and responses of many informants based on personal observations but also on the reconstruction of events, as related to me by informants and where possible correlated with other sources of data. As an active developmentalist actor, I illustrate some of my own actions, including biases, and bring these into the account. As a result, my representations may overshadow those of other actors, but this does not preclude other interpretations or translations of the experiences described here. In parts of the study I highlight how different actors, including myself, give different translations of the outcomes and events, and in Chapter 7 I draw some of these conflicting project realities together.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the details of my research process. I described the selection of sites and access to the sites and the fieldwork phases, the ethnographic methods used and the challenges with these.

The chapter also detailed the identification of informants in and outside of Waldesruhe and RI and the various approaches to collecting and recording data. I detailed the ethical compliance procedures and practices I followed. I noted that the practice of fieldwork is itself a mediated encounter, the irony of possibly studying mediation while mediating did not pass me by, and I have tried not to let this influence the tale. I discussed the data collection process and analysis along with the challenges encountered at various times, particularly with respect to analysing the data and writing up the findings.

While I did not experience any major challenges working for RI or living in Waldesruhe, I was always cognisant of the fact that I was an outsider: I was a social scientist working in a natural science research council. Although I got on well with colleagues, I felt a distinct disciplinary divide and a rather strange stereotype about what I was expected to do. In the village I was an English-speaking white male living amongst less privileged coloured people who had a different history. At times I wondered, however, whether my idea of difference was not limited by how I felt people would see me. In the village I was always treated with what I experienced as mutual respect and honesty, even if one informant noted that the real conversations did not occur in meetings when we were present but afterwards, when we had left. At the RI I was also treated with respect, even if it became clear on a few occasions that my social research inputs were considered of lesser importance than technical requirements: projects should not be delayed for research that would help understand the position of farmers, and project implementation should be driven by technical criteria such as purchasing of seedlings, weather and soil preparation. Similarly, directors tended to assume that natural scientists would have a better understanding of projects than I, even when I was the acting project manager and they my team members. Yet, despite being an outsider, my continuing relationships with residents and former colleagues is a tribute to the friendships that were founded.

This chapter concluded with a reflection on fieldwork, research processes and my mediation of different worlds, which largely occurred as I embarked on the analysis and writing up of the thesis. It forms the basis for the next chapter on the history and contemporary life in Waldesruhe and for the argument that mission stations, and Waldesruhe in particular, are fertile grounds for the presence of brokers and acts of mediation. Chapter 3 reveals livelihood practices, daily life and social relationships through a number of 'ethnographic snapshots' based on archival research, interviews and observations. It thus prepares the ground for the subsequent analysis of brokers, mediation and translation in rural development in Waldesruhe, and how the honeybush project was translated into success and failure.

Chapter 3

Waldesruhe: Mission stations, development and brokerage

Land brokers in South Africa arise from within the ranks of beneficiaries, using their slightly better acquaintance with the 'rules' — or with the various conflicting sets of 'rules' — to help their less adept counterparts 'play' the land game. That benefits will accrue to them is beyond doubt, but to see them as motivated only, or primarily, by greed would be mistaken. As often, they are driven by a desire ... to help those who share their social origins but are less experienced South Africa with its wide discrepancies in wealth, literacy and access to resources in general, provides a fertile terrain for the growth of ... brokerage.

— James (2007: 201–202)

Introduction

This chapter argues that mission stations in the Western Cape, such as Waldesruhe, are fertile places for brokers and mediators. This has been the case since their establishment in the 1700s, when they became CRRs in the 1970s and transitional local councils (TLCs) between 1994 and 2000. In these periods certain individuals with influence (brokers) mediated between the local residents and neighbouring farmers, the church and the state. In Waldesruhe, brokers were initially senior members of the *kerkraad* of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk* (NGSK), the NGK's missionary branch for coloured people.¹² When Waldesruhe became a CRR, many of the *kerkraad* members became members of the local *bestuursraad*, the Waldesruhe management board (WMB). Some of these members continued to perform brokerage roles and mediated with the state, as they had with the church, over second order resources and between the logics of the residents and outsiders, and their social relationships. *Kerkraad* and *bestuursraad* members often coincided in Waldesruhe and some members can be considered as village 'big men'¹³ who increased their influence over time and became

¹² The NGSK was intended for coloured people in both urban areas and residing on farms. The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) was the counterpart for blacks. In 1994 the NGK dropped all its racially segregated names, becoming the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA). As locals referred to the UCRSA as the NGSK when I first met them, I largely follow this practice. However, it is possible that they continued to use this acronym to distinguish themselves and their history from that of other races. Until 1994 the NGK had generally promoted Afrikaner nationalism, and this will have likely rubbed off on parishioners of all races but especially those whose mother tongue was Afrikaans.

¹³ In Waldesruhe most members of the *kerkraad* and *bestuursraad* and later the TLC were men, as were other prominent members such as the chairpersons and treasurers. According to minutes and interviews women only had marginal roles as secretaries. The exception was one woman who was a chairperson of the *bestuursraad* during the 1990s, prior to the formation of the TLC.

ardent gatekeepers and mediators. The exploration of life histories, local roles in the village and contemporary livelihood practices illustrates that these local and influential actors were well-travelled and broadly exposed to the ways of the 'outside' world and understood the language and regulations, as opposed to being marginal residents in a remote rural village. Thus, they possessed some of the characteristics of local brokers highlighted by Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (2002) and Olivier de Sardan (2005) (see Chapter 1). Some of these actors later mediated the advent of land reform in Waldesruhe after 1994 and the honeybush demonstration plot from 1999.

What emerges in this chapter is a picture of people and their practices, some of whom develop the skill of mediation, often a part of their embodied, objectified and institutionalised cultural capital, to acquire second order resources, well versed in this practice due to a history of mediating the modernising influences of the mission societies, church and state. This chapter introduces three crucial theoretical tenets: the ethnographic work of Comaroff and Comaroff (1991, 1997) on the modernising and developmental focus of mission stations and the subsequent creative cultural reappropriation and assimilation of these influences by local residents; Certeau's (1984) theories on *everyday life*, in terms of the strategies (by the state or the powerful) and tactics (of the local or less powerful); and, lastly, Bourdieu's (1984, 1986, 1988) ideas of habitus, cultural capital, and fields (and associated knowledge of their relevant rules). These theoretical approaches enable us to understand the historical embodiment of broker characteristics and how these were used to engage with and play the land reform and agricultural technology diffusion fields or games (James 2007), which are the primary concerns of subsequent chapters. Certeau (1984) suggests that scientific organisations, projects and scientists themselves invoke strategies imposed on the less powerful while those who are subjugated adopt opportunistic and defensive tactics in creative ways. His reference to scientific organisations is useful when we discuss the honeybush demonstration project but is also relevant to the notion of experts in the mediation of land redistribution.

The chapter traces the history of Waldesruhe from the start of the mission station, through its declaration as rural reserve up to 1994, thus providing the historical context into which the land reform and honeybush projects were located. It traces in particular the various situations in which brokerage and mediation became critical to ensure the management of the village, access to local livelihoods and acquiring development resources from the church and the state. As part of this, the chapter examines the mission station as a precursor for rural development, the CRR as a form of development, and the role of agriculture in the livelihood strategies of villagers. This forms the basis for the examination in ensuing chapters of the impact of land redistribution and the honeybush project.

Mission stations — origins and history

During the early years of Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope from 1652 relations of semi-cooperative symbiosis prevailed between Cape colonial officials, agents, colonists and the semi-pastoral Khoi and hunter-gathering San (collectively known as the Khoisan). By the 18th century, Khoisan livelihoods had been undermined through trade and tribute demands, to such an extent that they lost independence of their grazing and hunting land to settler farmers and *trekboers* (pastoral

colonists) on the western and northern frontiers of the colony (Elphick 1982). They gradually transformed into low status wage labourers. Increasing dependence on farmers for employment as shepherds and herders resulted in the loss of their livestock, as colonial farmers did not want Khoisan breeds intermingling with their imported breeds. These practices were combined with restricted movement out of the colony (Elphick 1982; Penn 1989, 2005).

A similar pattern of social transition and land dispossession emerged in the southern Cape from the 1750s, as the demand for land and timber from this area increased (Guelke 1982). By 1777 the Dutch East India Company established a woodcutters' post and extended its authority into the area beyond Swellendam (Stehle 1993: 67). The area around Waldesruhe, stretching as far as Plettenberg Bay, became a major supplier of wood until the early 1900s. Khoisan in the area supplied farmers and woodcutters with labour and gradually came under colonial authority (Deacon 1993; Stals 1993).

Several of the key families in Waldesruhe claimed descent from Khoisan, freed and runaway slaves, and Europeans who settled nearby during the 19th century. Deacon (1993) confirms the long presence of Khoisan in the area, that increased with migration into the area due to conflict with the settlers in the Cape Colony during the 17th and 18th centuries (Catling 2008; Penn 1989, 2005). The migration was further enabled by Ordinance 50 of 1828 that removed restrictions on the movement of non-Europeans within the colony. The area attracted people because of its need for agricultural labour due to a boom in pastoralism and commercial wool production following the arrival of the 1820 settlers (Warden 1989: 32–34). The abolition of slavery in December 1834 prompted the movement of newly freed slaves to the southern Cape in search of work.

Mission stations appeared across the Cape Colony hinterland from the 1700s and became a primary source of seasonal agricultural and other labour (Warden 1989). Mission societies obtained land for their stations in various ways. Land under freehold title was surveyed and purchased from the colonial government, mostly by the society headquarters in Europe. Sometimes residents of a mission station purchased land, partially or in full, with the assistance of the mission society. In a few cases local European farmers bequeathed their land to be held in trust by a mission society or church for their workers but these farms were not mission stations although a church might have been built on the farm.¹⁴ In other instances, mission societies were granted land by the colonial government that considered the act of Christianising local populations worthy and modernising as it had a stabilising moralising and productive effect on the local population; comparable to Weber's (1958) later ideas of a Protestant work ethic. Colonial farmers welcomed the skills transferred by the missionaries and the colonial government encouraged mission stations from the 1800s. By 1904 there were 6 000 major mission stations managed by 25 mission societies in South Africa (Catling 2008: 17, 18). Following the transition of coloured mission stations into CRRs in the late 1960s and early 1970s, by 1994 23 mission stations in South Africa were recognised as CRRs, held in trust for coloured people by the minister of

¹⁴ Waldesruhe is an exception: its land was purchased by a German missionary for his sister and later upon her death he gave it to the NGSK for the specific purpose of a mission station.

the House of Representatives for Coloured People (HRCP).¹⁵ Waldesruhe was one of twelve CRRs in the Western Cape. These CRRs ranged in size from 55 to 17 000 hectares. In 1994 it was transformed into a TLC and in December 2000 incorporated into the local municipality (personal communication, official from the former Department of Planning, Local Government and Housing of the HRCP in 2006).

Mission stations appear to have a strong link to land. Initially converts, residents and some missionaries saw the mission station as a means of curbing land dispossession by Europeans. Missionaries also saw it as a way of getting support for their 'purpose' from the indigenous population. Once a mission station was established, the focus for the missionary and his council of elders shifted to the layout of the land and its use. Stations in the Northern and Western Cape were often of similar general design with the church, pastorie and school as the nucleus. Around this nucleus was the residential area with commonage land in-between, known as the *binnemeent* (inner-commonage), used for communal crop production for the mission. The residential properties, including gardens for household-production of crops and livestock, were initially about a morgen¹⁶ in size. Beyond the residential plots was the *buiteemeent* (outer commonage), used for individual cultivation of grains and for communal animal husbandry, often by wealthier residents in some stations (Catling 2008; Robins 2008). Missionaries or the church council allocated land and implements to residents.

The layout of each individual mission station was then determined by the specific topography and size of land allocated to it. Initially missionaries and then the state tended to emphasise the agricultural use of land (Catling 2008; Van der Horst 1976) and ignored the residential situation and rights to residential land. This was a historical trajectory that has continued to influence the rural development pathway since 1994. On some Nama mission stations in the Northern Cape, residents originally received 'tickets of occupation' that offered some form of security of occupancy to the land on which they lived and access to the two commonages, but not ownership (Boonzaaier 1987). This right of occupancy could be passed on to descendants. Waldesruhe residents claim their ancestors never got such tickets as the mission station was bequeathed to the NGSK. Residents living in the area before the 1970s were simply registered in terms of their membership of the Waldesruhe NGSK congregation, with the *kerkraad* allocating plots. When Waldesruhe became a CRR, through Section 4 of Act 24 of 1963, the NGSK *kerkraad* list became the town register and now fell under the WMB.

¹⁵ One of the last pieces of apartheid legislation relating to the CRRs was the HRCP's Rural Areas Act 9 of 1987. The act effectively meant that all agricultural land in the CRRs was held in trust by the Minister of the HRCP. The act stipulated that CRR residential plots could be privately owned. However, the process of actual transfer of ownership of residential plots is still not complete. This slowness is largely assigned to a lack of bureaucratic capacity, with the changes of laws and government institutions from 1994 onwards and boycotting the 1992 national referendum that initiated the constitutional change (personal communication, official from the former DLGHA, 2006).

¹⁶ A morgen is approximately 0.85 hectares or 8 567 m².

While there are similarities between mission stations, there are also differences, in particular in their histories and how they emerged into their present state and circumstances. In the 1860s, a German missionary from the Berlin Missionary Society purchased the 158-hectare farm of Waldesruhe for his sister, and began to hold monthly church services for all races of farmers, woodcutters and their labourers. His evangelical work was highly regarded and supported by the district's local NGK congregation, which built a school and church on the farm in 1869. European and coloured children from neighbouring farms attended the school. After the death of his sister in 1872, the missionary bequeathed the entire farm to the NGSK, to be managed as a mission station. The NGSK appointed a minister who gradually took over the responsibilities of the German missionary in the area. In recognition of his hard work and devotion, in 1884 the local NGK built a new and bigger church at Waldesruhe for the NGSK. As there was no missionary or *dominee* (minister) residing permanently in Waldesruhe, the mission station and its facilities remained largely under the management of the Waldesruhe *kerkraad*. Congregation members who resided elsewhere gradually moved to and built houses on Waldesruhe, especially when they became too old to work on the surrounding farms or for the woodcutters and thus lost their places of residence.

During the 1980s and 1990s each Waldesruhe resident was supposed to be given a Deed of Allotment (*toekenningsbrief*) and subsequently a Deed of Grant (*grondbrief*).¹⁷ However, I was informed by various sources that by 1993 only eight households had received a Deed of Grant but none of the others had even received a Deed of Allotment. According to some informants the awarding of the Deeds of Grant was delayed because the town register was supposedly out of date because the WMB never kept a formal waiting list but simply denied or approved housing or access to land upon application. Another reason provided was that the town register was lost in a fire in the late 1980s when the original WMB office burnt down. By 2003 another 11 households had obtained their Deeds of Grant. While nine of my informants reported having a Deed of Grant, only one, a pensioner, was willing to show me hers, which she did very proudly. Interestingly, the 2011 census indicates that 88% of the Waldesruhe houses were paid off or in the process of being paid off, suggesting that they had at least one owner. Who owned the other 12% is unclear.

As late as 2010 I was still being informed that most residents did not have Deeds of Grant. Possibly the situation of my neighbour and host family sheds some light. They had been allocated land by the WMB decades earlier and eventually, in 2009, started building on this plot. One can assume that they owned the house and possibly the land but had no proof of land ownership because of the questions surrounding this, as noted above. For the 2011 census, they would simply have responded that the house was paid off or being paid off. The other 12% of households possibly resided in houses or on land that technically belonged to others; a few even 'squatted' on un-serviced *buitemeent* land that was set aside in the 1980s to become part of residential extensions. As late as 2010 the local

¹⁷ A Deed of Allotment indicates that the land is allocated to a resident, but it is not yet an indication of ownership (personal communication, official in the former DPLGH 2007).

municipality still refused to service this land despite the number of people who had built wooden houses there. As Michael Josephs, one of these residents explained to me:

I have family here. I have a right to be here. I lost my job and house on the farm. My name is on the list [seemingly compiled by the local municipality in the 1990s] for this plot. It is not somebody else's land. They won't supply water or electricity. I had to dig my own toilet [pit latrine].

In Waldesruhe, the concern was not the ownership of or even access to the *buitemeent* for farming but ownership of serviced residential plots and shelter. In this regard, individual residential rural property rights have not progressed much. Older residents reported people being evicted from their houses if the *kerkraad* and later the *bestuursraad* decided to do so. Alternatively, residential land was subdivided and the current occupier had no say about this. The *kerkraad* and *bestuursraad* also began to allocate the farmland they managed for housing as demand increased. Thus, we get a picture of leadership councils or mini-local authority councils in the form of the *kerkraad* or the *bestuursraad* allocating secondary resources, first of the church and then the state. I suggest that it is more insightful to consider them as brokers rather than patrons in this context, as they deal with secondary level resources. We also get the impression that agricultural land is being taken away from farming households. I return to this point near the end of the chapter.

The land-use pattern of Waldesruhe was largely determined by the topography of the farm and the surrounding mountainous area. The farm resembles a 'Y' shape (see Figures 1 and 2). It is surrounded by gullies on most sides and lies at the foot of a mountain range. Most of the portion captioned '*Inkommergrond*' (Figure 1) runs up the side of the mountain. This is a disputed piece of land that I discuss later on, as it impacted on some of the social relationships in the village. The shape and topography of Waldesruhe has influenced the housing development since the 1870s, with most of this taking place on the flatter portions of the farm. The original *binnemeent* was rectangular in shape with the church and school on the left-hand side of the area, marked as Phase 1, and houses to the right-hand side. The original *binnemeent* flowed into parts of the *buitemeent* (now known as Residential Phases 2 and 3). The first official extension of the residential area, called Phase 2, was already planned and drawn up by 1980, with houses built in 1985/86. The Phase 3 extension — located next to the road running through Waldesruhe and adjacent to the redistributed farm — was planned at the same time but only developed in late 2010. However, some portions already had houses, built there between the 1950s and 1970s.

Figure 1 illustrates how the residential areas and houses are interspersed across the *binnemeent* and *buitemeent*, rather than neatly distinguished as one finds on some other mission stations. By the 1940s, the earliest time my oldest informants could recall, there were no large parcels of flatland that could be used for growing grain or ranging large numbers of livestock safely. The relatively small size of workable land parcels meant residents who farmed used horses to prepare the soil. Most farming was done on the *binnemeent* and on residential plots to provide household food. It is evident from Figures 1 and 2 that most of the land is not suitable for agriculture. The population of Waldesruhe increased as successive generations of residents were born, and as more and more people

were relocated there because of colonial, union and apartheid government legislation. These factors brought pressure for more land and housing. The flatter parts of the *buitemeent* increasingly became allocated for residential areas.

Figure 1 was probably photographed around 2003 or 2004 and gives a good representation of the housing settlement pattern during my visits. Figure 2 illustrates the intensive developments that occurred in Phase 3 after 2010. It also more accurately depicts the Waldesruhe mission station/CRR boundary, as well as the undulating terrain. Figure 2 illustrates the increasingly dense overgrowth (in portions A, B and C) of the redistributed farmland and the increase in farming by neighbouring farmers bordering on the more arable parts of this land. At the foot of the Y, in both Figures 1 and 2, we can see the only pieces of land (to the left of the road) that are still farmed by non-land reform beneficiaries. The portion in Figure 1 captioned 'Census 2011 addition' was never part of the original mission station or CRR. It is privately owned farmland.

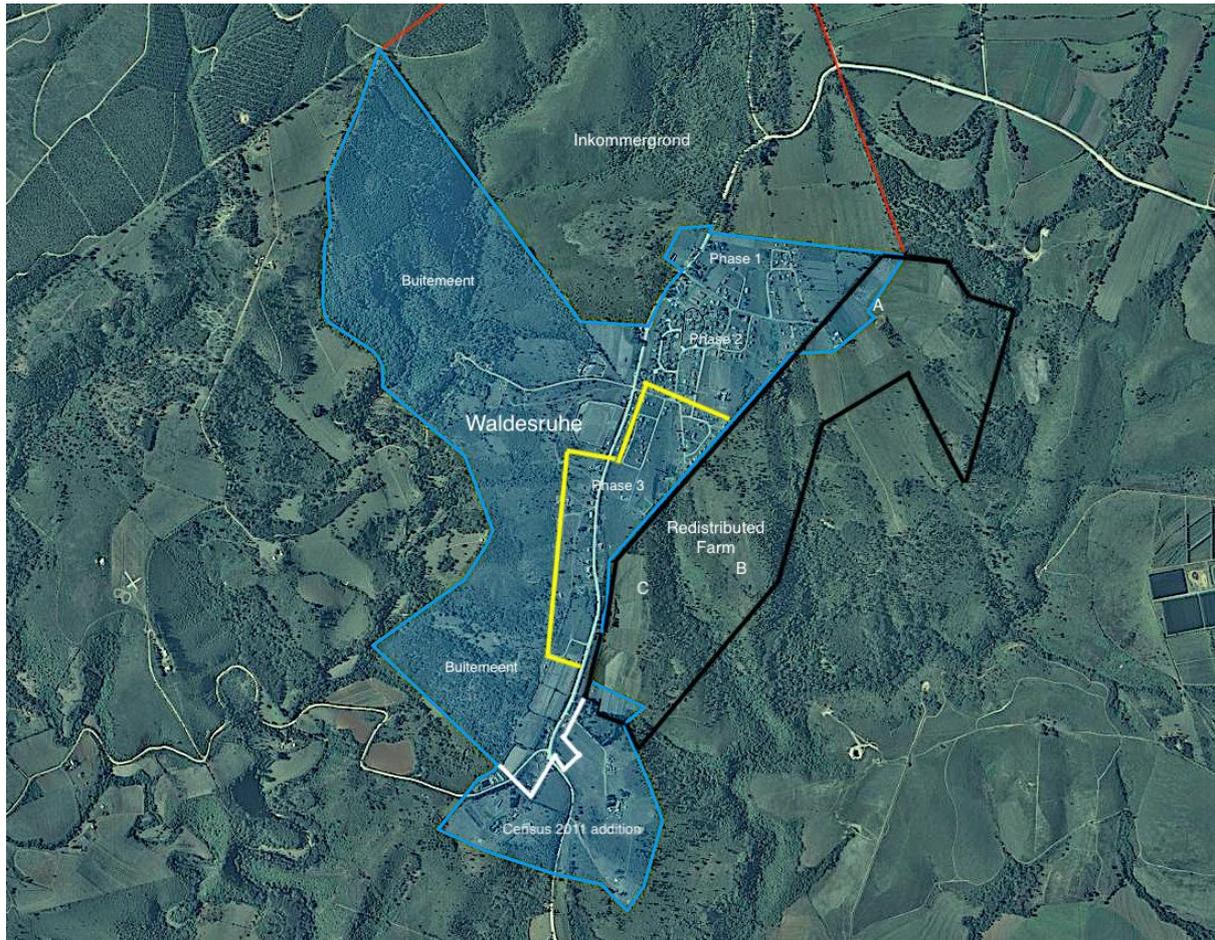


Figure 1: Map of Waldesruhe and redistributed farmland

Source: STATS SA Census 2011, Main Place 'Waldesruhe'. There are a number of errors with this figure that I have tried to correct. The area indicated as 'Census 2011 addition' is not part of the original mission station or CRR, according to the maps obtained from DLA-SC. The original boundary of Waldesruhe apparently ran along the white line. Blue spaces within the black border are not part of Waldesruhe but of the redistributed farmland. The Phase 3 extension, indicated by the yellow line, has become much more populated with numerous houses and several new gravel streets since 2011 (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Map of Waldesruhe development post-2011

Source: Google maps Jan 2019

Census 2011 also provides us with a general picture of the services that existed during my period of residence¹⁸. Table 1 offers an indication of the numbers of households in the village and the population along with the services provided and different measures of quality of life.

¹⁸ I use the Census 2011 figures for descriptive purposes as my data in this regard was not as detailed or uniformly collected. As noted in Chapter 2 there are some differences in this data and my own, especially with regard to the total number of residents and households (which I obtained from the municipality in 2000 and 2008). The figures for household income above R153 800 also seem to me to be higher than I experienced.

Households and population		No.	
Total Population (2.87% increase from the Census 2001 total of 931)		1 235	
Number of Households		308	
Female Only Headed Households (<i>de jure</i>)		112	
Male and Female Headed Households		196	
Language		No.	
Afrikaans Mother-Tongue Speakers		1 213	
Other Mother-Tongue Speakers		22	
Residents and Education	No.	%	
Male Residents	593	48	
Female Residents	642	52	
Young (0-14 years)	334	27	
Working Age (15-64 years)	827	67	
Elderly (≥ 65 years)	74	6	
No Schooling (≥ 20 years)	25	2	
Grade 12 Education (≥ 20 years)	333	27	
Higher Education (≥ 20 years)	37	3	
Housing and Services	No.	%	
Formal Dwellings (Brick or Timber)	280	91	
Flush Toilet	222	72	
Piped water in dwelling	254	83	
Electricity in dwelling	286	93	
Household quality of life indicators	No.	%	
Electric/Gas Stove	280	91	
Refrigerator	256	83	
Television	252	82	
Satellite TV Decoder	89	29	
Motor Vehicle	99	32	
Cellular/Mobile Phone	274	89	
Households with No Income	34	11	
Household Income	R 1 – R 19 600	68	22
	R 19 601 – R 38 200	89	29
	R 38 201 – R 153 800	105	34
	R 153 800 – R 307 600	9	3
	R 307 600 +	3	1

Table 1: Waldesruhe Census 2011 DataSource: STATS SA, Main Place 'Waldesruhe' <http://www.statssa.gov.za/>

Figure 3 depicts the annual average household income in 2011. The fact that approximately 1% of households fall in the range of R 307 601 to R 1 228 800 strongly supports my conclusion above that the Census 2011 included households outside of Waldesruhe the mission station and CRR.

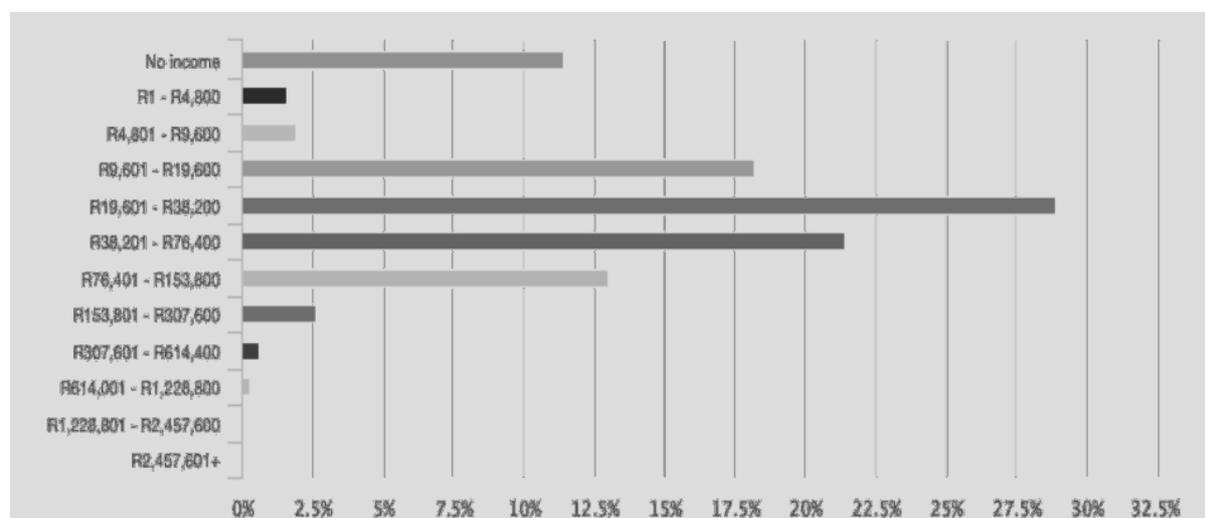


Figure 3: Waldesruhe Average Annual Household Income 2011

Source: STATS SA, Main Place 'Waldesruhe' <http://www.statssa.gov.za/>

Missions as precursors of rural development

Mission societies and their stations can to some degree be considered analogous to contemporary international aid and development agencies with their associated programmes and projects of modernising the locals. Ferguson (2004) and Catling (2008) report that these societies and their agents brought spiritual and material assistance (food, skills training, agricultural practices, education, health and medical services) to rural areas and people considered heathens and less developed in the 1700s and 1800s. In reference to the London Missionary Society, Ferguson (2004) goes as far as describing it as a Victorian aid society. In discussing life on mission stations, mainly inhabited by Southern Tswana, Comaroff and Comaroff (1991, 1997) describe the ways that the missionaries, and mission stations, mediated colonial modernity in terms of micropractices, habits, behaviour, subjectivities, artefacts, attitudes and ideals, all of which were transferred and transformed through the ideas of Christian preaching and interpretations thereof, by particular denominations or societies and station residents (see also Catling 2008). They also suggest that those people who moved to the missions were motivated by the instrumental desire to access the missionaries' cultural capital material culture, rather than any notion of deep Christian conversion. This is early evidence of mediation across the colonial administrative and religious domains, as each mission society and missionary sought out support for the implementation of its Christian theologies and modernising practices, posited as the best means to uplift and 'modernise' the rural population. Like current development organisations (Hobart 1993), the

mission stations sought to ensure acceptance of their ideas and backing (land and finances in particular) from potential supporters locally and abroad, rather than only from the people they intended to help. Greater acceptance of their ideas by the colonial governments led to more support for mission stations as mission societies competed against one another to be recognised as the society with the best plans and capabilities; in a sense, the 'real experts' without whom no tangible colonial modernisation or development could occur in the hinterland. This 'expertise' was to dissipate to other residents in various ways and not only included the christianising expertise. The christianising purposes of the mission stations and their priests resembles what Bierschenk (2014) calls norm entrepreneurship, as missionaries attempted to transfer their norms to local residents who often resisted or mediated and embraced these norms selectively. Ferguson (2006: 87, 98) notes that Christian churches and missionaries are more powerful and significant in Africa's political present than they were in its colonial past. Thus, they have entrenched their historical power and influence in governance and development, having shared these norms and expertise with followers. Perhaps more importantly, Ferguson (2010) sees the particular rise of Pentacostalism in various parts of Africa following from the withdrawal of the state and international aid in the era of neoliberalism. A similar picture is presented by Piot (2010) in his ethnography of Togo, West Africa, whereby he illustrates how neoliberal logics permeate every area of social life.

The influence and mediation of the mission station and the missionary, detailed by Comaroff and Comaroff (1997), includes the introduction of Christian education and the replacement of historical land management and agricultural practices, leadership and authority systems, clothing, food, housing design, medicine, notions of self-sufficiency, rights, self and group identity, and moral relationships with such that are based on Western European and Christian norms. These replacements resonate with contemporary development activities generally and with apartheid and post-apartheid development activities in South Africa in particular. Indigenous and other displaced people had their own reasons for settling on mission stations and converting to Christianity, just as project participants do for enlisting into contemporary development initiatives (Olivier de Sardan 2005). Some considered residence on and collaboration with missionaries to be the only practical means of curtailing the gradual dispossession of their pastoral, gathering and hunting lands. Others, who experienced social disruption and conflict as a result of European expansion into the interior, saw mission stations as providing material benefits, as havens of safety, security and residence (Catling 2008; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997). Mission stations provided cultural capital and the means to understand the field of colonisation. Catling (2008) suggests that initially the local populace was attracted to the mission stations by offers of food and skills but soon became disenchanted and adopted a migrant pattern of residence. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) draw on Certeau's (1984) ideas to show how indigenous people selectively appropriated the offerings of colonial modernisation and Christianity, but were ultimately consumed by the system as their dependence on its offerings increased, much like current participants of development interventions (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Olivier de Sardan 2005).

However, as Comaroff and Comaroff (1997: 366–368) argue, mission societies, their missionaries on the ground and the colonial government were often at odds — despite appearances of

common goals of civilising and educating the indigenous inhabitants — about how to achieve their aims and what civilising the inhabitants actually meant and involved, notably when it came to ideas of spiritual authority and secular legality. Societies abounded, affiliated to a range of denominations (NGK, Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed), from local origin, but especially from different countries of origin across Europe and North America, all with different ideas about the spiritual salvation and ‘civilising’ of the local population. They competed for support from both the local population and the colonial government. This lends historical support to the contention that both colonialism and christianisation (as metaphors for development) were not ‘a monolith, a machine of pure domination; or that “*the colonizer*” may plausibly be portrayed as a coherent, unitary historical agent’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 367, italics in original). The process of colonisation and christianisation in South Africa, as with post-colonial development interventions, was a multifarious, fragmented and uneven process with different, diffuse organisations, ideals, norms and theologies vying for acceptance, depending on brokerage and mediation for support.

Rather than portraying one unique culture on the mission station, local people assimilated the tenets of others, selectively adopted and reappropriated practices, artefacts and rules, along with how and when they applied them (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997). This selective embracement confirms their tactical consumer- or user-like behaviour (Certeau 1984), suggesting subtle and selective appropriation of desirable practices and artefacts along with resistance to what they considered undesirable. While they may have become dependent on the dominant discourse and practice to a large extent, they also influenced it by their selective enrolment and adaptation (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997), and subsequent creation of their own modernities. Existing social institutions were combined with new ones and continually underwent change, resulting in inconsistent experiences and heterogeneity, rather than widespread uniformity across mission stations. Writing about the Northern Cape, Robins (2008: 34) points out that the effect of these historical interlinked interactions between societies, mission station managers, colonial government and residents (many of whom had their own connections to other areas) on and around the mission stations were characterised by eventual cultural hybridity, which still persists and continues.

Three points are crucial to note about the historical situation and changes that resonate with the current development chain. First, there were vast spatial distances between the headquarters and mission supporters in Europe and the stations and resident missionaries on the ground in South Africa. Secondly, there was also a substantial physical distance between the mission stations in rural areas and the colonial government situated in Cape Town and its representatives in a few country towns. Thirdly, each of the numerous missionary societies attempted to stake its claim to the spiritual salvation and ‘civilising’ of indigenous people in its own way. Each society had different access to resources, often competed with other societies for sites to establish mission stations, and had a number of stations located across South Africa. Thus, each society tried to mediate for recognition, relationships and resources.

A society’s flexibility and ability to adapt and transform certain secular, educational and spiritual practices was also influenced by the presence and type of missionaries running its mission stations and

his relationship with members. The missionary and his church council of elders conducted, administered and governed both the secular and spiritual aspects of the station and its inhabitants. Some missionaries lived permanently on the mission station and dealt exclusively with all its affairs. In other cases, such as at Waldesruhe, first the Berlin missionary and then subsequent NGSK (and after 1994 the URCSA) ministers attended to a number of stations in the area, travelling on a regular basis between them to attend to their spiritual and secular affairs. As an NGSK mission station, much of the everyday spiritual and secular control of the Waldesruhe station was located in the hands of the church council, often composed of an elite grouping, mediating between the missionary and the congregation. The church council was in charge of all secondary resources belonging to the church, including land and implements, enforced mission station and church regulations and conducted the day-to-day management of facilities. Their close collaboration with the missionary and then the NGSK ministers had its own modernising effects on multiple aspects of their administration of the mission. The NGSK, as a branch of the DRC carried through its reformed Presbyterian and Calvinist ideas (the supreme authority of God, predestination and the fallibility of humankind) in Waldesruhe (discussed below in terms of the roles of the *kerkraad* and WMB members). Because the first missionary and subsequent ministers at Waldesruhe seldom lived on the station, the church council was responsible for mediating between the congregation and outsiders, including the NGK and the NGSK synods. This position was reinforced when Waldesruhe became a CRR in 1970. It would be realistic to argue that Christian doctrines were not the only practices transferred and that some members of the *kerkraad* would also have adopted mediation and Western leadership skills and learned the ways of interacting with different government and church bodies and their representatives.

Early state developmentalist interventions and the transition to CRR

The gradual increase in population density on mission stations by the early 20th century meant that the administrative and spiritual obligations of the missionaries increased enormously. To alleviate this pressure, the colonial government introduced the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act 29 of 1909. Secular control and administration were very loosely transferred from the missionaries to the Department of Native Affairs, with the local magistrate (*landdros*) as its agent, but this did not change the nature of the mission station. The subsequent raising of taxes on residents increased the number and duration of periodic out-migration by residents, who needed employment to pay for this taxation. When the government recognised that this strategy was counterproductive, it amended various pieces of legislation in order to achieve improved land use, agricultural production and sustainability, to provide at least for the subsistence needs of the local residents (and ensure the ability to pay taxes). These attempts proved futile. As later with the apartheid homelands, the main economic activities in these areas were diverse forms of employment outside of mission stations and the CRRs into which they were later transformed, but inside only limited state employment, a few small-scale or survivalist enterprises, dependency on state grants and the residual small-scale agricultural activities that Sharp and West (1984) and Catling (2008) describe as a safety net.

Immediately after the Second World War an interdepartmental committee was established to investigate the mission stations and the 'coloured rural settlements',¹⁹ with the purpose of making recommendations for the improvement of the social and economic wellbeing of the inhabitants of these areas (GUSA 1947, cited in Catling 2008: 19, 20). The committee had to consider the annulment or modification of Act 29 of 1909. The conclusion was that Act 29 failed to protect and care for the residents of these areas and subsequently their living conditions had drastically deteriorated. Housing was pitiable and deteriorating, while education facilities were considered inferior (GUSA 1947, cited in Catling 2008: 19, 20). There was overpopulation, overstocking of livestock, soil erosion and subsequent shrinkage of agricultural lands. This resonates with what Beinart, Delius and Trapido (1986), Bundy (1988), Delius (1996), De Wet (1980, 1995), De Wet and Whisson (1997) and Ferguson (1990) argue transpired on the pre-apartheid betterment schemes on the African reserves. Mission stations were socially stratified and produced classes of educated elite. In Namaqualand (of interest here because detailed ethnographic research has been conducted on the CRRs there, but little research has been carried out in CRRs in the southern Cape), farmers with a secure income, forming a local elite, owned relatively large herds and sold their surplus crops (Catling 2008). Some of them let portions of the communal *buitemeent* to neighbouring white farmers for livestock foraging, thus getting a cash income for themselves from communal lands (Catling 2008; Robins 2008). Mission stations also produced classes of semi-skilled and unskilled migrant labourers, along with a poorer class of residents whose engagement in labour activities was irregular and whose agricultural practices largely consisted of vegetable gardening for own consumption (Sharp and West 1984). What gradually emerged were highly stratified socioeconomic settlements. By the 1940s, farming benefitted a few residents but the mission stations, like the African reserves, were not self-sufficient, and an increasing number of residents engaged in migrant practices.

The 1947 commission ignored the history of migrancy, seeing it only as a recent activity by the youth rather than a core historical component of mission station life and one that was becoming increasingly entrenched as stations fell under state control. Periods of migrancy became longer and its practice more predominant. The commission noted general trends only, similar to when South Africa's rural development policy was negotiated in the 1990s and to the common practice today (James 2000a, 2001). As with the current rural development policy, the commission's solutions focused on the improvement of agricultural land use, ignoring and misunderstanding the roles of migrancy and agriculture and how they interconnect. Neither the commission nor the 1994 policymakers acknowledged the differences in experiences between the residents of mission stations, CRRs and

¹⁹ It must be noted that 'coloured rural settlements' bear no relationship to CRRs. Like James's (2000b, 2001, 2007) example of Doornkop Farm, coloured rural settlements are farms that were owned in freehold by coloureds, either by descent or by purchasing land from a European farmer (Catling 2008). Buisplaas in the southern Cape is an example. Such land was never transferred to any church to be held in trust.

rural settlements and the impact of earlier policies. As Murray (1996) and James (2000b, 2001) indicate, these were not communally oriented or homogeneous microsocieties that all had the same experience.

Act 29 was not revoked, but a number of grazing regulations were passed in 1963, 1965 and 1981 (see Catling 2008). However, these were not uniformly applied and, by the 1990s, disputes about the historically contested user-rights to commonage and about boundaries were regular occurrences in some Namaqualand CRRs (Robins 2008). By the 1990s, various management systems of CRR commonages had virtually collapsed (Catling 2008; Robins 2008). By the mid-1980s individuals in Waldesruhe who needed to farm simply ignored the WMB and worked the *buite-meent* as they wished, without seeking permission. Minutes of meetings of the WMB in the 1980s indicate that while the management was upset with such outcomes and members occasionally clashed over such cases, it could do little to prevent them. Yet the management board did little to regain control. In Waldesruhe specifically, there were only few of these cases with usually the same individuals making demands on *buite-meent* land.

In 1963 the Coloured Rural Areas Act 24 was gradually introduced on mission stations, mainly in the present Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces largely inhabited by coloured people, following the proclamation that these areas were for the exclusive settlement and ownership by coloured people. The act was effectively a recodification of Act 29 of 1909. The 1963 act created a separate legislative framework for local government, land and mineral resources in what were declared as coloured areas. This framework introduced new local government structures and management boards — though they lacked credibility and the support of many mission station residents (a similar pattern emerged in the ‘traditional homelands’ created by the apartheid state and the traditional leaders appointed therein, as with the forced resettlement and villagisation imposed throughout the country). On the mission stations, landholding changed as it passed from church to state. Up to the present, the state remains the custodian of most former mission stations, including Waldesruhe, although in many cases the commonage is now under joint custodianship of the local municipality and the DRDLR through Act 94 of 1998 (DRDLR 2010).

Management boards in the CRRs consisted of ten or more elected residents, one of whom was supposedly nominated by the Minister of the Coloured Persons Representative Council (CPRC)²⁰ and later, from 1984 and 1994, the HRCP. Catling (2008) suggests that residents acquiesced to the members of and management by this board. He suggests that opposition was typically from the local church minister and salaried newcomers to the area. This does not seem to have been the case in Waldesruhe, however, where the membership of the WMB was dominated by active elders of the Waldesruhe NGSK *kerkraad*, most of whom represented relatively wealthy, influential and respected families in the village. Educated NGSK members, originally from outside the village but residing there since 1960, also enjoyed prestigious positions on the WMB, notably the local primary school principals

²⁰ The CPRC was a partially elected council from 1969 to 1980, supposedly representing the affairs of the coloured population group though it was very restricted in influence and legislative powers.

who had extensive experience in interacting with government officials. During the CRR period, WMB members developed a vast experience of interacting with government bureaucrats and officials as they tried to develop Waldesruhe by constructing houses, water reticulation and sanitation, and providing electricity and tarred roads. The church and WMB members graduated from dealing with secondary resources of the church to those of the state. At the same time specific individuals developed networks within the village, across broader church networks and with neighbouring farmers, state officials and other mission stations.

In Waldesruhe there was a strong link with being a member of the NGSK, especially the *kerkraad*, and becoming a member of the WMB. In the 1970s some people transitioned into both roles. From the mid-1970s, different members of the same extended families served on both committees simultaneously. Key were the Jacobs, Lourens, Osprey, Holtshausen, Smith, McGregor, Gabriels, Dippenaar, Abrams and Koekemoer families. Some of these family members also became members of the TLC after 1994. Households (often more than one and including extended members) from these influential families were also the ones who received land through the SLAG process and were key actors in the mediation of that process (see Chapter 4). During the three decades before 1994, a significant group of the local elite formed the 'leadership' of the village through different structures, as these unfolded. This was a powerful group, of which many members were skilled in brokerage, mediation, dealing with the state and other bureaucracies, including the church, and understanding the language of the state and church. They had their own networks within and outside of the village. In this manner they had cultural capital that was embodied, objectified and institutionalised (Bourdieu 1984). They can also be considered to have had what Bourdieu (1984) called *habitus* (the embedded skills, customs and temperaments based on some of their experiences) and knowledge of different fields and associated rules (church, state, leadership, bureaucracy, neighbours). These characteristics enabled some of them to implement strategies and tactics, depending on whom they were dealing with — those over whom they had authority or those who had authority over them in various ways.

The WMB had multiple roles. Minutes indicate that during the 1970s and 1980s it was responsible for: the collection of local taxes (rates) from residents; the administration and allocation of all lands (residential and commonage); the planning and maintenance of infrastructure (residential and public); the allocation of housing rights, regulatory control over visitors and temporary residents (who were often expelled for minor offences); and the delivery of basic services for which several residents were employed on a more or less permanent basis over the years. Board members often had to manage conflicts between husband and wife or between neighbours. Some informants who had been WMB members reported that these numerous responsibilities often exceeded their capabilities, as they generally lacked expertise in the demands placed upon them. Others felt they were equipped to handle most situations. However, some serving members of the WMB noted that it tended to function autocratically and selectively, with some members often favouring the needs of friends and family while overlooking certain types of misconduct and infringements of individual rights. When it came to local development, the WMB, like the boards in other CRRs, was often slow to make decisions and comply with the various CPRC and DLGHA development plans, even though it (and the other boards) was

generally seen as a puppet of the apartheid state by some local residents and political activists (personal communication, official in the former DLGHA 2006).

Interviews with residents who served on the WMB from the 1970s to the early 1990s indicated several interesting trends. Often the same people were re-elected because no one else was willing to take their place or oppose them. Even if they were unpopular, local residents still elected them because they had the skills and demeanour to deal with officials, mediate change and access important secondary resources. Some members considered their roles and functions to be unfulfilling. Others indicated that they tried to mediate between the perceived harshness of the state and the needs of local residents — similar to Gluckman's idea of the intercalary role of the village headman (Gluckman, Mitchell and Barnes 1949) — but also juggled their relationships as best as circumstances would allow (Kuper 1970; Mair 1968), by drawing on the support of other residents (see case of unit farming below). A few openly acknowledged that they saw their role as implementing the laws of the state no matter how autocratic these seemed. These few also argued that the laws were generally based on Christian principles and that, as good Christians, everybody should obey them, thus illustrating how far the National Christian ideology of the National Party had penetrated the consciousness of some residents, as well as the strong link between the NGSK *kerkraad* and the WMB. Despite the change from mission station to CRR, many board members believed that Waldesruhe should remain governed on the principles and doctrine of the church. Interestingly, some who held this view had also changed denomination on a few occasions, returning to the WMB as they were elected or nominated by peers.

The norm for male schoolteachers and NGSK elders to become members of the WMB indicates an element of paternalism. This is further illustrated by the behaviour of some members. During the CRR period, perceived transgressions of local laws were punished in a variety of ways. Some of these laws were NGSK laws or beliefs and others were CRR bylaws. Public drunkenness was punished by means of fines and threats of expulsion. Repeat offenders were expelled from the village but were seemingly able to return after a few months, sometimes even weeks, at the whim of the WMB or a particular senior member. Any interpretation of inappropriate dress amongst women resulted in a stern reprimand. Inappropriate dress and public drunkenness could result in explicit reprimands in front of the entire NGSK congregation at the Sunday church service, humiliating the offenders and simultaneously illustrating the strong links between WMB practices and the NGSK. Those who considered this public humiliation inappropriate gradually moved to other denominations, as these were permitted once the mission became a CRR. Visitors who had not reported their presence to the WMB or stayed overnight without permission were expelled as were young women who had children out of wedlock. So, despite managing new regulations, the WMB appealed to NGSK Christian doctrine in gauging seriousness and consequences of a wrongdoing. The NGSK never seemed overly concerned about the loss of members. In the ten years I visited the village, it remained the largest single denomination (personal communication, local minister, 2008). Younger WMB members said that they often went along with the decisions of the older members, whom they believed had greater experience in these secular affairs, in order to reduce confrontation within the WMB. There appears to have been a firm hierarchical structure in the WMB and younger members only became a member of the executive if supported by the elders, particularly NGSK elders (personal interview, Paul Jacobs, 2008).

When a serving member of the WMB (until the 1990s predominantly male) had a problem with other members, he would resign from the NGSK and join another denomination. Here he would soon work his way onto the church board and from there back onto the WMB. Errol McGregor was one of these individuals. However, on the whole the WMB was strongly representative of the NGSK members. On numerous occasions, during interviews and in public documents, NGSK members who had served on the WMB referred to themselves as the local leadership and representatives (*plaaslike leierskap en verteenwoordigers*). This was also the position they invoked during land redistribution mediation (see chapter 4).

It is fair to say that most of those actors from the village whom I call brokers and mediators came from this elite group or were linked to it through family ties. What is important is that prior to land reform in 1995 and the honeybush project, certain Waldesruhe members had gained experience in mediating with the church, the state and local farmers as well as establishing networks. Furthermore, they often did this for their own benefit but also for that of other residents. The widow of a neighbouring farmer shared the following thoughts with me:

Errol McGregor, Piet Osprey and less frequently one of the Jacobs family would come to the house. They would talk to [her husband Karl] about politics, the village, the church and the villagers. They would ask his opinion on political and spiritual matters. Sometimes they would ask him to help out a worker or to find one of the women in Waldesruhe work. The farmers here had a good relationship with the [Waldesruhe] community. Errol and Piet worked hard to ensure a good relationship. According to [her son] Franz, they still have a good relationship although there are less villagers working on the farms. He sees Ted McGregor, who occasionally comes and looks for advice and old things he is not using (interview with Cecilia Badenhorst, September 2008).

In light of this statement it would be difficult to see Errol, Piet, Ted or anybody else from the village who approached the farmers as patrons (both Kurt and Derek also had strong relationships with neighbouring farmers, borrowing implements or getting access to agricultural inputs). Rather, they are better understood as brokers or mediators who drew on secondary resources, owned by others, rather than their own direct or first order resources (Lindquist 2015). They definitely had experience sourcing secondary resources, some over three or four decades. On the other hand, the state, the church and neighbouring farmers are better construed as patrons owning first order resources. Of course, how we define the church is based on positionality, as churches, like many development agencies, have to do a lot of mediation to attract resources and thus have their own skilled brokers. The same can be said of officials in government departments. I got the impression from Cecilia Badenhorst that Karl often used his networks with other farmers to find work for Waldesruhe residents, so this does not necessarily make him a patron all the time. Following Lindquist (2015) and Olivier de Sardan (2005), it might be useful to focus on the act rather than the actor if we are to fully comprehend the type of mediation and mediator. Sometimes the outcomes of mediations were favourable and resources were obtained, jobs secured, and government interventions mediated rather than rejected outright. At other times

mediations did not have such favourable outcomes. Unit farming and the arrival of the *inkommers* provide specific examples of a positive and a negative outcome of mediation.

Unit farming (*eenheidboerdery*)

The Rural Coloured Areas Law 1 of 1979 was an attempt to consolidate and amend the legislation concerning to the control, improvement and development of the CRRs and 'coloured rural settlements'.²¹ It granted the management boards more discretion and control over local administration and promoted the idea of economic driven *eenheidboerdery* involving modern technologies. Between 1980 and 1984 the government attempted to increase the agricultural productivity of some CRRs by getting the management boards to divide the land into clearly demarcated agricultural and residential zones, with well-defined residential plots. An important intention was to eliminate communal farming close to the nucleus of the settlement, retaining this land exclusively for housing, and to subdivide the *buitemeent*, especially in large CRRs, into 'economic agricultural units' for *eenheidboerdery*, as a step towards commercial production using modern inputs. The intention of these contentious subdivisions was to privatise land parcels on the *buitemeent*, in the belief that this would then encourage agricultural entrepreneurship, improve production outputs and result in the conservation and protection of *buitemeent* lands, which were seriously overgrazed and eroded in many areas (Boonzaier 1987; Boonzaier and Sharp 1994; Catling 2008; Robins 2008). Potential farmers qualified themselves for these economic units by owning at least 200 head of small livestock or holding assets to the value of R 3 000 and being able to pay the annual rent of R 300 (Catling 2008). As with the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development programme that superseded SLAG in 2001, with its stringent financial criteria for entrance, *eenheidboerdery* meant that only wealthier farming households were practically able to access these 'economic units'. According to local residents, nobody in Waldesruhe was in the position to participate financially in *eenheidboerdery*.

On some mission stations *eenheidboerdery* was met with opposition by residents of different socio-economic strata. Robins (2008: 39) illustrates how the wealthier and modernising cohorts in Namaqualand embraced the findings of the 1976 Theron Commission,²² combined it with 'locally-embedded religious' doctrines of 'individuality and Christian self-reliance, dignity and self-development'

²¹ While the 'coloured rural settlements' were often included in respective legislation, it seems that such legislation had limited impact on their existence with regard to land and residential property rights and ownership (personal communication, local NGO worker, June 2001).

²² The Theron Commission was officially called the Commission of Enquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group. It drew on Oscar Lewis's (1966a, 1966b) culture of poverty thesis.

and pushed for individual ownership of the *buitemeent* as necessary for escaping poverty.²³ Thus, even if the 1992 rural development planners in South Africa ignored ideas of individuality, here we have recent signs of individual wealthy farmers and households showing little interest in communal practices — at least in agriculture.

Entirely ignored by state proponents of *eenheidboerdery* was the historical system that prevailed on the former mission stations in which residence or occupancy status entitled households to access a small parcel of land for limited livestock grazing and some small horticultural production. Sharp and West (1984) argue that this was a safety net that protected CRR residents from absolute poverty and provided a measure of social dignity during times of excessive hardship. Additionally, it was acceptable practice that firewood and wild food could be gathered from the *buitemeent*. Privatisation would thus deny the majority of the residents on the CRRs access to these communal natural resources. At the time of the Theron Commission, on some mission stations the larger agricultural land in the *buitemeent* was already farmed by a handful of wealthier registered occupiers who had usufruct rights (i.e., right of use depended on them not destroying or wasting the land and its natural resources, which according to the Theron Commission many were doing anyway) to cultivate crops and graze livestock.

In Waldesruhe, one of the biggest challenges was topographical in that by the 1980s much of the *binnemeent* and the flatter parts of the *buitemeent* were set aside for housing in accordance with earlier legislation (Phases 2 and 3 in Figure 1). The remaining *buitemeent* was largely inadequate for farming or residential purposes because of the uneven, rocky and sloping terrain and the dispersed form that housing had taken on (see Figure 2). Two or three hectares here or there could be farmed as a small unit (see the pieces of land at the bottom and the top right-hand corner of the Y in Figure 1) but usually these were allocated to a specific household's use with no time limits imposed. Farmers would have to remove the numerous trees on the slopes and gullies to increase the extent of arable land. This situation prevented officials pushing the idea of *eenheidboerdery* in Waldesruhe as persistently as they had done in other CRRs. However, there was also social opposition to *eenheidboerdery* from various WMB members and some residents. According to church elder Piet Osprey (personal communication, November 2001), there were several reasons for this opposition, even if the state supported the move by providing a tractor and implements and despite the good relationship between neighbouring farmers, the *kerkraad* and the WMB.

Some WMB members argued that *eenheidboerdery* in the *buitemeent* would eliminate the safety net for poorer residents and prevent access to land for cultivation for those in between migrant contracts. This reflected with their own positions as relatively poor residents mostly working outside of Waldesruhe, or being dependent on local contract and seasonal work. Their own need to conserve the little arable land available seems to have underpinned their unwillingness to adopt *eenheidboerdery*

²³ My interview with Ted McGregor (see Chapter 6) shows a similar interpretation about the value of the honeybush demonstration project. He sees some of his peers as being short-sighted and not understanding the long-term benefits that could be accrued from the honeybush project.

and associated privatisation of the land through long-term contracts. According to Piet Osprey, the WMB informed the state officials that *eenheidboerdery* would negatively affect the majority of residents and that residents were opposed to it. Key mediators at the time were Errol McGregor and Derek. Yet the WMB minutes of the 1980s indicated that it had already received a tractor, ploughs and a bush cutter from the state as part of an *eenheidboerdery* package — that was not to be implemented. This set a precedent (exploited later during the land redistribution intervention), showing how the state could be manipulated if one knew the rules of the game.²⁴ The *eenheidboerdery* is a clear example of mediation by WMB members to ensure that they accessed resources but that state intentions did not negatively affect them or other villagers. Members understood and mediated between the state's need to distribute resources and see these being used, and the local need to conserve arable land for the 'greater good'.

Mediation and brokerage were not as effective, however, around the arrival of *inkommers* in Waldesruhe and the acquisition of a neighbouring farm in the 1980s, with ill will still prevailing amongst some families. From the information available to me it is unclear towards whom the mediation was biased, but what is evident is that the resultant social rifts impacted on the land redistribution mediation process. I examine this in the next section.

Inkommers, housing, land and social rifts

The establishment of the Ciskei 'independent' state in 1981 impacted on Waldesruhe because it led to the resettlement of approximately 62 coloured households to the village in 1986. By 1990 15 of these households had returned to their former location. The link for resettlement in Waldesruhe was created by the *dominee* of the settlement in the Eastern Cape, as their representative, and his father Errol McGregor, as representative of the Waldesruhe NGSK and WMB. NGSK ties were the deciding factor for the relocation of the group to Waldesruhe. The outcome of this mediated relocation was that 152 hectares of farmland adjacent to Waldesruhe was purchased for their resettlement (marked as *inkommergrond* in Figure 1), however they were prevented from settling on this land because of prevailing legislation (discussed below). Some interviewees suggested that the money used to procure this land came from the state as part of resettlement compensation paid to the Eastern Cape NGSK. Others contested this claim, arguing that much of the money was misappropriated by the NGSK and the WMB.

The group that moved to Waldesruhe is locally referred to as the *inkommers* (literally incomers or outsiders). The term is quite commonly used in the CRRs to mark that these residents did not have the same rights in representation and land in the CRR as those held by the 'citizens' or *burghers*. The

²⁴ The WMB made the mechanised ploughing implements available to certain residents. Interviews indicated, however, that agriculture was usually done on such a small scale that horse-drawn implements were sufficient.

term thus reinforces social exclusion (Robins 2008: 29-49).²⁵ The continued use of the term after 1994 indicates the discord that persists in the village for a particular generation of households (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of how this group actively excluded the *inkommers* from the SLAG redistribution process but were foiled when the *inkommers* contested the land identified for the redistribution process).

There were many factors relating to ownership and occupancy of residential and agricultural land that caused this rancour. According to some *inkommers* and the consultant who facilitated their land restitution claim in 2003, the land was initially transferred to the WMB, a measure necessary in light of the racially based policies and property ownership legislation at the time and considered as temporary. This is confirmed in WMB minutes and those of a meeting on 8 November 1985 between the Eastern Cape NGSK and the WMB. The long-term intention, by the Eastern Cape NGSK, was that the land would ultimately be owned by the relocated NGSK members, either communally or as individuals. While the Eastern Cape NGSK went ahead in 1985 to subdivide the land at its own cost, the subdivision and land transfer were not recognised by the DLGHA of the HRCP and could not be officially proclaimed as a new extension to Waldesruhe. For this, the land should first have been transferred to the HRCP before this body would have then allocated it for incorporation into Waldesruhe. Ironically, the transfer of the land directly to the WMB gave the HRCP no control over it. The NGSK, in turn, refused to grant a post-factum transfer to the HRCP, a decision supported by the WMB as this gave it control over the land. Some informants suggest that, at the time, the WMB wanted to protect its own interests in the land (the exploitation of the natural resources and the income derived from renting out the land for grazing and cropping purposes to residents and neighbouring farmers).

When the relocated households arrived in Waldesruhe during the course of 1986, there were no physical structures built on the *inkommergrond*, a situation that prevails at the time of writing.²⁶ Apparently they were not allowed to build because the land was not officially proclaimed as part of the village. Sometime during 1985 and 1986, the DLGHA built a number of houses on Residential Phase 2 of the *binnemeent*, in accordance with Law 1 of 1979 (Phase 2 in Figure 1). It is unclear whether this

²⁵ In Waldesruhe the *inkommers* were referred to in terms of their place of origin in the Eastern Cape as well as *inkommers*. For the sake of confidentiality, I have opted to use the term *inkommers*, but it must be noted that *inkommer* applies to any outsider who comes from elsewhere or is a second-generation resident. Genealogy is very important in creating identity and to sanction belonging. The sustained use of *inkommers* by some Waldesruhe residents over 20 years emphasises their disparagement towards this group. The children of some *inkommers* married the children of *burghers* in Waldesruhe and it seems they and their children were accepted, at least across families. Other *inkommers* were not so fortunate, and two who continued to be outspoken about the relocation and the *inkommergrond* appear to be constantly disliked by a particular generation of Waldesruhe *burghers*.

²⁶ Currently, some Waldesruhe residents use the land to graze their mixed-breed dairy cattle free of rent, while the *inkommers* do not use it at all. I also heard allegations about some of the land and access to water being rented to commercial neighbouring farmers but could not substantiate these.

was as a response to the failure of the inclusion of the *inkommergrond* into the village and a means to accommodate the *inkommers* or whether it aimed merely to address the pressing need for housing in the village. The lack of housing caused conflict that made relocation and social integration in Waldesruhe untenable for some. Some *inkommers* claim the housing was intended for them; others dispute this as there were never enough houses for the anticipated 62 households; and yet others suggest that there were insufficient houses for the *inkommers* because Waldesruhe residents had occupied some of the structures before their arrival. Some Waldesruhe residents, in turn, claim the housing was specifically built for them. Others consider the allocation of the new houses to the *inkommers* as an ‘invasion’ of their land and ‘occupation’ of their housing. Such perceptions prevailed despite apparent interventions by the WMB and the fact that it and the NGSK were jointly responsible for the allocation of houses in Waldesruhe to resettled households because of their membership of the NGSK (not because the WMB largely resembled the NGSK *kerkraad*). The problems that arose through the relocation process tend to support the accusation that the WMB and the *kerkraad* were marked by weak accountability, administration and governance structures and by autocracy and nepotism.

Villagers from both groups recalled the violence and conflict that these difficulties triggered. Houses occupied by *inkommers* were vandalised for a number of weeks after their arrival. One Saturday afternoon in 1986 tension escalated and acts of arson and physical assault were committed before the police restored order and ended ‘an afternoon of bloody violent confrontation’. The lack of housing led 15 households of *inkommers* to gradually return to the Ciskei. Those who remained never received a Deed of Allotment or a Deed of Grant, or even a lease with the WMB (a situation shared with numerous Waldesruhe residents who also had no proof of ownership or occupancy). The *inkommer* Alvin Foster reported, for example, that he was forced to return to the Eastern Cape after he was expelled from his house in 1990 for disagreeing with Errol McGregor, the WMB chairperson at the time. Most of the remaining *inkommers* left the NGSK and joined the Catholic congregation where they were accepted by *burghers* who were members.

Some of the older generation of *inkommers* claim that intimidation persists and that they are often excluded from community events and development opportunities despite their presence on local committees. They note how one *inkommer* was not informed of crucial housing forum meetings in 1995 to discuss the future of the *inkommergrond* and that they were never invited to be part of the farmland redistribution process. In general, the claim was made that the existing structures in Waldesruhe had ignored the *inkommer* leadership, none of whom were ever invited to serve on the WMB or the later TLC.

It is plausible that malice was intentional. As I show in Chapter 4, the WSFA had its eye on the *inkommergrond* for farming and redistribution and it is unlikely that it would have encouraged housing on the land; the *inkommers*, on the other hand, would not want to lose this land through the farmland redistribution process, as they believed it was their land, provided to the households as part of compensation for the forced removal. Antagonism towards certain individuals still remains on both sides of the divide, with accusations about where the money to purchase the *inkommergrond* came from, how much was actually received by the NGSK and, possibly, the WMB (or at least certain members), as

opposed to how much was spent on the purchase of the land and the subdivision thereof. One particular Waldesruhe resident was accused of collaborating with the Eastern Cape NGSK elders to ‘steal’ the balance of the money involved in the relocation. Questions were voiced about what happened to the assumed balance of this money although no overall total amount was ever disclosed. The sum originally received was allegedly more than the purchase price plus survey, subdivision and transfer costs. In conflict with this interpretation are WMB minutes from 1987 according to which the surveying and subdivision costs had not been fully paid up.

Accusations relating to the plundering of natural resources (indigenous trees) and the illegal lease of water rights and land to neighbouring white farmers feature in WMB minutes and draft land restitution claim documents I reviewed. And yet, despite the discontent that was raised during interviews, many of the *inkommers* interviewed reported making firm friends with Waldesruhe residents and intermarriage between the communities occurs. In some cases, Waldesruhe residents have joined their *inkommer* spouses back to the Eastern Cape. Waldesruhe residents made similar statements and few of the long-term Waldesruhe residents gave any indication that animosities remain. Nevertheless, tensions still exist with certain Waldesruhe residents seeing *inkommers* as troublemakers and some *inkommers* considering certain members of the Waldesruhe community as untrustworthy.

My repeated attempts to get clarity on the status of *inkommers*’ restitution claim for the *inkommergrond* from the Southern Cape Regional Land Claims Commission proved unsuccessful. At every turn, I was informed of two factors. First, their claim had to be for the land they lost in the Eastern Cape, from where they were originally relocated in 1986. Once that claim was settled, the Commission for Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) could investigate a claim for *inkommergrond*, now owned by the local municipality. Secondly, the official claim documents had been sent to the Eastern Cape Land Claims Commission and I could not see them as there were no copies. This was despite the fact that the *inkommers* and other Waldesruhe residents considered the claim was about the land adjacent to Waldesruhe, meaning the *inkommergrond*. I was eventually told by officials at the CRLC that, as the claim for the Eastern Cape land was not processed and no decision made, the matter was *sub judice* and CRLR officials would not talk to me or shed any further light on the matter. While this was frustrating for me as a researcher, it was infuriating for the *inkommers* who have waited more than thirty years for their land, land which appears not to have been transferred to them because of the apartheid legislation at the time (interview, Alvin Foster, February 2008; personal communication, restitution consultant working for the *inkommers*, 2008 and 2009). Their history is shadowed by the experience of political, economic and land rights abuse in Waldesruhe and the Eastern Cape.

Livelihoods in Waldesruhe — the agrarian absence

In 2000 the pattern of external employment and migration persisted. Unlike other CRRs, Waldesruhe is uniquely positioned that residents can easily access economic opportunities in the many growing coastal and inland towns in the southern Cape and surrounding districts. There was never an elite cadre of full-time farmers as there was in some of the Namaqualand CRRs.

Neil Jacobs was in his eighties when I first met him in 2000 tending sweet potatoes. He was a former labour tenant in the surrounding district until apartheid legislation in the 1960s forced him to leave the farm on which he and his family of thirteen dependents had lived for more than a decade. He acquired land in Waldesruhe through family ties and built a home. While he attempted some farming, lack of sufficient arable land and apartheid legislation prevented him from producing and selling on a scale to the markets in Cape Town, as he had done as a labour tenant. The limited local market for his produce resulted in him focusing on subsistence farming. He worked as the gravedigger in the village and on neighbouring farms, but was only paid when he worked. He supplemented this with occasional work on neighbouring farms. His story reinforces the notion that agriculture in Waldesruhe was not a mainstay livelihood but more a residual act for household consumption and a safety-net activity.

Waldesruhe lies within South Africa's winter rainfall area but also experiences limited rainfall throughout the summer months. In 1999, the DOA-WC included it in an inventory of coloured settlements in which agriculture is practiced (CDAWC 1999). According to this inventory, the southern Cape is a mixed farming area of sheep, dairy cattle, fruit, vegetables and winter grains, such as wheat and canola, typically farmed by large-scale commercial farmers. The area has a temperate, humid climate (Catling 2008). Rainfall is consistent, with an annual average of between 580mm and 695mm, making Waldesruhe and surrounds suitable for agricultural production. Potatoes, beetroot, carrots, butternut squash and cabbage were the most commonly cultivated crops and were produced under dryland conditions, as neither the sparse areas of commonage nor the household gardens had access to irrigation (CDAWC 1999). Although most houses have access to potable water, this is not suitable for agriculture because of its high cost and its high levels of chlorine that damages crops.

An assessment conducted in early 1998 by the DOA-WC of the agricultural potential of Bruce Jones's farmland and the farming activities in the village more widely (CDAWC 1998)²⁷ indicated that the cattle in the village were predominantly cross-breed dairy cattle (approximately 120 in number) most of which grazed and drank on the *inkommergrond*. There were also approximately 25 pigs. About 10 households owned horses, used as draught animals for ploughing fields and transporting produce from the fields to the home. While pigs were kept for slaughter or selling, cattle husbandry acted primarily as investment; individual cattle were sold irregularly and only when the owner required money — during a

²⁷ These types of government assessments are often conducted over one or two days at the most and involve meeting with one or two residents who recount what they can recall about the past months. It is unrealistic to expect this methodology to produce accurate figures and time frames. Thus, from 2000 until I left, I know of only three people who were involved in pig production — in 2000 — each with about 5 pigs. Also, the number of cattle fluctuates enormously at any particular time, depending on a household's needs or even weather patterns and economic trends. This particular report was six pages long and suggests that further assessments are required. Its weaknesses and its subsequent acceptance by the DLA-SC and the minister suggest that its primary intention was to push land redistribution and not agricultural development.

household crisis — or when offered a good price (see Ferguson 1990). Limited income is required for this type of investment as most cattle range freely and are fattened-up before selling. Costs involve purchasing calves, necessary medication and products for 'fattening-up'. This was confirmed in interviews with Cyril Abrams, Kurt, Derek and Craig.

During the 1970s a few households raised dairy cattle and sold milk, using their relationships with some of the neighbouring white dairy farmers to facilitate this process. Apartheid legislation prevented them from selling milk directly to dairies. I came across only 10 people who could recall these endeavours: their impression was that the total number of cattle involved was extremely small, about 20 or 30 head of cattle. In 2006 Craig had about 20 head of dairy cattle but used the milk to feed the calves. Craig is permanently employed as a veterinary assistant and uses his income and experience to realise his dream of being a small-scale dairy farmer sometime in the future. He employs somebody to mind his livestock, which are grazed on parts of the *buite-meent*. Wealthier cattle owners, who have access to some land and stable income, like Craig are fearful of livestock diseases that can be transmitted when cattle are reared communally. They tend not to graze their cattle on the *inkommergrond*.

As the population grew and the demand for housing increased, few household plots are still a morgen in size; indeed, most no longer have home gardens. The Phase 2 and Phase 3 township extensions from 1980 consist of very small plots of about 300 m² to 400 m², too small for any decent-sized vegetable garden. This change to denser residential areas seemed to occur parallel to the provision of more and better services. Some informants state that the period between 1975 and 1987 was the period of greatest development in Waldesruhe when it came to services and housing. A new primary school was built in the 1970s, a water reticulation system was introduced around the same time and several of the roads were gradually tarred (though the main road through the village is still a gravel road). Electricity, plumbed water and sanitation were also introduced. In the late 1980s the Forestry Services (*Departement Bosbou*) built a number of houses in Phases 1 and 3 for some residents. Older brick housing from the 1960s can also be found in these phases.

Agriculture in Waldesruhe, at least from the mid-20th century, appears to have been confined to household gardens and limited livestock husbandry, with occasional attempts to sell small surpluses locally. There is very little evidence from interviews and workshops that agriculture was practised on any broad scale by most inhabitants. The limited activities steadily declined over time and it is arguable that the mission station was never a major hub of agricultural activity despite the few localised residents who farmed out of need in times of abject poverty and unemployment. Despite being a successful farmer before he came to Waldesruhe, Neil never managed to return to that occupation and, like most residents, was dependent on alternative employment. The decline in household gardens is not exclusively attributable to the growing demand for residential property but also to an increased need for incomes through varied migrant labour activities and insufficient time to manage these gardens.

Warden (1989) indicates that from the 1870s, urban industrialisation offered new economic opportunities for mission station residents, but these were acts of temporary migration rather than permanent relocation to towns and cities. Thus, temporary migration was historically an important part

of the mission way of life, as much as it was for the inhabitants in the native reserves by the turn of the 20th century. Catling (2008: 17) describes contemporary residents of mission stations as ‘historically disadvantaged communities of migrant wage earners, pensioners and part-time farmers’. By the 1900s, migrancy was a way of life on many mission stations in the Western Cape and industrialisation and growth of the surrounding towns provided increasing opportunities for non-agricultural employment. This included demand for female workers in factories and as domestic workers in the sea-side suburbs.

Many of the men born in the 1940s and 1950s learned trades and entered the construction industry as painters, carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, tilers, plumbers and electricians. The practice of agriculture was reduced even further during the 1970s and 1980s when many young artisans worked throughout South Africa, returning only when contracts were completed. Other men obtained driver’s licenses and became truckers, spending long periods away from home. During the absence of menfolk, neighbours or family members occasionally worked their land, giving their families a portion of the harvest. Yet, as increasing numbers of men moved into migratory labour patterns, this support system declined and those remaining behind had to look after their own gardens. This shift, along with the time women spent commuting to the surrounding towns, meant that less attention was given to home gardens.

Derek recalls his experiences of this period and sums up the situation from the 1960s:

My father [Neil Jacobs] farmed before we came here. He was a labour tenant. As a child, I helped him farm. It is in my blood. He fed and educated all of us [12 children]. Then we came here in the 1960s. Other people here farmed in those years, but it was mainly for own use. Sales were small. In the 1970s I learned a trade. That is what we brown people [coloured people] did. ... Farming was not for everybody. You needed money, land and water — you still need that. Some were truck drivers. My brothers and I travelled around Transvaal and Eastern Transvaal [referring to the current provinces of Gauteng, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga] working on construction sites. We were builders and only came home for Christmas or after the contract. ... Jenny [his wife] only worked occasionally. I sent money and she raised our children. ... Few people had vegetable gardens in those years. There was not always space and there was little time. The women had seasonal work on the white farms and the men were away for long periods. The old people farmed on the *meentgrond* [*binnemeent*] and some farmed when we had no job. A job was important, even in those years. With money, you could invest. You could buy a car. I have a shop here²⁸ ... I work for the municipality and do the maintenance here. ... I have done this since the 1980s.

²⁸ Derek ran one of the three spaza shops in Waldesruhe. A spaza shop is a very small ‘convenience store’ usually selling bread, milk, cigarettes, cold drinks, sweets and crisps. It is typically run from an individual’s house. Derek’s son ran his at times.

In an interview during 2006, Sara indicated that her husband had been a weekly migrant since 1980; even after they received land in 1999, they did not have the time to farm. WMB minutes indicate that those who farmed during the 1970s and 1980s tended to be either pensioners or members of poorer households who, lacking regular employment, sought permission to access the *binnemeent*²⁹ for planting crops and occasionally to use the tractors and implements managed by the WMB. Minutes often indicated the same individual requesting permission to use the same piece of land season after season, without anyone else requesting permission. While agriculture was a livelihood for some, it was largely for own consumption. It was less important than wage labour, often linked to temporary unskilled employment on neighbouring commercial farms, and was largely a safety-net activity when households were in dire straits.

Jeremy Quinn, a pensioner in his late 60s when I met him, noted that he learned his farming skills as a child working on neighbouring farms. He left the mission school at about 13 years of age and worked on the neighbouring white-owned farms. Jeremy is the head of one of the poorer households in the village but has no land at home to plant a vegetable garden. He has farmed on small parcels of *buitemeent* but struggles with fencing these to prevent livestock eating the crops. He managed to enclose a small section of the *binnemeent* near his house in which he occasionally planted potatoes. He and his wife were reliant on old age pensions, while he and his son Paul 'invest' in cattle that are enclosed on this land at night. For most residents, semi-skilled employment was considered more desirable than working on farms or farming themselves. Neil's story testifies that those who attempted to farm often experienced restrictions in directly accessing sufficient land and produce markets. The increased shift to a monetary economy resulted in the need for regular cash income in the form of wages and was mediated by the apartheid coloured labour preference policies.

Neighbouring farmers described a number of non-agricultural activities that were strongly evident in the village during the 1960s and 1970s but gradually decreased or disappeared altogether. These included some of the following:

- A family of furniture makers repaired wooden structures and floors and made cupboards and furniture for farmhouses when required;
- A resident beekeeper produced honey and removed hives on farms;
- Grave diggers prepared graves in the village and on neighbouring farms;
- Leather workers made and repaired saddles and harnesses and mended shoes and chair seats;

²⁹ In Waldesruhe people generally spoke of the '*meentgrond*' and only distinguished between *binnemeent* and *buitemeent* when I specifically asked. The *meentgrond* that was accessed through the WMB and the mission station was all *binnemeent* as this was the most suitable agricultural area of the settlement. As Figure 1 illustrates, most of the *buitemeent* is unfarmable due to the mountainous terrain, gullies and natural forests.

- Bricklayers and other artisans repaired and built houses in the village and on the surrounding farms. These were construction workers who had tired of working in the Transvaal or staying away from home for long periods;
- Thatchers repaired roofs in the village and on farms until thatch was replaced with corrugated asbestos, tin or tiles;
- Women took in washing and ironing from the neighbouring farms and worked as domestic workers and cooks; and
- Women picked beans and peas on neighbouring farms on a seasonal basis.

Ethel Dippenaar, a pensioner, worked as a household cleaner and cook on a neighbouring farm for most of her life. The farmer's wife taught her how to make preserves, bread and confectionery. She made and sold these to friends and at church fetes to supplement her state pension. During the 1970s and 1980s many women in the village undertook seasonal work in various agro-processing factories that existed during those years. These included the canning of vegetables and fruit and the processing and packaging of frozen vegetables. Access to motor vehicles, through savings generated from migrancy, and quicker transportation meant that more men and women in the village sought daily employment in the surrounding coastal towns, notably as tourism and gentrification increased employment opportunities. In 2011 approximately 32% of residents owned motor vehicles and there was a daily bus service to the nearest town from where taxis were used to travel to the other towns in the district. Some residents shared transport costs if they were working in the same town. At PRA workshops participants noted that motor vehicles were a sign of wealth and success. This is largely because most residents did not have cars and relied on the few with cars to provide them with transportation during emergencies and times of need. Alternative sources of employment meant that for many the reliance on neighbouring farms for employment gradually reduced, as did the reliance on the cultivation of home plots and the *buitemeent*. Movement out of the village and reliance on local farmers enabled the establishment of new and broader networks. Some people, like Piet Osprey, moved to local towns where they took up clerical and other work and returned occasionally on weekends to visit family. This enabled them to secure better education for their children (this was before the introduction of a permanent bus service to the nearest high school made this option more equally available to all residents of Waldesruhe). Piet performed as a lay preacher at the NGSK in Waldesruhe and some other settlements on Sundays, extending his relationships and networks. When he retired, he and his wife returned permanently to Waldesruhe.

Many of these historical routes out of poverty were ignored by policymakers and state officials, as was the existing diversity of livelihoods in which agriculture has little prominence. Consequently, rural development policy makers of the 1990s and their foreign advisors tended to accept the all too pervasive global developmentalist discourse that agriculture is the most crucial global driver for rural development through a combination of fundamental land reform and the dissemination of new technologies (Rigg 2006). Rigg (2006) argues just how misplaced such ideas are for South Africa and several Asian countries. The land available is often too small and many people have been locked into

other sources of livelihood for decades, while the youth are interested in urban-based activities and rewards, thanks to the migratory patterns of their parents. This is much the case in Waldesruhe.

Bryceson and Jamal (1997: 11) argue that these types of global policy recommendations are outdated and based on colonial misassumptions that the interface between Africa and the world market will retain the form of agricultural commodity exchange into the future. While some residents of Waldesruhe do have a link to agriculture, even by the 1960s it was simply one of many livelihoods available and, for those who were involved, it was never a prominent livelihood but a safety net. Secondly, agricultural improvement of land is, in the case of Waldesruhe, probably an insufficient driver for rural development, given the opportunities that exist in neighbouring towns and that could be enhanced to increase employment and income.

Conclusion

Mission stations have a long history in South Africa and exhibit many characteristics of contemporary development agencies, particularly in their struggle to attract support and access resources. Brokerage and mediation were a means of achieving this. Similarly, mission station residents adopted modernising and christianising practices on their own terms as much as they could, thereby creating modernities.

In 1994 Waldesruhe was a site that had experienced colonial forms of modernity for over a century. Like on many other CRRs, it comprised people who had experienced reduced freedoms, controlled movement and residence, lack of rights to land, loss of assets, social dislocation and paternalistic leadership, due to the political economy and legislation of the colonial and post-colonial states. Movement and residence in these areas was largely determined by the church and government policies. However, even when we note how agriculture was often attempted to uplift these mission stations and CRRs, usually with little success, it would be incorrect to assume these historical experiences were homogeneous or even similar across mission stations (James 2000b, 2001).

The WMB seems to have been part of a broader policy of extended and diffuse rule, with some WMB representatives primarily looking after their own requirements, looking after those of other residents only when it suited them and sometimes blurring the two. This appears to resonate with the traditional leadership system in the former homelands and in other CRRs. Acts of mediation appear to play out in these sites and particular individuals emerge as brokers and mediators due to control over cultural capital, habitus and knowledge of different fields, all of which enables them to mediate support and acquire second order resources. Their knowledge of rules, regulations and codes of conduct enables them to develop tactics to counter state strategies. Like the modern development agency and state, the links between these historical institutions of mission stations, church and management boards, and their colonial and post-colonial authorities, were usually overextended. This often-fractured chain enabled mediation to take place in different ways based on local patterns and behaviours rather than general planned practices. While it was agreed that Waldesruhe would not participate in *eenheidboerdery* the DLGHA supplied them with agricultural implements on the basis that the WMB was willing to manage their use by residents.

The historical migratory employment pattern for mission station residents, particularly those in Waldesruhe, enabled them to develop worldly skills that became useful when combined with local interactions with the state. It also enabled some of them to develop networks spanning provinces and extending to state agencies. The specific history of Waldesruhe residents and the emergence of an elite group of brokers and mediators, with a shared history of village and church management and often spiritual and family ties, enabled them to mediate various interventions such as *eenheidboerdery* and the relocation of the *inkommers*. This history also impacted on the outcomes of the farmland redistribution process discussed in Chapter 4. There was an absence of communality/communalism and thus social discord with the *inkommers* prevailed. These social divisions were never acknowledged after 1994. Rather, an imaginary prevailed, in particular amongst the development community, of a unified group of communally oriented agrarian villagers and, later, unified land redistribution beneficiaries who wanted nothing more than to farm. This imaginary, taken up by local residents, was to decisively shape the redistribution process that followed. Residents used it to shape land reform policies to their advantage and to acquire land without contributing to the realisation of policy proposed rural development, a process described in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Brokers and the mediation of land redistribution in Waldesruhe

[The role] of the anthropologist is to deconstruct cultural realities by making clear how these relate in often contradictory ways to the specific social contexts within which they are produced. ... [If this includes] the developers as well as those developed, then it is illuminating for them to examine and analyse the forms of behaviour and expression used in both arenas, and the extent to which these intersect and/or diverge.

— James (2000a: 143)

Introduction

Land redistribution interventions, like other development projects, are more than simple technical interventions. They are socio-political systems in which dissimilar individual and group outlooks contend for authority (Mosse 1998a) and in which enrolment and translations occur and representations are made. The acknowledgement of these activities is crucial to understand the complexity of the local development process, its shape and its outcomes (Mosse 2005a; Mosse and Lewis 2006). Although not talking about development directly but more generally about state interventions, Foucault's thoughts on project plans are nevertheless useful. He argues that these plans cannot be seen as ideals,

in the heads of a few ... [planners or] abortive schemas for the creation of a reality. They are fragments of reality ... [in that they] ... induce a whole series of effects ... [whereby they] ... crystalize into institutions, they inform individual behaviour, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things. (Foucault 1991a: 81–82)

Projects can be considered as institutions or even specific fields of practice in Bourdieu's meaning of places where acts are carried out according to specific rules and bind different people together for limited periods of time. These places are fluid as actors can come and go. Crucially, Foucault's ideas about projects gives them the appearance of different cultural fields with different rules and regulations and ways of behaviour that are determined by the actors and other factors. Despite similar design we would be wrong to think that each project will have the same outcome. The case of Waldesruhe is different in many ways to those of other LRPP sites. As Latour (1996, 1999) notes, policy is not a blueprint for projects or interventions but is rather a means for generating support for ideas for a limited period of time. Policy brings different actors together in different places where they attempt projects that strive to give the appearance of policy coherence. The final *White Paper on Land Reform* (DLA 1997) was broad and often ambiguous. In 1995 the LRPP — based on combinations of the earlier negotiations about land reform and rural development (Aliber Maluleke, Thagwana and Manenzhe 2011; James 2007) and the 1994 principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme

(RDP)³⁰ — seemingly catered for everybody who sought farm and urban land through redistribution. In practice, however, only farmland was redistributed along with the presumption that such land would be used for income-generating agricultural purposes. This opened policy up to mediation and multiple transformations, translations, distortions and modification of meanings, ideas and processes about practice, implementation and outcomes. If you wanted land in a rural area this had to be farmland and you had to represent yourself as a farmer willing to farm viably at some scale and possess a business plan indicating this.³¹ Brokers and mediators became crucial for making such translations and representations.

James (2007) illustrates how land redistribution and restitution beneficiaries reinterpret policy to shape it towards their own requirements, thereby influencing implementation and subsequent outcomes. But why should only beneficiaries reinterpret policy? The key argument of this chapter is that the flexible nature in which policy and ensuing projects, plans and objectives were mediated in Walderuhe enabled different actors to acquire support and represent (transform) policy implementation for their own individual or collective purposes. It is through policy and the mediation of project intentions that actors achieve outcomes that, while not neatly conforming to project plans, appear sufficiently to meet policy requirements so that they can suit both beneficiaries and officials. For their own reasons some actors translate and represent historical events and circumstances (Ferguson 1990), either by ignoring them, translating them or overemphasising them (Latour 1996; Mosse 2005a). A distorted picture of the historical and prevailing reality is created and embraced when it coincides with the needs of different actors, notably officials desiring rapid land redistribution and potential beneficiaries desiring land in the southern Cape. On the other hand, the policy discourse (MacDonald 1998) is a tool that enables some actors to counter the intentions of mediation by others when they felt threatened. Rossi (2006) illustrates how field staff are able to broker relationships between senior bureaucrats and villagers.

This chapter argues that mediation and the networks commanded by an individual, encouraged by the vagueness or flexibility of policy, allowed influential actors or brokers to engage with development

30 The RDP manifesto by the ANC formed the basis for the 1996 Green Paper on South African land policy and thus the 1997 White Paper. The land redistribution strategy paper of 2001 (MALA 2001), following the *Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture* (NDA 2001), marked a shift towards better-resourced farmland seekers.

31 Business plans explained the lay-out and use of the land, the crops/livestock to be produced and the projected income. They were compiled and framed in terms of contemporary agricultural technology, markets and value chains. Most often the provincial Department of Agriculture and a consultant would separately develop parts of these plans with applicants, which were then packaged by the regional DLA field officers and sent to the Minister of Land Affairs. Often the plans followed the practices of the previous farm owner. As business plans were rarely followed, they can be considered as representations of intent used mainly to acquire land.

actively and to represent selected events and use cultural resources and capital to achieve land redistribution. This amounts to the mediated interaction of Certeau's (1984) 'strategies' and 'tactics' by officials and potential beneficiaries and other actors. This argument is also a relevant precursor to the mediation of the honeybush project discussed in the next chapter. Mediation is crucial in development interactions and it is necessary for implementers and users (potential or otherwise) to engage with one another. In so doing they shape the intervention and its outcome and the consequences thereof, although these can be unexpected. With respect to cultural capital, Mosse and Lewis (2006) argue that mediation involves specific influential actors using persuasion to accumulate supporters, create or strengthen networks, and drawing on translation to sell ideas, attract resources and ultimately give meaning to the often-contradictory process of development. As a component of mediation, translation facilitates collective acceptance and merging of diverse interests that result in the shape of a project, its implementation and its outcomes, which may or may not reflect the original concept, plan and intentions. These effects become acceptable to some, or at least provide seeming coherence to the incoherent policy discourse. In Waldesruhe the incoherence emerges from a history of failed agricultural interventions combined with a new dispensation that will only provide land if it is used for agricultural purposes. However, as established in the previous chapter, Waldesruhe is not an agrarian economy; rather, it has increasingly relied on labour migration out of the CRR to access livelihoods nationally, regionally and locally. And the real demand is land for housing, not for agriculture.

The core of this chapter hinges on the brokers, networks and acts of translation involved in acquiring farmland. I begin by examining the official networks of land redistribution in the Western Cape and southern Cape. Then I look at the unofficial beneficiary networks in Waldesruhe with an emphasis on Piet Osprey as a leading broker in this network, and his other networks. I then examine how land redistribution comes to Waldesruhe, how it lends itself to brokerage across networks, how it unfolds so that various outcomes result from intended and unintended actions by different actors and the subsequent consequences. The process of redistribution exacerbates old social rifts, illustrates a lack of cohesiveness amongst beneficiaries and creates a rather powerless and strife-torn farmers association which is little more than a trust for administering land and implements; and land is transferred that is seemingly of dubious, or at least limited, quality for commercial agricultural purposes. Rapid redistribution is not really coupled with agriculture and results in a group of experienced brokers and mediators who then encounter RI and its honeybush project, the focus of Chapter 5.

The DLA-SC land redistribution networks

In the Western Cape, the provincial director of the Western Cape DLA oversaw the LRPP from 1995 to 1999 in conjunction with the provincial RDP office. Other state departments, including the transitioning provincial departments of agriculture, housing, local government and the land NGOs were represented on the LRPP steering committee, enabling the Western Cape DLA to keep provincial stakeholders informed and access their technical expertise and networks. The regional offices and personnel (e.g. the DLA-SC) were responsible for coordinating the identification, assessment, design and implementation of possible pilot projects throughout the province. My discussions with DLA-SC officials in 2000 indicated that by 1999 there were at least 27 SLAG pilot projects in the four districts they served.

The network was extensive. Local officials would report to regional directors, who in turn reported to the provincial director. He reported to the director general for land affairs who passed on project plans to the minister for approval. This created a long departmental 'communication chain' from minister to field personnel, which Mosse (2005a) and others (Li 2007; Olivier de Sardan 2005) note is diffuse, creates opportunities for mixed messages, permits limited control and enables translation at every point. Each person along this chain was mandated to get land redistribution moving rapidly. In a similar manner but in respect of restitution, James (2007) illustrates how land marked for redistribution was given to restitution applicants when the farms they claimed could not be viably returned to them. This suggests a lot of manoeuvrings to make policy appear to work. Fieldstaff and district offices would overlook and underemphasise anything that might prevent land redistribution. Indeed, it was not a linear process anywhere in South Africa (Hebinck and Cousins 2013).

Along this extensive chain were other networks with different actors and institutions. While the regional director was consulting with the regional director for the DOA-WC, fieldstaff consulted with land NGOs and village leadership. The regional director in the southern Cape and the fieldstaff also had to deal with actors, circumstances and events relating to 27 different redistribution projects. Thus, there was scope for policy messages and project plans to become reinterpreted along their vertical and hierarchical bi-directional journeys (Rottenburg 2009), through acts of translation, in attempts to secure support for projects and resources. In Waldesruhe, as in many other places, first contact was made through a local land NGO. The process began in 1995 and concluded with the transfer of farmland to the Waldesruhe Small Farmers Association (a legal body comprising of the beneficiaries) in September 1999 (indicated in Figure 1 as 'redistributed farm'). It occurred during a period in which land and agricultural policies were undergoing continual change in terms of shifting foci, new alliances and new ministers. The period from 1994 to 1999 was largely marked by the desire to rapidly redistribute farmland to many people but without any agricultural support. It already points to reasons why RI was later able to step in and introduce honeybush as agricultural product. The economic development of the redistributed farmland as agricultural land as a contribution to rural development was discussed in policy (DLA 1997) and plans, but little was in place, institutionally or otherwise, to ensure it actually happened, until the implementation of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme in 2004. Consequently, the first decade of land redistribution has been criticised as ineffective (Greenberg 2010).

The Waldesruhe land redistribution networks

Piet Osprey, then in his early sixties, and his wife returned to permanently settle in the village in late 1990. Decades earlier he had left to work in a neighbouring town, but returned occasionally to the village, especially on weekends where he would perform as a lay-preacher. His son Jeffrey and his family had returned some years earlier. Piet became a member of the WMB and retained his position as a NGSK elder and lay preacher. He purchased a dairy cow and planted a field of corn to provide fodder for it. Despite this minimal involvement in agriculture he became the main driver and broker of farmland redistribution and was considered a farmer by the DLA-SC and the RI research team. As part of the redistribution process, Piet became the chairperson of the WSFA when the DLA-SC required such an entity. How was he able to do this despite his many decades of residence outside Waldesruhe?

In Waldesruhe he was considered a man of influence in the village. He was also considered wise and worldly, knowing a lot of people. His standing and value was reinforced by his role as a lay preacher and elder for the Waldesruhe NGSK and his strong relationships with neighbouring farmers and other NGSK congregations in the district, as well as the NGK and key people in other CRRs in the region. His influence increased when Errol McGregor, a local retired schoolteacher and long serving WMB member, former NGSK elder and broker between local farmers and some community members, passed away in 1993. When the TLC was established in 1994, Piet became a councillor and his son became the chairperson.

Piet was able to use a key position of influence and belonging and his cultural capital to move into other positions, maintaining various local and other networks he had established over the decades and developing new ones as he became aware of land reform. His history, experience and skill at brokerage, along with that of several other beneficiaries, reinforces the idea that the ability to access development resources requires persuasiveness and a range of mediation skills, and that brokers are those with good communication skills and influence with which to continually sell ideas and muster support (Neubert 1996; Bierschenck et al. 2002; James 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015; Mosse and Lewis 2006). Piet and several other Waldesruhe residents were instrumental in shaping the local land redistribution process and its eventual outcome. They all had the cultural capital to do this along with different degrees of habitus and understandings of different fields. My impression of Piet and Derek in particular was that they spent a fair amount of time looking into new opportunities and attempting to understand as much about these as possible in order to acquire available resources.

In 1995, Piet heard about SLAG and the LRPP in the southern Cape through his networks linked to other churches in the region and in the main towns. He discussed this opportunity with his son Jeffrey and several peers: his cousin Marc Holtshausen, the three pensioners Neil, Michael King and Damien Smith, and three of Neil's sons, Derek, Mike and Paul. These nine individuals were related through family ties or close friendships and all were important members of the Waldesruhe NGSK, with most having served on the *kerkraad* at some stage. Six had previously served on the WMB, three of whom served on the TLC in 1995. Six of them, Piet, Marc, Derek, Paul Jacobs, Jeffrey and Michael King, can be considered 'customary leaders' in Waldesruhe, bringing with them years of experience in engaging with state bureaucracies and dealing with local residential affairs through mediation, limited patronage and gatekeeping.³² They can thus be construed as representing a group of brokers and mediators with particular skills (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Mosse and Lewis

³² In an interview in 2001, Piet indicated that local leadership was historically and currently drawn from a group of people that consisted of the more educated and 'politically' engaged members of Waldesruhe, such as school teachers and clerks working outside the village, members of the NGSK church council or those who had experience in dealing with outsiders. The latter group included people like himself who worked outside of the village in supervisory positions.

2006). Bar some minor changes in composition, this group was to drive the land redistribution process in Waldesruhe from 1995 to 1999.

According to Marc, Piet and Derek, at their initial meetings all nine agreed it worthwhile to pursue and obtain farmland in the area on the grounds that they would collaboratively or individually farm some of the land, while securing land for future use. Three of them were locally employed state employees (Derek, Jeffrey and Marc) and two were self-employed (George and Paul September), working outside of the village. These five considered farmland acquisition as a means to generate a side-line income or to use upon retirement. Neil, Michael King, Damien and Piet were pensioners and wanted land largely because they had never owned land and because they felt they now had time to farm. Initially the group of nine intended to acquire land exclusively for themselves. But this was not to be the case.

As the 'leader' of the informal group, Piet organised some meetings with a local land NGO who then introduced him to the local DLA-SC district field coordinator. At a 1995 meeting attended by representatives of the Waldesruhe group, the NGO and the DLA-SC, the group of nine was informed that to acquire farmland in the area they would need to create a communal property association with its own constitution, a legal requirement under the forthcoming Communal Property Associations Act 28 of 1996. The act was designed to 'enable communities to form juristic persons, to be known as communal property associations, in order to acquire, hold and manage property on a basis agreed to by members of a community in terms of a written [and signed] constitution' (DOJ 1996).

The group of nine was also informed that the high price of farmland in the area would require an increase in the group membership. At the time, the SLAG grant available per household was R 15 000; the combined grant from nine households was insufficient to purchase any local farmland. Eligibility for a grant was determined with an income means test, according to which a household could have a combined monthly income of no more than R 1 500. The information led to some confusion within the group and Marc withdrew from it, thinking that his household income (that was greater than R 1 500 per month) meant he was precluded from being a member of the group. Two other households that later attempted to become members of the WSFA were also excluded because their monthly incomes exceeded R 1 500. However, this interpretation of the rule was incorrect and the final government policy (DLA 1997) clarified that the *average* income of all households in a specific formal group of applicants could not exceed R 1 500 per month. This was done to enable the application by a mixed bunch of applicants — both poor and not so poor. What is unclear is whether the officials and the NGO understood this distinction at the time of the 1995 meeting. Informal interviews from 2006 and 2007 indicate that they were aware of it but uncertain whether it would be included in the final *White Paper* and thus did not feel they could act on it at the time.

The group of nine approached some Waldesruhe residents until 30 households (28 *de jure* male and female headed and two female-headed) agreed to form a farming association, known as the WSFA, that would apply for farmland through the land redistribution pilot programme. If successful, they would then form a community property association. Who was considered resident and who was approached illustrates a brief act of translation at the beginning of the process. In 2000 PRA participants

(mostly redistribution beneficiaries) reported that all Waldesruhe households were approached to become members of the WSFA, as the intention was to get more members in order to purchase a large farm in the area.³³ My own research found, however, that family, friends and work colleagues were first approached, more or less in this order, and that the process was largely informal. Despite statements to the contrary, the *inkommers* were never approached (interview with Alvin Foster and Margarete Francis, May 2007): the eight residents pushing the farmland application process assumed that the *inkommers* would eventually get access to the *inkommergrond*, which included land for both housing and farming (interview with Piet Osprey, May 2001); some also felt that the *inkommers* did not need access to land, as they had not used the *inkommergrond* since their arrival (separate interviews with Piet Osprey and Derek Jacobs, May 2001). In an interesting turn of events the *inkommergrond* was the first parcel of land identified by Piet and the WSFA for redistribution. This group appeared to be attempting to ensure that this land was officially allocated and that the *inkommers* would have no future claim to it.

Mission stations retain a history of membership selection, brokerage and mediation that seems to be part of the group cultural capital in different ways. Robins has clearly illustrated how this applied in the Namaqualand region in the 1990s to how land and cultural identity struggles unfolded. Some mission stations went about a process of cultural reinvention and reconstitution, with all its contradictions, fragmented history and inconsistencies, and in doing so enabled the contemporary expression of seamless identities (Robins 2008: 35). Community is a fluid and contested concept (Amit 2002), given its emotional and all-encompassing appeal in public rhetoric but lack of empirical referent (see also Thornton and Ramphele 1988). In Waldesruhe, membership of community hinged largely upon acceptance by influential members of the village. It had little to do with legal and geographical factors such as residence, participation, property ownership or even unity. Community membership was determined by social relations, many of them influenced by the manner in which the mission station had been managed. From 1986 there existed a strong social divide between some of the *old Waldesruhe burghers* and the *inkommers*, and some of the former, especially those in authority on the WMB, refused to accept any of the latter as community members. Notions of community and ideas about who is and is not entitled to membership provide an important resource for 'community spokespersons' to exert influence over who can and cannot be selected as a beneficiary. As I show later, this does not mean that those excluded from networks were powerless and did not have their own networks and resources.

I suggest that artful brokers and mediators in Waldesruhe, like on other mission stations, invoked selective strategies about identity and continuity from the past when they portrayed an image of a homogeneous, poor agriculture-based community, but one that simultaneously excluded

³³ According to this narrative, notices were placed in strategic areas around the village, such as the TLC offices and the clinic, while the remaining members of the group of nine went door to door to identify beneficiaries. There is no documentary evidence indicating that a formal community-wide meeting was called.

inkommers, those who had never served in positions of authority and those who were not part of the social networks around the original group of nine. I had initially thought that most of the beneficiaries were NGSK members, on the basis that all original nine attended this church, but this proved to be incorrect; several beneficiaries were members of other denominations. A crucial factor was genealogy, extended family networks and relationships developed while serving on the WMBA. Ted and Shirley McGregor, for example, became participants because Ted worked with Derek and Piet had served on the WMB with Shirley.

Some of those who were approached turned down the offer because they preferred applying for a state housing allowance, as this appeared a very real possibility in 1995 or they did not want to farm. However, as late as 2007 many had still not received this housing allowance. As my neighbour, Cyril, put it to me in 2006:

I am upset that I didn't apply for land. I would at least have got something. I got nothing. We are going to build a house soon, but it is our savings. There is still no housing grant. With land I could rent it out or even sell it. There are rumours that people intend selling their farmland now that they have individual title.³⁴

Waldesruhe is thus composed of different networks, with the strongest located around historical leadership by elite families and family ties. The community is marked by different interests, with many preferring a housing subsidy over a land grant. It also contains a group that is historically excluded because it is made up of newcomers.

Establishing the WSFA through mediation

Piet mediated his identity and that of other applicants, representing them as farmers or people having a connection to farming and farmland based on a reconstituted history of farming in Waldesruhe, because this was required by government policy: farming experience was the exclusive means of acquiring farmland in this period of rapid farmland redistribution. Only some of the Waldesruhe applicants had farming experience beyond limited vegetable garden production; most were actively participants in the non-agrarian urban wage economy. Derek often indicated that most applicants were not farmers and had very little farming experience; only five or six of the 30 applicants were able to farm. In contrast, there were residents who were experienced farmers but had not applied for land; the reason for their exclusion never became clear. One such person was Jeremy Quinn who seemed to have been excluded because he was not part of the elite group network (separate interviews with Jeremy Quinn and son, Paul Quinn in 2008). Later, he worked for some of the beneficiaries as a labourer after they received their land. This example illustrates that, like the past leadership of the village and church boards, the final WSFA represented key families.

³⁴ The WSFA constitution had a clause that for the first five years the acquired land could not be sold to non-members. While this period officially ended in September 2004, beneficiaries could only consider selling in 2007 when they finally received individual title.

At a January 1996 meeting of the applicants, attended by just more than half, the DLA-SC requested them to formalise the WSFA by finalising the constitution and to submit a request for assistance to the DLA-SC that outlined the agricultural project. The DLA-SC would then officially work with them to source suitable land and request state resources for planning grants and consultants. By the end of the month, the final group of beneficiaries was confirmed and the WSFA constituted with the following office holders: Piet (chairperson), Derek (vice-chairperson), Natasha Gabriels (secretary), Mike Jacobs (treasurer). Additional members were Gerhard Albaster, Paul Jacobs, Chris and Shirley. Four of these individuals had all served on the WMB before 1994 and three on the TLC, conforming to MacDonald's (1998) idea that rural people tend to support 'customary leaders' and to make these their representatives. Most were embedded in local social positions and relationships where their cultural capital as local elites placed them in a particularly powerful position, vis-à-vis the new state. Again, key local families were represented on this structure.

Piet, Derek, Jeffrey and Natasha undertook most of the work preparing the constitution and forming the WSFA, drafting the proposal and meeting with consultants and DLA-SC representatives, because they were generally available in the village. With the help of the local land NGO the WSFA submitted a request for assistance to the DLA-SC in March 1996, proposing why they should receive help and how the farmland would be used. The proposal illustrates how the WSFA translated the history of the village (see Chapter 3) for policy purposes and how land redistribution was the outcome of mediation. But it is first necessary to illustrate why it was possible to do this beyond the obvious policy vagaries and development dynamics of extended chains of communication.

MacDonald (1998) has argued that the emphasis in the South African land redistribution policy on participation of communities and land reform beneficiaries in dealing with the state is nothing more than an attempt to implement policy and project decisions that have already been made by government. Rottenburg (2009) makes a similar argument for development generally. Participation is less about identifying and including local needs into policy formulation and more a way of legitimising policy (MacDonald 1998: 53). The 'desirability', 'suitability' or 'soundness' of a policy is thus illustrated by how it expresses the principle of community participation, rather than by its clear definition and the application thereof. Most of the post-1994 agriculture (NDA 1995) and land reform policy documents (DLA 1996, 1997) appealed to the rhetoric of participation, community, sustainability and other developmentalist buzzwords. Their vagueness lends appeal and power to multiple and diverse users — as was the case in Waldesruhe.

Yet, as MacDonald (1998) posits, policy discourse also provides the means to mediate against strict adherence to policy requirements. She identified three groups of discursive resources that enabled applicants to make claims for support and buzzwords that were open to interpretation (MacDonald 1998: 49):

those discursive resources that draw on notions of historical injustice and perceptions of 'tradition'; those that draw on the principle of community participation in policy formulation and implementation; and those that are based on the imperative for economic development for their support.

Appeals to historical injustice and tradition enable people to represent themselves (or others) as suitable beneficiaries, while the emphasis on notions of community, local participation and partnership, and the fluidity of these concepts, provide community representatives with enormous power for negotiation to achieve what they want. At the same time the most minimal acts of participation and ideas of partnership can be translated as meeting the policy requirements. These vague concepts are fundamental to acts of mediation (transforming, translating, distorting and modifying meanings) and those who are able to use these fluid terms to their advantage we recognise as brokers and mediators. Similarly, developing business plans based on or including economically viable production also meet the minimal levels of policy discourse. Combined with flexibility in the interpretation and implementation of policy by officials, these factors enabled land-seekers and officials to achieve mutually acceptable land redistribution, even if for different reasons.

Within the land reform discourse there is an implicit assumption that the government and potential beneficiaries are like-minded and have the same objectives for land reform (James 2000a). However, MacDonald (1998: 54; see also James 2000a, 2007) argues:

While there may be agreement on the need for land, significantly more contention surrounds questions of what kind of land, for what purposes and with what additional inputs or services. These issues are assumed to be neutral and uncontentious [by experts, policymakers and implementers].

Participation (and the idea of partnership) exists as a significant discursive resource (Rottenburg 2009) that can strengthen the inputs provided by community representatives during the execution of the land redistribution project, thereby tempering state control over the process. The TLC and the WSFA executive committee effectively acted as gatekeepers, compelling state officials to recognise their authority and deal only with them or their delegates. This increased their influence over the redistribution project and controlled the flow of information, resources and their use. All ideas from consultants and officials had to pass through the WSFA executive committee before going to the broader group of beneficiaries to ensure the idea of partnership was adhered to. Relationships and direct linkage of the executive committee with the TLC ensured that officials could not bypass the WSFA or the TLC without being criticised for sidestepping democratically elected community structures and renouncing the principles of participation and partnership. Unlike the ethnographer, the officials could not appear to question structures or their legitimacy. In any event, for the sake of speeding up farmland redistribution in the area, they may not have been interested in challenging local structures and processes.

Appealing to notions of community, and claims to represent community interests, provide and increase the perceived social legitimation that requires 'community representatives' to identify resources and recipients. In Waldesruhe, Piet was an 'acknowledged community and church leader for years' (interview with DLA-SC field staff member, September 2002). He and anybody he delegated became the official point of contact in this participatory partnership. Yet MacDonald (1998: 51) posits that this form of recognition was not democratic or participatory because,

without a change in peoples' concepts and experience of authority, they will elect those who already have authority ... and [these people] continue to exercise autocratic control over these structures.

Despite the 'democratic' turn in 1994, in Walderuhe, certain individuals were supported or elected by default based on their previous roles in authoritarian leadership positions, as well as their multiple networks, family ties, generational peers, relationships with neighbouring farmers and experience and abilities to deal with state officials. Many residents of different generations saw them as being the most suitable people to represent local affairs to outside organisations. This does not mean that they were liked or that their actions were always perceived as beneficial by others, but it did mean that they met with little opposition because of the value they could bring in terms of their relationships with and understanding of outsiders — especially officials. These individuals included Piet, Shirley, Kurt, Marc, Derek, Jeffrey, Paul Jacobs and Chris. These individuals' mediation abilities were important for the survival of poor rural households, which faced inadequate and insecure access to resources, wages, remittances and livelihood opportunities (see MacDonald 1998: 59). These individuals had often been in better jobs with more stable employment and were in an ideal position to pass on favours to less fortunate individuals and to obtain resources and favours from the neighbouring farmers. They brokered relationships with villagers and farmers. This included lending money, providing food, supporting ideas, sharing knowledge, giving advice and facilitating links to livelihood opportunities that they became aware of. Some of them intervened on behalf of residents when they had problems with employers on the neighbouring farms or nearby town. Boissevain (1969) argued that these people were simply patrons and that brokerage, with regard to the control of secondary resources, was one of their functions as they dealt with both first order and second order resources. Unlike current anthropologists of development, he did not consider brokers as primarily assembling and making translations and representations.

MacDonald explains that for the LRPP the definition of community and beneficiaries was the prerogative of the community representatives. In Walderuhe, the WSFA executive and the TLC were well connected and their definitions went unquestioned, so that they became the ones who translated circumstances into other formats. As MacDonald (1998: 52) emphasises for the LRPP in general,

as long as beneficiaries meet general criteria associated with the programme, government officials can only challenge the identification of beneficiaries by challenging the representivity of these spokespersons.

In Walderuhe, doing so would have been inconceivable. The TLC was a newly elected structure in a newly democratic South Africa, and it could not be challenged without challenging the new democracy. The WSFA was strongly linked to the TLC. This freedom to identify and select beneficiaries may explain why certain influential people and their households became applicants and others did not.

Another point of interest is the small number of female-headed households that joined the group. When I questioned various residents about this, I was told that agriculture was typically a male preoccupation and that women were typically involved only in small home gardens. The final business

plan submitted to the DLA-SC in March 1998 also emphasised that agriculture was traditionally a male activity. Most households were male-headed; and when a household was female-headed, it was normally because the woman was a widow. Such a woman was often elderly or engaged in alternative sources of income, so that she was without the means to engage in agriculture. In 1995, such an individual may have preferred applying for a housing subsidy rather than a land grant, because she would not have the labour to assist her with farming. When a female-headed household thus applied for a land grant, this was done for other concerns. Shirley, for example, had no intention of farming nor did she need the housing grant as she already had a house. Yet, like other pensioners, she saw the acquisition of farmland as a means of leaving a legacy to her children.

Two sisters-in-law from beneficiary households suggested that the degree and involvement of women in agriculture was determined by household gender relationships rather than 'traditional practices'. Both women were married to men who worked outside Waldesruhe. Sara September's husband, Paul, worked away from home all week and only returned on Friday nights. According to her, the situation was as follows:

Now that we own land, we are able to plant vegetables and to sell some of these. We do not do this every year. Paul is not always around, and he does not let me work the land alone. ... He lets me plant in the home garden because it is smaller and easier for me to manage. This [home garden produce] is for us to eat. We don't sell it. [Yet] I no longer plant [in the home garden]. I make money selling cigarettes, bread and chips [potato crisps]. And sweets. I use this to buy food and things for myself. This year [2007] he has lent his land to his brother David September and Henry King. He does not want the land to sit [remain unused]. I do not know what they will farm or how much they will pay him for the land.

Clearly Paul was in charge of decision-making, especially when it had to do with commercial agricultural production. Sara repeatedly referred to the land as Paul's despite the fact that, legally, it also belonged to her — the intention of SLAG was that both household heads as a unit would hold rights to the land. Sara also suggested that it was easier for her to sell cigarettes and food items and use the profit to purchase vegetables rather than growing vegetables herself. She got no help with her home garden except for soil preparation and planting. Paul, too, found it taxing to work all week and farm on weekends. After a while, he found it easier to let the land to his brother. One reason influencing their decision not to farm was the care their disabled son required and which Sara provided.

The situation in the household of Verna September, Sara's sister-in-law, was quite different. When her father, Michael King, passed away in 1999, Verna and her husband David inherited his land, as her mother did not want it. At the time Verna worked for a national supermarket chain which required extensive travel around the district. She quit the job at the end of 2000 and attended a vegetable production and chicken layer course organised by the DOA-WC in 2001. In October 2001 she and David prepared the inherited land and started to grow vegetables:

We did this until the end of 2003. At the beginning of 2002 David started going to sea [he worked on the oil rigs] for three to five weeks at a time. I farmed. I got the

labour, planted the crops and harvested. I sold the vegetables [to hawkers in the surrounding towns]. I did everything. David helped when he returned. The soil was very hard and stony. There was no water. I had to drive [bring] water [with a pickup truck] every day.³⁵ We got the wrong piece of land. We did alright but rainfall was erratic, and you cannot rely on the rain in summer. Vegetables involve too much driving around. It hurt my back to pick up the bags and to harvest. In 2003 I stopped. I was running the chicken project [which started in December 2002] ... and the money was better. The work was not so demanding. David and I decided to use my father's land for cattle [grazing]. We put three calves there in 2004. They are still there. It is much better [grazing land] than the *inkommergrond*. Now [2007] David is clearing the Trust Land next to my father's land. We will divide this into camps and keep our cattle there. This will ensure that there is sufficient grazing for the cattle. My cousin Henry King and David farm potatoes together this year [on land rented from David's brother Paul]. We will have cattle together soon. I am helping despite running the chicken project. I fetch the inputs and the labourers. David is often at sea and Henry works all day. I do the driving and I manage the labourers. We do this [farm] together.

Unlike Sara, Verna considers herself to be an integral part of the farming activity and emphasises that it is a joint effort. Far from being excluded from decision-making, she performs a crucial role in the realm of household livelihoods and their outcomes. While Sara was unaware of what David and Henry King were intending to farm on the land that they were renting from her household, Verna knew that it was going to be potatoes and that they were going to pay Paul cash for rental of the land. She was part of this process and well informed.

While the general pattern may be that agriculture, when it is practiced commercially, is typically a male prerogative in the village, it is clear that at least one woman has performed an important role in commercialising the use of the redistributed farmland. Involvement in agriculture has more to do with the relationship between husband and wife than being simply a continuation of tradition or the typical practice of a specific gender. Furthermore, Verna and another female resident, Lucia Fredericks, jointly operate the chicken layer (battery hens) enterprise that is situated on a portion of the Trust Land and are considered to be the drivers of this project by locals and DOA-WC officials.

The structure of the WFSA group is interesting in terms of the intended policy focus as it conforms to gender, age, disability, poverty and other policy requirements despite most actors having no farming experience or intention of farming. Like the original proposal, it meets some of the more explicit requirements of the policy.

³⁵ Verna filled water containers at the storage dam, drove them to the field and irrigated the vegetables by hand.

Almost following Scott's (1998) four conditions common to all 'planning disasters' to the letter, the practice of mediation in Waldesruhe involved: the mediation of the construction of nature and society by the government; a 'high-modernist ideology' of agricultural production; the use of science and controlling state authority to drive 'large-scale interventions'; and an almost 'prostrate civil society' buying into and partnering with state plans. And yet, in a move away from Scott, we see a mediation of these conditions. Mediation does not mean that in their final outcome the projects might not appear as planning disasters, which they do for some (see Chapter 6), but rather that it allows an alternative understanding of the unfolding of development, its shape and its outcomes.

In 1996 the WSFA membership represented households consisting of eight pensioners, five disability grant recipients, one unemployed individual and seventeen self-employed or permanently employed individuals.³⁶ Three of the employed individuals worked in the village for the HRCP. At least three of those employed outside of Waldesruhe only came home on weekends or even less frequently. Several others departed early for work each morning and returned after 6pm each evening and did not have much time to attend to any farming activities, with the exception of Saturdays.³⁷

Interviews with the final group of beneficiaries indicate that less than half had been directly or consistently engaged in farming activities during recent years. Only a few had been regular active farmers or farmworkers; the agricultural experience of most was limited to small vegetable gardens at their homes or microscale livestock husbandry. Their lack of agricultural experience was ignored by officials, suggesting that this was not a key factor in their political mandate to show that redistribution was happening. The minimal likelihood of this group being able to farm 'productively' and cohesively as a collective unit once land had been allocated was also overlooked. Of course, the land reform policy was 'wise and progressive' enough to include people engaged in part-time as well as full-time agricultural activities. However, the point here is that many of this group did not appear to have the time and experience to engage in most of the project objectives as outlined in the project proposal and subsequent farming enterprise plans. It seems that it was more relevant to officials that most of the potential beneficiaries appeared poor, lived in a rural settlement, were of a particular race and had not previously owned farmland.

³⁶ This data is obtained from official DLA-SC records. While representations of income are probably incorrect in that they do not include informal earnings, the figures do illustrate the income diversity within the group. The records do not explain how the household incomes of the final 30 applicants were calculated on the basis of this data.

³⁷ Several interviewees noted that Sundays were typically spent with the family and that the only agricultural activity done would be to feed and water livestock. This had also been a mission station tradition.

Mediating land redistribution

In March 1996 and on behalf of the WSFA, Piet and Natasha submitted a request for assistance to the DLA-SC that outlined the intended agricultural project and motivated why the WSFA required support. My interviews indicated that few people, including many beneficiaries, had seen this proposal. Piet's brokering capabilities, especially translation skills, are evident in the proposal's content. It reveals some selective history, hides other matters and fits into the general rural development discourse of the time, while implying that failure to acquiesce to the request would be another act of social injustice in a history of many such injustices experienced by the villagers. The proposal outlined several reasons for requiring farmland. First, WSFA members resided on a mission station in which agriculture, in terms of self-sufficiency, had always been an existing right (*bestaansreg*) of residence. Secondly, historical agricultural practices involved vegetable and grain production and the small-scale ownership of various livestock. Thirdly, while the submission is made specifically by the 30 applicants, it claims that diverse community consultations were conducted, which supported the submission of the proposal and its plan:

The total number of people in the group is thirty. The community supports the proposal. Various community meetings have been held and the community gave their support to such a programme. (*Aantal mense in die groep is dertig. Die gemeenskap steun die voorlegging. Verskeie gemeenskapvergaderings is gehou en die gemeenskap het hulle steun toegese [sic] aan so 'n program*) (WSFA Proposal submitted to DLA-SC March 1996).

Fourthly, further support is confirmed by the fact that the TLC said it would provide land to assist the WSFA to get started. What is not mentioned in this request is the overlapping composition of the WSFA and the TLC and that the farmland offered by the TLC was the *inkommergrond*, contested since 1986. As the successor of the WMB in 1994, the TLC became custodian of the *inkommergrond*.

Despite the proposal noting limited subsistence agricultural activity, agriculture is considered more of a right than a major practice and the proposal argues that this right must be upheld for residents and extended to others (such as transient farmworkers) by making more land available. In a rather contradictory manner, the proposal requested more land but implied that land was available for immediate use. This opens the question why more land was required if land was immediately available for the WSFA and could be arranged through the TLC? It was a contradiction the DLA-SC officials never examined and could not explain to me during interviews. I would argue that the policy in 1995 focused on those who had no official ownership of farmland, so that the availability of land in Walderuhe for farming was not considered a challenge to redistribution. It was a period of fast-track farmland redistribution. The proposal also makes no mention of a shortage of residential land or even conflict over land ownership, nor do DLA-SC documents until late in 1997. This illustrates how mediation involves the selective use of facts on the basis of what is deemed likely to attract or entice support, and how it avoids matters that might hinder the process. The proposal's invocation of the community suggests cohesiveness and agreement, despite the troubled past involving the *inkommers* and the

rivalries that existed in the village. The proposal claims that all 220³⁸ households (*gesinne*, literally referring to families) in the village support the 30 households receiving ownership of land. My research, however, uncovered no record of such support and non-beneficiaries interviewed reported they had not seen the proposal.

Interestingly, the proposal describes the general poverty amongst Waldesruhe residents and mentions alcohol and drug abuse in the village. It posits that employment is largely seasonal, and projects are needed to create employment in the 'off-season' and that agricultural opportunities would be a main source of income during this period. The proposal records that the community of Waldesruhe is morally obliged to assist homeless farmworkers and that during their temporary stay in the village they can participate in agricultural projects and earn an income. It is also desirable that farmworkers with family ties can retire to Waldesruhe. It ignores issues such as markets for agricultural goods and housing in a situation of housing shortages. It also does not draw a clear link between 30 people receiving agricultural land and the realisation of the proposed benefits by everyone else staying temporarily or permanently in the village; it only gives the general sense that the local leadership, in a rather patriarchal fashion, will lead others to better socioeconomic conditions. Yet it leaves open the questions of how the other villagers will be employed and how the land grants and support given will assist with the social and health problems highlighted in the proposal. What the proposal does have is a very clear invocation of desirable developmentalist jargon (needs, community, improved wellbeing through economic agricultural activities) and identification of sought after disadvantaged groups (farmworkers, the unemployed, the poor, historically disadvantaged).

The proposal postulates three types of agriculture for the farmland redistribution and development project: home gardens for producing vegetables for own consumption; small-farmer units where individuals would farm commercially, resonating closely with the idea of *eenheidboerdery* of the 1980s; and a commercially oriented community farm, which would provide employment for community members, infrastructure for the individual units and funds to upgrade unspecified community facilities in the village. It seems ironic that this plan largely follows practices that had dwindled and failed in the 1980s. Their use only makes sense when we acknowledge that this type of model covers all the bases from food security to smallholder and largeholder agricultural production as envisioned in the later *White Paper on Land Reform* (DLA 1997: 35). Furthermore, it makes sense when we view it in terms of the mediation of state opportunities and resources by groups that desire to acquire land for multiple purposes, an aim they cannot openly proclaim.

38 The figure of 220 appears to be exaggerated. At the first PRA meetings that I facilitated in July 2000, the figure was given as approximately 120 households. Official municipal figures in August 2008 suggest that there were 186 households, including the informal dwellings established on the Phase 3 residential land since 2000. Census 2011, in contrast, indicates 308 households, but includes some that fall outside of the Waldesruhe boundaries (see Figure 1).

Although the proposal mentioned no specific monetary amount, as this was not required of it, it did ask for financial support to continue with community consultation and facilitation, agricultural planning, the provision of water, the reclamation (soil evaluation and preparation) of agricultural land, the provision of infrastructure, the training of a core group of farmers, and working capital. The land it identified as being available for loan to the WSFA by the TLC and for which it needed money for training and immediate project implementation was 65 of the 152 hectares of the *inkommergrond*. It focused on this land because it was already being used by some WSFA members and residents for cattle grazing and some grain and vegetable farming. My interviews revealed that approximately 30 residents grazed cattle on this land but only two, Clement Gabriels and Martin Lourens, planted vegetables on a micro-scale for household consumption. A portion of the land had also been rented out to a neighbouring farmer for grain cultivation. The authors of the proposal believed that TLC ownership of the land would facilitate its transfer to the applicants; they chose not to mention the contestation and conflict that existed over this piece of land since 1986 of which all WSFA and TLC members were well aware. Again we see how an attempt to obtain this land is carefully orchestrated through mediation in which some facts are not revealed.

The proposal indicated that the community had a strong leadership, enabling residents to take control of their own circumstances and future, but that it was realistic enough to know that key people required further agricultural training. The document implied that the WSFA members were these key people. The proposal concludes that there is great development potential in Waldesruhe and the reason that development has not materialised is the lack of development opportunities, better employment opportunities and poverty. It emphasised a strong link between its proposed agricultural development project and the RDP. Its final appeal is that the Waldesruhe community must be seen to benefit from the LRPP projects in the southern Cape, an urgent requirement due to fact that the social, built and natural environments were gradually deteriorating. It appeals to developmentalist ideas of sustainability, stakeholder consultation, community, poverty, lack of opportunity and decent employment, tying these to the intentions of the RDP and indicating the urgency of the intervention to halt community and environmental deterioration. The proposal's implied intention to address broader local needs also spoke to DLA-SC criteria for recognition as beneficiaries.

This was a short, well scripted proposal that had the right tone, leaving room for both parties to manoeuvre once initial support was provided. It was not cast in stone. Although I could not get confirmation for this, there were suggestions that DLA-SC officials and the local NGO assisted the authors. During 1995 and 1996 the DLA-SC contracted a number of local NGOs to assist with the drafting of proposals and constitutions, given their experience with and access to local communities (interview with DLA-SC official, September 2008). This illustrates strong collaboration between the government and the NGOs.

What emerges from the Waldesruhe proposal is that it is a carefully crafted document that excludes and translates many facts about the history and contemporary situation. No mention is made of the high employment rate and dependency on local migrant employment; it focuses instead on agriculture as a historical right of residence. It also coincides nicely with the RDP intentions and the

land reform discussions of the early 1990s. It evokes an image of an isolated village in which a group of benevolent families and leaders are willing to lead the other households out of dire poverty. This picture does not fit with the data identified in Chapter 3 on livelihoods in the village. It clearly shows how beneficiaries and their mediators are willing to bend the facts to acquire land.

What takes place in Waldesruhe may not occur in other similar settlements, as what transpires here is largely dependent on the translations undertaken by particular actors during specific encounters (Long 2001). Mediation and its element of translation enabled WSFA representatives to ensure that they appeared to be in agreement with government intentions and principles. They reinforced this notion by ensuring that women were represented on the WSFA executive committee; that members attended workshops on the mechanisms of the process; that the necessary legal constitutions were compiled; and that other bureaucratic formalities were adhered to throughout the process (minutes of WSFA meetings, submission of proposals, attendance of meetings). This adherence to bureaucratic protocol enabled them to engage with government on government's terms and gave the appearance that they acquiesced to government authority. Effectively actors used policy vagaries to obtain what they wanted on their terms where possible. However, they were to encounter opposition from within Waldesruhe and within the WSFA that changed the shape and outcome of the farmland redistribution and delayed the process.

Conflict over land with the *inkommers*

The farmland the WSFA proposal identified for redistribution was the *inkommergrond*. According to Piet and some others, this land was a good choice for redistribution because by this point it was managed by the TLC when this organ replaced the WMB in 1994 and its future was uncertain. Redistribution was a way in which its future for Waldesruhe could be ensured. Its advantages were that it had water rights, was adjacent to the village and had traditionally been used by some residents (Piet Osprey, interview, May 2001). The idea to use this land appears to have met little resistance from DLA-SC officials. The resistance came rather from the *inkommers* and the Eastern Cape NGSK. For this we need to recap the history around this piece of land.

When the *inkommers* were relocated to Waldesruhe in 1986 they brought with them the farm indicated as *inkommergrond* in Figure 1. This was ostensibly purchased using state money paid for the loss of their land in the Eastern Cape. Despite subdivision of this land, there were no houses or services when they arrived. Due to legal complications at the time, the HRCP would not allow this land to be incorporated into Waldesruhe. To overcome this, the Eastern Cape NGSK transferred the land to the WMB. After Act 9 of 1987 was passed the Eastern Cape NGSK started pushing the WMB to transfer the land back to it.

In March 1988 and again in August 1991, correspondence and minutes of meetings indicated that the WMB agreed that the *inkommergrond* belonged to the Eastern Cape NGSK and indicated that they were going to transfer the land back to it. Delays in this process resulted in the Eastern Cape NGSK writing to the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) and the minister of land affairs in August 1994 and again in 1996. Given that there was now a new democratic government there was

hope that this land question would be resolved. However, little response was received. When this land was mentioned in the mediations of 1995 and 1996 as a strong possibility for immediate use for a potato project (discussed below) and later redistribution, tensions and discord between *inkommers* and WSFA members increased — notably between the *inkommers* Margarete and Alvin and the residents Piet, Jeffrey and Derek.

The DLA-SC only realised that it faced a problem over the rights to the *inkommergrond* in mid-1997, when the TLC and the Eastern Cape NGSK (now the URCSA) agreed in a meeting that the land would be transferred to the Eastern Cape URCSA and that in the interim the TLC would continue to manage it until the process was completed. At this point the DLA-SC comprehended that only once the land was officially registered in the name of the Eastern Cape URCSA could this body consider selling it to the WSFA in terms of the land redistribution programme. Realising this, the DLA-SC informed the WSFA that alternative farmland needed to be sought.³⁹ This ended the WSFA attempts to acquire the *inkommergrond* through redistribution. Four important things materialised from this decision by the DLA-SC in 1997. First, it unofficially acknowledged the *inkommers* as having some right to this land; considering the land for redistribution was impractical as gaining access to it would mean taking delays in the process into account. Secondly, it made the right of the Waldesruhe residents to access to this land questionable. Thirdly, alternative land had to be found, and this rather quickly, placing pressure on the DLA-SC as Waldesruhe was now an official redistribution project. Finally, some *inkommers*, having revitalised their networks with the Eastern Cape URCSA, embarked on a process of seeking this land through restitution. They used the policy discourse to challenge the control that the WMB (1986-1994), the TLC (1994–2000) and the local municipality (from 2000 onwards) had over this land. They later emphasised their right to this land when they and representatives of the Eastern Cape URCSA submitted a restitution claim for the *inkommergrond* to the CRLR in 2003.

The impact of lack of cohesion on the redistribution process

In 1996 the WSFA was far from a homogeneous and unified body. It was a state-instigated institution comprising a divided group with no experience of farming collectively, split by differences of opinion, disagreement of purpose, social and economic stratification, and united only in the intention to receive land (interviews in Waldesruhe, 2001). Most had no farming skills, some felt they could contribute in administration, budgeting and logistics (interview with Ted McGregor, 2000), though tasks and roles were never clearly allocated. The structure that was worked out was solely designed to meet the DLA-SC's requirements. The divisions remained after the applicants formed a community property association in 1996 and fundamentally shaped how the redistribution process took place.

³⁹ Correspondence between the DLA-SC and the Southern Cape CRLR in March 1999 indicates that the latter had not been aware of this challenge and contested ownership before then. The delay suggests a lack of communication between directorates within the same department.

The original eight applicants — mainly from the Jacobs, Smith, Holtshausen and Osprey families — were either related or close friends and peers and had worked together in other areas of village life but not in farming. These ties seem to have been the strongest reason for initial collaboration. The final group of 30 that submitted the proposal in 1996 consisted of several smaller family groups and individual households, many of whom did not get on, both between families and within them. Kurt indicated that he did not get on with his father-in law. Derek noted that while he got on with his brothers, he could not farm with them.

The unanimous reason for coming together was to get land from the state but not necessarily to jointly farm this land. For Neil, acquiring farmland was a symbolic gesture. He had supported his entire family as a labour tenant until apartheid legislation forced him to move to the village and stop farming. Unlike some beneficiaries he had no land next to his house. Given that he was 84 years old, he did not feel that he would be using the redistributed land after the first year and wanted his sons to use it afterwards. He said that others wanted land simply because they were not allowed to own any in the past and that they could always leave it to family members to use. It was being made available for free, so why not acquire it. However, beneficiaries did not disclose these reasons to other WSFA members, illustrating how individuals have the ability of influencing outcomes through small acts of nondisclosure (indeed, few beneficiaries ended up in farming). Three households indicated to me in 2002 that they had joined the group in order to own land because they had never owned any before; they had no intention of farming at the time or in the future. Rather, they considered land an asset which they could leave to their dependents or rent out for an extra income or food. Gert Abrams, in turn, joined as beneficiary because he thought he would receive financial compensation from the redistribution process rather than land. In 1995 the SLAG allocation was almost double that of the housing grant of R 8 500. Gert intended to use this money to improve his house. When he did receive land instead, he never farmed it. He also questioned why he had never received his share of the balance of the grant, which Piet and the WSFA executive decided rather to use to purchase implements for the WSFA.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of the discord comes from the potato project that was initiated by the DLA-SC in early 1996. The DLA-SC saw the project as a means through which to expose WSFA members to collective commercial agricultural activities and to generate income for the WSFA. As the WMB at this point still thought it had exclusive control over the *inkommergrond*, it permitted the use of approximately six hectares of this land for the potato project. The DLA-SC drew on commercial farmers and, agrochemical suppliers in the area as well as the farming cooperative and the DOA-WC to support the project by providing expertise, funds, inputs and implements. It also arranged for a buyer for the potatoes. With all this officially organised support, one would expect the project to have been a financial success. However, this was not the case.

The inability of most WSFA members to collaborate was a major problem and brought about a lot of discord in the project. Many members did not get actively involved once the project was underway: some pensioners were too old, many had employment obligations, and yet others had no intention of farming. As a result, Piet decided to pay only those who had actively worked on the project once the proceeds came in after the harvest. This led to conflict with some of the 'non-participants'. Ultimately,

the WSFA made very little money, many saw it as a financial failure, and much ill-feeling was created amongst the members. As Ted recalls:

We were told [by the DLA-SC] to start small with a little grant, just to get this project off the ground and then we could ask for more as we increased our [agricultural] activities. Local organisations donated fertilisers and agrochemicals. About R 63 000 was donated, although not all of this was in cash. A lot was in kind. Kagiso Trust gave R 35 000 cash. The project was a flop because it was not correctly managed. Piet Osprey wanted to begin on a large scale. As a result, the expenses were greater than the income. We [the beneficiaries] only got R 20 000 from the sale of the potatoes. Actually, we lost money. This money was going to be put into the [WSFA] account but then Piet Osprey decided to pay the money to those members who had actually done some work on the project. I am not sure if it was R 10 000 or R 20 000 that was paid out but in any event no profit was made. What is R 10 000 divided by 30 or even 10? Not much! The transport costs were high. These were not planned for. I got no money. I sent a labourer in my place as I was working and did not have time to farm. I paid this person but got no money. Only those members who actually worked on the land were paid. Some of these people were unhappy that they got paid so little [about R 1 000 per person]. Piet Osprey kept a record of everybody's hours. Those who did not personally work on the land got no money at all. The people who worked on the project worked together well, there was no arguing. The argument was between me and Piet and it was about the management of the project. It was not managed properly.

This experience shows that only few WSFA members were willing and were able to work together. One of the outcomes of this experience was that when a local commercial farmer made carrot seed available in 1997, Piet and Derek obtained this seed and planted it in their home gardens. They sold the produce to hawkers in a neighbouring town. Derek is of the opinion that he and Piet paid for the seed and farmed individually because they could not work with the other WSFA members and also did not want to work with each other. Other WSFA members, such as Craig and Clement, accuse Piet and Derek of obtaining the seed for free and not making it available to all WSFA members. Ten years later a few WSFA members were still recounting this episode and voicing their dissatisfaction with what had happened. They used it as an introduction to the lack of control over the implements after Piet died. They cited this example to point to the continued lack of trust, cohesion and leadership within the WSFA and the village as a whole. It indicates that by 2006 there was still no cohesion within the WSFA, and that it was rooted primarily from disagreements between younger and older members.

The potato project had far-reaching consequences for the redistribution plans. Due to the bad experience, Piet informed the DLA-SC director at a meeting in 1998 that the redistribution farmland (which had already been identified and the application for purchase approved by the minister; for details, see next sub-section) would need to be subdivided; as the members of the WSFA could not work together, the body could not own the land collectively. Each household should rather own its own portion

of land on which to farm independently. Any remaining portion would be held collectively. The director had no problem with this request and was quite thankful for it because he was aware of the tensions in the group and the discord that had emerged from the potato project (interview, former DLA-SC director, 2010). When the land was transferred to the WSFA in September 1999, a land surveyor was appointed to carry out the subdivision. The transfer of the subdivisions was only completed in September 2007. Each beneficiary household received between 1.6 and 2 hectares of land depending on the topography; the remainder of forty hectares was to be held in trust by the WSFA (for details see the subsection below). Figure 3 below illustrates the subdivision of the redistributed farm land and the topography. Ravines and gradients can be readily seen.



Figure 4: Diagram of subdivisions and topography of redistributed farmland

Source: DLA-SC 2009. There are 30 subdivisions with the remainder of the land held in trust, the bulk of which comprises of ravines and gullies or wetland. The diagram also shows the distance of the irrigation dams from the subdivisions 19-30 where most activity took place. The extent of the farm is 99 hectares. The farm boundary is demarcated by the points A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, Z, Y, X, V & M.

By raising the issue of subdividing the land and farming individually Piet almost unintentionally shaped the outcome of the redistribution. Yet Piet acknowledged in 2001 that the conflict did allow people to do what they wanted with their land and released them from being bound to collective decisions in the main. Waldesruhe was one of very few redistribution projects that was given permission to subdivide and for individual beneficiary households to own portions of a large farm. This was against the norm of the time, whereby large numbers of SLAG beneficiary households were settled on

commercial farms and expected to farm collectively or obtain dividends through collective shareholding (Hall 2007).

According to some beneficiaries, the request for individual portions, with some held in trust, was done to ensure that there was land available for any of the land beneficiaries who might need more land later as their farming activities demanded. Other beneficiaries indicated that some portions of the 40 hectares that the WSFA held in trust was not really arable (see also DOA-WC viability study, CDAWC 1998, discussed below). Active farmers, especially those producing vegetables, felt on the other hand that each portion should have been larger than two hectares; by 2006, these farmers wanted more land. And two beneficiaries, in turn, argued that the remainder in trust with the WSFA should be available for hire by anybody and the rent paid should be an income for the WSFA. But the only portion where this was possible was the portion C, D, E, F 7 G. However, much of this was waterlogged during winter months making it unfarmable and risky for livestock ranging.

DLA-SC officials avoided explaining how they determined the size of each portion, and stated that they merely followed the instructions of the WSFA executive committee and the findings of the consulting engineers and land surveyor. They emphasised their participatory and partnership role. They also noted that there was no problem with subdivision as the SLAG funds covered the cost and the beneficiaries paid the transfer costs from the WSFA to individual households.

While the communal property association's constitution had been finalised in January 1999, legal advice indicated that the association should be changed into a trust because the farm was to be subdivided and the community property association was not a suitable entity for managing the remaining land (interview with conveyancing attorney, July 2007). The necessary documents were submitted to the Master of the Supreme Court in July 1999, which allowed the land surveying and subdivision of the farm to commence. Once the subdivisions were completed and mapped, the beneficiaries themselves were allowed to choose the portion they wanted. However, Piet ensured that certain households had first choice in this activity, namely the Osprey, Jacobs, McGregor, Holtshausen, Smith, Dippenaar and Lourens families who all selected the land that suited them — close to water or close to their homes. In September 1999, the WSFA, now constituted as a legal trust, took transfer of the farm. Formal transfer of the subdivisions from the WSFA to the individual households only transpired in September 2007 due to legal and technical problems concerning water access and the transfer of water rights, and the fact that several beneficiaries had died and some wills had not been updated to ensure that the land would go to their heirs.

Negotiating land and business plans

Identifying and acquiring a suitable piece of agricultural land in the area proved to be a long process. First, no land in the area was available for the state to purchase on behalf of the WSFA. Secondly, a great deal of time was wasted by certain members of the WSFA and the TLC with the attempt to acquire the *inkommergrond*. DLA-SC records from 1997 show that a 99 hectare farm on the southern border of Waldesruhe was considered. This farm was not on the market although its owner, Bruce Jones, was prepared to consider 'suitable' offers. After several months of discussions, a provisional agreement was

reached and in early 1998 the DOA-WC conducted agricultural surveys and economic studies to identify the crops and livestock that would be suitable for this farm. The consulting engineers had the land formally valued and compiled a business plan which incorporated all the necessary studies and ideas from the original WSFA proposal for assistance. The report by the agricultural property valuation specialist (De Kock 1997) in November 1997 indicates that the land was readily accessible from the village but that two sections of the farm required new entrances (only one of which was to be approved by the district council). Some beneficiaries later argued that the lack of access was the reason why they never used their portions of land, though other beneficiaries simply made their own entrances. The report also indicated that at least 25% of the land was unsuitable for agricultural production because it had a slope of 1:4 and consisted of rocky gorges and valleys. It noted that the rainfall pattern was not as suitable for dryland farming, in contrast to land to the east of Waldesruhe.

The 1997 valuation report (De Kock 1997) contrasted significantly with a DOA-WC technical report dated 24 March 1998 that revealed that many field crops could be grown on the land as long as agrochemicals (fertilisers) were added. Recommended crops included legumes (beans), lupines (peas), onions, cabbages, corn, sweetcorn and potatoes. While nothing had been cultivated on this farm for a decade, these crops had indeed been produced in the area amongst commercial farmers and in some household food gardens. The technical report considered the microclimate to be humid, thus making it unsuitable for small grains, tropical and sub-tropical crops, including fruit, and deciduous fruits. Economic modelling using commercial farming budgets indicated, however, that only five hectares out of the total 99 could be profitably farmed, given the existing challenges to accessing water. If irrigation were used, this model of 1998 indicated, then vegetables could only be cultivated on five hectares and would bring in an estimated income of R 51 570 per annum. This was not a great sum of money for a group of 30 households, especially after labour was paid. (At this stage the planners and officials still assumed that the land would be farmed collectively.) The report further indicated that the land's natural grazing capacity was far from suitable and that fifteen hectares of natural grazing would be required per large livestock unit (LLU), in this case cattle. It suggested that the carrying load of the land could be slightly improved if commercial fodder was planted.

At the time of the 1998 DOA-WC technical and economic assessment (WCDA 1998), the annual rainfall for the area was 650mm with 65% falling in winter. Two storage dams, connected to the local irrigation network, were situated on the north-western boundary of the farm. These were at great distance from the other areas of the farm where agriculture was envisaged by the main beneficiaries who acted as brokers in the redistribution process. Furthermore, the water allotment was only six hours per week for the entire 100-hectare farm. Three smaller dams, fed by seasonal springs, were situated on other parts of the farm, two of which were on the forty hectares to be held in trust and one was on the north-eastern boundary.

The consequences of this lack of water became evident once the beneficiaries started farming their portions. They need to be considered here (before continuing with the narrative of how the decision was made to buy the identified farm) in order to illustrate what issues the government studiously ignored in its processes. The water situation was to prove a significant constraint to farming after the transfer of

the land. Yet, despite the topographic and technical limitations, beneficiaries who engaged in farming attempted to overcome these constraints by managing water in different ways and from various sources. In 2000 and 2001, Craig was farming vegetables and potatoes on three hectares, Damien and Eric Dippenaar each on one hectare. On the eastern boundary, where there was only a single seasonal spring, Paul September was farming potatoes on two and Derek on one and a half hectares. Kurt was farming potatoes and mixed vegetables on two and Piet corn on two hectares. They were clearly stretching the expectations outlined by the DOA-WC to their limit. Some others were ranging at least one cow per hectare.

Figure 4 shows that only smallholdings on the western boundary of the farm had regular access to water from the two irrigation dams served by the local irrigation grid. In addition, access to the irrigation network was extended from six hours per week to 24 hours every fortnight for the portions linked to it. The smallholdings on the eastern boundary of the farm, however, had practically no access to consistent water resources. At times they used the water from the *inkommergrond* or that from one of the springs. Because of the great distances and the uneven terrain, it proved too costly to extend irrigation to the eastern boundary. Notwithstanding the many visits by the DOA-WC and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry between 1997 and 2005, the problem of access to water prevailed because resolving it was too expensive for both government departments. Some of the beneficiaries affected seemed to overcome some of these irrigation challenges at least initially. Above Verna described how she transported water from the storage dams to her father's smallholding by car.

Other facts also suggest that the piece of land identified was not the most suitable for a land redistribution project. In 2002 an RI soil survey showed a significantly high density of root knot nematodes which affected root crop cultivation, which included the popular crops of beetroots and carrots. Other constraints, such as life cycle changes, proved to be even bigger challenges to farming for some beneficiaries, resulting in some either not farming at all or only farming when the conditions were suitable or the need arose (see Chapter 6). And yet, despite all these constraints, some beneficiaries continued to farm the land they received through the redistribution process.

Despite the disadvantages of the identified land, that were clearly identified in some of the reports and evaluations, in June 1998 the minister of agriculture and land reform approved the submission. The notes to his director general indicate that he was concerned that this might be the only land available and suggested increasing the offer to Bruce Jones if necessary. He also expressed concern that Jones might have been involved in property speculation since he had only bought the farm in 1996 when the state's land reform programme and commitment to rapid redistribution was widely known. He did not, however, think that the applicants were unsuitable, suggested by his overwhelming desire to transfer land as quickly as possible. He also made no comments about the viability and accuracy of the plans and other details sent to him. Clearly Murray (1996) and James (2000b, 2001) accurately described the mindset of land reform officials as having a very specific perception of rural people and their desire and use of land. The minister's distance from the people and the site, mediated through the information passed on to him, had some role to play in this. But he, like his staff in the DLA-SC, wanted to see land redistributed quickly to illustrate the state's desire to do this.

The *White Paper on Land Reform* (DLA 1997: 35) proclaims that government has a vision of rural areas which

envisages a well-balanced mix of *farming systems and rural enterprise* (livestock, annual and perennial crops as well as farm-forestry) with land held under a variety of forms of tenure by individuals, companies and communities. The objective is a flourishing rural landscape consisting of *large, medium and small farms and enterprises* developed by full-time and part-time farmers. A more balanced allocation of land and resources, partnerships between farm workers and farm owners leading to *increased productivity*, as well as the provision of secure tenure for all rural people are all part of this vision. (Italics added for emphasis)

This vision of rural areas can only be defined as one of commercial agriculture because rural enterprises are seemingly those enterprises that involve plant and animal husbandry. The *White Paper* emphasised the economic purpose of land redistribution as a ‘precondition for ... government’s growth, employment and redistribution strategy’ (DLA 1997: 36). Thus, anybody involved in SLAG could be excused for assuming that farming was the only means to an acceptable application, and that there was a need to project an image or even cultural history and identity with farming and farmland along with a desire to focus on commercial agriculture. This view was held by officials, consultants and beneficiaries alike. What appears from critiques of the policy practice is the assumption that new owners intended to farm the land communally and simply required the necessary support to do so (e.g. Greenberg 2010; Turner and Ibsen 2000; Jacobs, Hall and Lahiff 2003). Evidence provided in this study and elsewhere (Hebinck and Cousins 2013; James 2001, 2007, 2011) shows, however, that many beneficiaries had no such vision of the agricultural development of redistributed land and had no intention of farming in this fashion if at all, as they could not afford to do so or did not wish to do so.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the mediations (transforming, translating, distorting and modifying meanings) involved in reaching policy objectives of identifying suitable beneficiaries and land, resulting in the final transfer of second-choice land of limited agricultural potential to the beneficiaries. Local brokers with networks emerged during this process and were involved in mediating policy and giving meaning to their intentions, often through acts of omission, recreation or by using events to support their interests, such as the need for subdivision. Their mediation and interaction with other mediators (state and NGOs) shaped the outcome of land reform in Waldesruhe — subdivided land owned by 30, mainly elite households, most of whom were not farmers or had no intention of farming. Less than half the beneficiaries worked the land at any particular time (discussed in Chapter 7). Notably the process had the ironic effect of bringing the *inkommers* into the land reform game despite intentions by Piet and others to keep them out of the *field*. Alternative land had to be sought and the ownership of the *inkommergrond* was finally questioned by the state.

Piet’s history, experience and brokerage abilities, thus his cultural capital, along with that of several other beneficiaries, reinforces the idea that access to development resources requires

persuasiveness and mediation skills and that brokers are those with good communication skills and influence with which to continually sell ideas and muster support. They also need networks for various purposes — to gather intelligence to learn more about the field and how it changes but also to ensure their security through commitment to their ideas. Mediation has little to do with being needy, even in the supposedly pro-poor rhetoric of SLAG in Waldesruhe. An historically elite group managed to acquire land, but the process was not always smooth; at times they were challenged from within their own group and at others from people who believed they had historically mistreated them — the *inkommers*. It is worth noting that the SLAG submission documents and the later RI project plans (see Chapter 5) were able to represent the village and land reform applicants as having a strong history not only of agricultural land needs but, more importantly for RI, of smallholder farming experience with livelihoods embedded in the soil (much as the World Bank and others had done for Lesotho in the 1980s; Ferguson 1990). This was a consequence of RI's limited PRAs, insufficient ethnography and reliance on a narrative created and supported by the WSFA and the DLA-SC for their own purposes. While RI needed committed farmers, the DLA-SC only needed the representation of farming, an interest in farming to identify and allocate farmland. The development criteria of RI and the DLA-SC differed, just as their projects did. I explore this in greater detail in an analysis of how the honeybush demonstration project was introduced and developed in Waldesruhe (see Chapter 5).

The redistribution process created a situation in which RI became locked into a relationship with a group of beneficiaries who had a rich experience in brokerage and mediation, but a limited dependency on agriculture, or even interest in it. This situation was compounded by the different pressures that a production project entailed and RI's own challenges relating to the honeybush project, its internal transformation and its ability to sustain the mediation of the honeybush project. The beneficiaries' water problem provided the opportunity for RI to promote honeybush in Waldesruhe as a crop that required little water after initial planting. RI had the vision for extensive production by small-scale farmers of a fairly drought-tolerant commercial crop in an area where irrigation was a problem. In part of the next chapter I discuss how the mediation practiced during the land reform project led into mediation in the honeybush project and had some very interesting outcomes when researchers encountered strong mediators and limited interest in farming.

Chapter 5

Science council brokers, mediators and honeybush technology in Waldesruhe

We need to think less in terms of interfaces between separate worldviews and more in terms of positioned strategies and perspectives.

— Rossi (2006: 29)

Introduction

James (2007: 248–249) notes that officials, project officers and consultants play a crucial mediating role: ‘The site where these negotiations are performed is at the ... interface ... Mediators become responsible by default for selling state policies’. While James directly refers to the land reform policies I discussed in the previous chapter, I suggest that this is equally applicable to the interfaces of agricultural technology transfer and other types of rural development interventions. Studies in francophone Africa suggest that brokerage serves to develop relationships and networks between users and producers/providers of development resources (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Neubert 1996; Olivier de Sardan 2005). These studies and that of van Leynseele (2018) in South Africa appear to support James’s (2007, 2011) arguments more generally that brokers cannot be confined to normative descriptions of intermediaries (neutral messengers in Latour’s [2005] sense) positioned between the state or development agencies and those to be developed (Neubert 1996). Rather they are active mediators (Latour 2005) who necessarily need to convincingly repackage and sell the development message, and this includes assembling supporters, translating or transforming messages in different ways to accommodate different potential users and supporters. Rossi (2006) provides an interesting example from Niger in which fieldstaff mediate between beneficiaries and the management of the development agency. According to Mosse and Lewis (2006) it is not unusual for translation to be ineffective: even when it appears to gain traction for some time, it may be limited and fail to retain the traction; in other instances, it might never really gain traction.

With these theoretical ideas in mind I look at different brokers and attempts at brokerage and mediation within the science council at which I worked (hereafter called SC) and in Waldesruhe, where it engaged, and the impact these had on the shaping of the project of post-land redistribution technology transfer. The main focus of this chapter is to show that brokers and mediators exist in development agencies (science councils in this example) and are able to translate circumstances to ensure support for ideas they believe are desirable and when organisational opportunities enable this. Some agents are in an awkward position of having to mediate between management and beneficiaries. In the first part of the chapter I summarise the early beginnings of honeybush (*Cyclopia* spp.) research from 1994 and note how a skilful broker and thriving network builder ensured that this rapidly expanded into several projects that supported an overarching smallholder farmer honeybush technology transfer project in the southern Cape. The second part of the chapter looks at the shifting roles of brokers in Waldesruhe and

the use of translation as beneficiaries shift from land redistribution to the diffusion of honeybush technology. Comaroff and Comaroff's (1991, 1997) arguments about 'converts' who seemingly embraced the early mission stations are applicable here. We see a contemporary example of where development 'converts' are more concerned with an instrumentalist orientation to the agent's material goods, services and infrastructures. So, by embracing development and RI researchers in the form of the honeybush project they were exercising their agency and desire to access these resources. As with the conversion to Christianity, this is not simply a story of Western, development hegemony of the consciousness of Africans. The third section considers the failure of my brokerage and translation attempts when RI's smallholder agriculture programme (SAP) coordinator resigned and I acted in this position for several months. The fourth and final section looks at the rapid closure of the project as both the research team and the beneficiaries lost interest in honeybush and resources and support for the project started to dwindle.

The honeybush brokers

Honeybush plants occur naturally in the fynbos areas in the southern Cape of the Western Cape province, extending from the Overberg as far as Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape province. Some 24 species of honeybush are found in this area. Since the mid-1990s, five species of honeybush have been experimented with for commercial purposes: Genadendal tea (*Cyclopia maculata*); Heidelberg tea (*C. sessiflora*); Mountain tea (*C. intermedia*); Valley tea (*C. subternata*); and Coastal tea (*C. genistoides*). Like rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*), South Africa's world-renowned fynbos infusion that grows on the Cape west coast, honeybush has a number of health properties and is sought after by health-conscious consumers. It is caffeine-free, contains antioxidants, anti-carcinogens and natural oestrogen, aiding digestion and general wellbeing (*Farmers Weekly*, 2001). Harvesting Mountain tea in the wild for commercial purposes is common in the area abutting the Western and Eastern Cape provinces. This variety has been exported to the United Kingdom since the 1930s and is preferred in Europe, where the largest market and demand for honeybush exists.

Genadendal tea has a weak taste with very little market appeal. Of the other species, a third to a half of the total annual sales in 2002 was a blend of Valley and Coastal teas. However, the most sought-after export variety was Mountain tea (De Robeck 2002). The European market increasingly demanded a supply of organically grown honeybush. Harvesting in the wild was a means of ensuring organic standards. From 1998 this small industry developed niche markets in Europe, the Far East and North America. By 2001 the total honeybush tea market had grown from 'between 30 and 50 tons to between 150 and 250 tons dry tea'⁴⁰ per annum but was still no more than 5% of the rooibos tea market

⁴⁰ 'Dry tea' refers to the product after it has been chopped, fermented, sorted, graded and bagged. 'Wet tea' refers to the product that is harvested and sold to the processors prior to any post-harvest processing. 'Dry tea' can weigh half to two thirds of the same volume of 'wet tea', depending on the variety.

(De Robeck 2002: 6). The market demand was increasing and honeybush plant extracts began to be used as additives to produce healthy cosmetic products (De Robeck 2002).

In the 1990s, the industry in South Africa was miniscule and informally organised. Most available production information is drawn from a handful of large-scale southern Cape farmers who attempted to diversify their overall farming activities by including honeybush as a crop. Much of the pioneering work of domesticating different honeybush plant varieties was initiated by a former National Botanical Institute researcher in 1993, in alliance with two science councils, when he researched the propagation, protection from pests and commercial trials of four varieties. Between 1994 and 1996 an RI researcher led most of SC's work on honeybush. Research focused on developing a standardised processing method that ensured quality, taste and flavour while enhancing the natural health properties and was conducted in partnership with Stellenbosch University, the Medical Research Council and the University of the Free State (De Robeck 2002; IDT 1999).

The SC was established in the early 1990s. The research institutes that became part of it had previously been research stations linked to provincial departments of agriculture. Their personnel generally had strong links to international commodity research and modern agricultural practices but limited exposure to African and coloured farmers. As part of SC, the research institutes formed a loose network of experts largely focusing on specific commodities. A national SAP was established around 1995 with a network of largely part-time SAP coordinators from each research institute who met two to three times annually to make decisions about how ring-fenced SAP parliamentary grant funding should be disbursed to the different research programmes at each research institute for SC's benefit and that of its new clients. My experience of two years of attending these meetings was that it was a collegial network in which members traded favours for favours to ensure they got parliamentary grant funding for what they and their institute considered to be the most pressing SAP projects. This give-and-take arrangement appeared to work relatively well in that the coordinators were able to present their projects to peers and quick decisions were made about the amount of funding to be allocated to which projects. Within two to three days annual budgets were finalised for all SAP projects.

In 1996, RI appointed a dynamic person on permanent basis as SAP coordinator. The appointee had a strong background in and cultural capital from working with NGOs and CRR farmers across the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape provinces. The person was also a qualified natural scientist and able to bridge the language and experiential barriers between science, development and smallholder farming, drawing on a network of international agricultural development organisations and individuals along with personal experience in other parts of Africa. The coordinator began to assemble a team of interested researchers at RI and had them and their managers trained in PRA. Given that interaction with former homeland and CRR farmers was rare at RI and there was no participatory management within SC, this activity was deemed vital to ensuring adequate service delivery to emergent farmers and to create an understanding by management of farmers' needs and those of personnel serving these farmers. Most RI personnel involved considered smallholder non-compliance to be caused by ethnicity and cultural conditions (see Olivier de Sardan 2005), enabled by a lack of

education. The SAP coordinator wanted colleagues to overcome this bias and believed PRA and farming systems research (FSR) a meaningful way of doing this.

My impression was that SC was extremely hierarchical in structure and that alternative viewpoints were seldom tolerated. However, the SAP coordinator seemed to influence the evolution of the SAP programme at RI. This seemed to require a strong-willed and resolute individual standing up to the management hierarchy, strongly dominated by white male PhDs and agricultural scientific experts. This individual was an extremely skilled broker and mediator, able to get both RI's senior management and the national SAP programme to follow the suggested ideas, thus becoming influential across many networks in and outside SC. The coordinator's experience in the land NGO sector provided a good relationship with the minister of land affairs and ensured direct access to SC's CEO from 1996 until 2000. Through the NGO experience the coordinator had also gained a sound understanding of intricacies of development funding. These were quickly adapted to coincide with SC's funding rules. Given that the SAP coordinator and another coordinator were both familiar with FSR and PRA, they convinced the national SAP programme to adopt a participatory oriented FSR model in working with smallholder farmers in South Africa. By 1998, this approach was embedded in the SAP and largely involved the establishment of demonstration plots in villages or traditional authority areas, in conjunction with farmers and traditional leaders, as the main vehicle of technology transfer. Farmers and villagers had to identify land and supply the necessary labour for the activities, while SC supplied the technological inputs and knowledge.

By 1997 the SAP coordinator saw the potential of honeybush as a crop for smallholder farmers and sold the idea of a large project with smaller components, drawing on the ring-fenced parliamentary grant, to the senior researcher who was leading the honeybush research and to RI management. The coordinator subsequently drew in researchers from two other research institutes of the SC, one located nearby to RI with the expertise to conduct research and trials on plant propagation (what I refer to as the 'subsidiary RI') and the other in Gauteng to do research on plant protection. Several new RI projects on honeybush were registered at SC's national SAP in October 1997 under the overarching name 'Improvement of Techniques for the Commercial Small-Scale Production of Honeybush Tea'. The name emphasised that it aimed to serve commercial smallholder farmers. In April 2000 the name was changed to 'Honeybush Tea: Technology Transfer through Demonstration Plots to Resource-Limited Producers'. The name change reflected new ideas that came into vogue in the national SAP coordinators' network and ensured the project's continuing support.

During 1997 and 1998 the RI SAP team began facilitating contact amongst different existing and potential actors in the industry. Several farmers and processors, who constituted the informal commercial honeybush industry, requested RI to step up its research activities and provided a small amount of funds. Eventually a network of processors, producers, interested producers, micro nurseries (willing to propagate plants for an emerging industry) and interested researchers was established. In 1998 RI's team and the SAP coordinator approached several former CRRs and coloured settlements in the southern Cape to determine interest in honeybush production. Some individuals reported

experience with harvesting honeybush in the wild for personal and/or commercial use, suggesting some history and local knowledge of the plant.

On 24 February 1999, the South African Honeybush Tea Producers Association (SAHPA) was founded with two RI members serving on its executive committee. At the founding meeting, Jackson Smit, a coloured farmer renting Perdevlei farm, one of the first identified sites for trial planting, was elected to the executive committee, emphasising SAHPA's non-racial intentions and the willingness to include emergent farmers into the industry. This fitted neatly with national discourses of rural development, agricultural support and the role of the science councils to develop and transfer modern technology to emergent farmers. By mid-1999, five potential sites had been identified: Waldesruhe, Smithsville, Perdevlei,⁴¹ Jamesville and Reendal. A small amount of between 100 and 200 different varieties of plants had been planted at Perdevlei (1998) and Waldesruhe and Smithsville (1999). Local farmers' responses to honeybush and the micro plantings were diverse but generally their uptake was limited and not without social and technical challenges. In Waldesruhe, when trials failed because of poor soils lacking drainage, locals quickly withdrew their promised labour. Similar social challenges characterised many of the demonstration honeybush plots.

RI needed a large and successful flagship project that would illustrate its potential to service coloured and African farmers, producing at different scales on the rural landscape. Some of the historical projects involving CRRs and coloured rural settlements in the Northern Cape, including land restitution claimants at Riemvasmaak, had proved challenging in respect of realising planned project objectives. Some RI researchers attributed the failure to attain planned project objectives and outcomes to the lack of cohesion within villages and settlements, and argued that viticulture and deciduous fruit plantations did not fit the areas because of the high costs of establishing vineyards and orchards. Instead, they proposed the plantation of honeybush, the cost of which they considered as comparatively low. At the time, however, no viability assessment had yet been conducted on honeybush for smallholders. Proposals submitted for SAP parliamentary grant funding in 2000, like the IDT (1999) viability study, seemed to inflate the projected returns from commercial honeybush planting and used figures from the most suitable microclimate in the southern Cape (SC 2000: 2):

Commercial distributors [processors] at present pay about R 12 000 per ton dry material to producers. At an average yield of 250g dry material per plant and 9 000 plants per hectare, an [annual] income of R 27 000 can be realised [per hectare]. (The evaluation plot at Waboomskraal, which is situated in a most suitable microclimate and planted with the fast-growing *Cyclopia subternata*⁴² yielded 7 tons

41 Perdevlei was a medium-sized farm left in trust to the farmworkers by its original white owner in the late 1950s, under the auspices of the Moravian church based in Smithsville CRR.

42 *C. subternata* was the species planted in Waldesruhe in 2000. Waboomskraal lies about 50 km away from Waldesruhe, on the other side of the coastal mountain range.

dry material per hectare two years after planting). The potential income that can be realised by resource-poor farmers makes the transfer of technology imperative as they can improve their standard of living through higher income and job creation (where it is needed most).

De Robeck's (2002) assessment noted the significantly different investment returns, yields and lifespans of different species and noted that job creation was fairly constrained and seasonal. RI's strict focus on commodities prevented researchers from transferring technologies on other crops that emergent farmers might be interested in, such as vegetable crops. RI simply lacked this expertise. Honeybush thus seemed to offer a new, fairly inexpensive technology and entrance into a small industry with a growing local and export market. SC (2000a: 4) sketched the project as aiming to

train resource-poor farmers in four communities in the cultivation of honeybush tea as to expand honeybush tea cultivation (20 hectares) in the Western Cape province within the next three years.

However, after a series of planning workshops with RI and the subsidiary RI that I facilitated in February and March 2000, the goal was changed to that of 'prepar[ing] resource-poor farmers in five Western Cape (rural) communities to enter and function in the (developing) Honeybush tea industry' (SC 2000b:2). A logframe with several broad objectives was developed. Identified farmers were not invited to this exercise; RI considered this too costly. It was rather agreed that the demonstration plot technical coordinator and I would develop the basic plan with each of the groups at the five proposed sites while we undertook the PRA workshops with them. It must be noted that by February 2000 I had not met any of the farmers interested in producing honeybush. In fact, I was not even aware of the 1998 and 1999 trial plantings and their outcomes. At the planning workshops the RI team agreed that we would include participatory project planning (PPP) into the participatory workshops and adapt the overall plan to each of the specific sites. A further agreement was that the project would extend until March 2005.

The RI SAP controlled most research relating to honeybush and had various on-station trials in the Winelands District (where honeybush does not occur naturally) and on commercial farms in the southern Cape. RI also controlled access to numerous networks of farmers, producers and processors. In this manner RI and the SAP coordinator performed brokerage roles, not only by channelling funds from the SC's SAP parliamentary grant to the RI's SAP but also by controlling access to networks within the industry and persuading others of the value of the honeybush and emergent farmer project. These activities coincided closely with those generally attributed to brokers (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Lindquist 2015; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Olivier de Sardan 2005). As Van der Ploeg (2003) suggests, having recognised expertise is not so much about possessing agricultural knowledge but about having an appealing vision and possible solution for the future state of agriculture that is important. The vision is what brokers sell and use to muster support. The SAP coordinator had this vision and was able to get others across networks to support it. The vision was that the location of CRRs and farmland redistribution sites in the southern Cape were ideal for honeybush production and that RI could become the sought-after expert organisation to catalyse rural development in this region

for coloured and African smallholders through transferring the new technology of honeybush. Furthermore, this neat, policy oriented, coherent technology and support package would attract financial investors from the national departments of agriculture, land affairs, science and technology and their provincial organs. Operational changes in the departments of land affairs and agriculture during 1999 were not seen as challenges but rather as providing the opportunity for RI to consolidate its activities. This vision was widely accepted: by late 1999 a multidisciplinary team was set up of enthusiastic members from RI, the industry, other SC research institutes and some universities.

Given the strides taken to establish an egalitarian industry and the inclusion of emergent farmers in commercially oriented research, RI's SAP coordinator accepted SC's CEO and President's National Award in November 1999 on behalf of all the honeybush researchers. There were two reasons that the CEO considered this the most innovative and interdisciplinary research project in the entire SC in 1999: first, the programme's scope and interdisciplinary nature drew on diverse expertise across and outside SC; secondly, emergent farmers were the key beneficiaries and the SAP parliamentary grant was used to fund research that would benefit them. Actually, given the relative newness of the industry and the lack of long-term research, the research benefitted all farmers involved in honeybush cultivation, including the majority that was made up of large-scale white farmers.⁴³ The award placed pressure on the researchers and RI to maintain the prestige associated with the project. It pushed them to concentrate on honeybush, even when the way forward was uncertain and farmer cooperation and commitment fluttered in Waldesruhe and appeared non-existent in Reendal and Perdevlei. To complicate matters, the CEO's support soon lost its significance when he resigned in early 2000, gradually weakening the SAP coordinator's influence and project cohesion as a whole. It also brought with it a period of transformation and financial uncertainty gradually affected the autonomy of the SC SAP coordinators and the allocation of the parliamentary grant ring-fenced funding.

Basic research into honeybush was ongoing. In fact, when honeybush was introduced into coloured rural communities from 1999, conclusive long-term evidence on the agronomy of honeybush cultivation and pest management was still unavailable. Despite this, RI's SAP team was willing to introduce honeybush as a commercial crop to smallholder farmers. Interviews with the SAP coordinator and researchers involved indicate that while the lack of research might not have been beneficial, the point in time was considered ideal to ensure that smallholders could embed themselves in the industry while it was small and thus racially transform the industry from the outset. In 2000 this provided an opportunity for RI researchers to engage in in-depth investigations of honeybush cultivation under smallholder conditions with farmers who were willing to take up the risk. However, few researchers

⁴³ For example, in the 2000/1 financial year the entire spectrum of RI honeybush projects had a total budget of R 465 000 (R 350 000 from a parliamentary grant and R 115 000 from a single external source). Of this only R 40 000 was allocated to the honeybush demonstration plot project; the remainder went to other RI and partner projects. Around 10% of the annual total was specifically allocated for smallholder farmers.

were willing to do so. When Derek invited researchers to join him in experimenting on honeybush cultivation in Waldesruhe in 2001, they preferred to stick to their knowledge and approaches. His experiences were never formally documented.

A year after receiving the award, the honeybush network started to fracture. During 2000 the subsidiary RI research team secured DOA-WC funding for the Jamesville site but did not share any of these funds with the RI team. A few months later the subsidiary RI coordinator, another broker seeking to establish himself as a crucial actor in the honeybush and indigenous plant marketing agribusinesses in Africa, held discussions with the United States-based Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP).⁴⁴ Most of the research team resigned from the subsidiary RI in December 2000 and formed ASNAPP's South African arm, based at Stellenbosch University, in January 2001. The effect was that they obtained significant foreign funding, focused only on Jamesville, and had virtually no future official contact with the rest of the honeybush research team at the RI.⁴⁵ The SAP coordinator made several attempts to enter into a contract with the local ASNAPP coordinator to continue the original collaboration on honeybush research, but by June 2001 these discussions broke down and there was no further official contact between the two bodies. This effectively excluded RI's researchers from Jamesville. While the subsidiary RI was initially tasked with conducting the feasibility study and running business and nursery training for smallholder farmers across all sites, the resignations and ASNAPP's unwillingness to collaborate with RI meant that RI employed a consultant in early 2002 to perform the study and did the training in-house.

In the meantime, RI's honeybush research team attempted to establish demonstration plots in Perdevlei, Reendal and Waldesruhe but by December 2000 only Waldesruhe had any significant plantings, with the participation of only four beneficiaries. While attempts were made to identify new sites, previous unsatisfactory contact with and responses to proposed projects from residents at these sites and a lack of significant funding to expand made this difficult. An Innovation Fund application submitted to the NRF in January 2001 for a total of R 16 million over three years was rejected in January 2002, with no further external funding forthcoming. By 2002 the parliamentary grant was greatly reduced and the national SAP coordinator terminated some of the projects in 2003. It is worth mentioning that the financial resources for research into honeybush were always minimal: they peaked at R 600 000 in 1998 and by the 2001/2002 financial year tapered off to less than half of this. The SAP coordinator had been instrumental in increasing the parliamentary grant funding from R 40 000 in 1994 to R 600 000 in 1998. Smaller amounts came from the Land Bank and one or two tea and food processors who had interests in laboratory research on processing quality.

44 ASNAPP was developed at Rutgers University in the US. Interviews suggested that at the time its South African office was receiving USAID funding. Jamesville was its first South African project.

45 One individual attempted to retain contact with RI in order to obtain information, yet shared little about ASNAPP's project in Jamesville.

What I observed here was an individual with sufficient cultural capital to enter SC and RI and identify a potential means of contributing to smallholder development by introducing a new crop, given that the traditional commodity focus was not really suitable in terms of the number of smallholder clients who could afford to develop these commodities. The southern Cape provided an ideal opportunity for honeybush intervention, given the number of CRRs and coloured settlements as well as land redistribution projects. The SAP coordinator was able to establish networks at various levels inside and outside the SC to ensure commitment to ideas of honeybush technology transfer. We get a picture of how an individual with the necessary cultural capital, habitus and knowledge of different fields was able to mediate and thus translate strategies of the SC and RI to the benefit of the RI, research managers, researchers and some smallholders. This person established new networks and consolidated others, holding them together from 1997 to 2001 when some started to fragment. When this individual left RI in December 2001, RI's honeybush research network slowly began to unravel (discussed in the third section). Because of this, I consider the SAP coordinator an influential broker and the rest of the research team as mediators with less influence. It is perhaps only at the village or farmer interaction level where the latter can be considered to have acted more influentially where they mediated between RI's SAP coordinator and the farmers. Yet, despite attempting to hold the honeybush project together after the SAP coordinator's resignation, we were unable to do so. But first it is necessary to see how the brokerage of honeybush played out in Waldesruhe from 2000, following the attainment of redistributed land.

Brokering and mediating honeybush technology transfer in Waldesruhe

In Waldesruhe, representatives of the DLA-SC and DOA-WC introduced the SAP coordinator and some RI researchers to eight land redistribution beneficiaries in June 1999. Three meetings transpired between June and August 1999 and culminated with the planting of about 200 seedlings on a small portion of Ted McGregor's residential plot in August. The honeybush demonstration plot technical coordinator felt that the Waldesruhe farmers were a suitable group. In discussions between them and the DLA-SC and DOA-WC, the WSFA came across as a solid organisation, able to drive this vision and provide evidence of how needed agricultural technology could support land redistribution and catalyse the rural economy. This was based on a number of inaccurate messages and assumptions: that there was a formal farmers' association and a long history of agriculture, beneficiaries had sought and acquired land to farm in order to bolster their livelihoods and create employment for others, and the DLA-SC and the DOA-WC had worked with the WSFA for four years without challenges. The land redistribution policy demanded that rural development support drive commercialisation and encourage the establishment of other agri-enterprises (DLA 1997). The RI project team interpreted rural enterprises to include honeybush farms, nurseries and processing facilities, thereby neatly fitting into a range of rural development criteria.

The researchers saw their role as transferring technology to those people who wanted it, and assumed this to be a linear process. The first step was to identify and inform interested people about

the benefits of honeybush production. Here they relied on networks with NGOs and district-based state departments to get access to interested parties. Having done this, it was necessary to form a project group amongst the farmers (or interested individuals) and to formalise this relationship with a constitution,⁴⁶ culminating in the 'tea projects'. Once this group was 'formalised', resources could be supplied. This strategy resonated with the approach used by the DLA-SC when it created the WSFA. Formal constitutions were assumed to indicate commitment by the group, substantiating the relevance of the project and site, formalising the elements of partnership and participation, seemingly something that could be referred to if commitment lagged. Why did this not work then for the honeybush tea project as it apparently had for the land redistribution project in Waldesruhe? With the land redistribution process there was the likelihood that members might lose the opportunity of acquiring land and Piet, Derek and others made sure that this did not happen. With honeybush technology transfer, on the other hand, there was nothing tangible the villagers would lose, given their circumstances (largely migrant workers many of whom had no immediate intention of farming): they did not need honeybush to supplement their income and they would not lose the land by withdrawing their participation. Piet, for example, was one of those who felt honeybush had nothing tangible to offer and that he would not lose anything by not participating (interview, May 2001).

The project in Waldesruhe did not unfold as neatly as the researchers anticipated in 1999 or as they planned during the workshops in early 2000. This was due to factors such as divergent expectations between beneficiaries and researchers, tense local social relationships and diverse interests around land and its use. Beneficiaries and researchers had very different ideas about farmland and honeybush and a broker was chosen who had little local influence. A key misassumption was that people received land through redistribution because they intended to farm; but, as shown in Chapter 4, this was a mediated (and sometimes misunderstood) process focusing almost exclusively on the acquisition of land.

At the time the difference between the activities involved in acquiring land and those of subsequently farming that land appeared indistinguishable to the research team. During the land restitution process, the government wanted to transfer land as rapidly as possible to show that land reform was a political reality; it gave little consideration to what would happen after transfer. The process demanded little commitment and labour from the Waldesruhe beneficiaries as this had largely been organised by Piet, Jeffrey, Derek and Natasha. Seldom did more than 10 to 15 of the 30 beneficiaries actually attend any meetings. Agricultural production and the adoption of a new technology, on the other hand, would require participants to regularly attend meetings and demonstrations, alongside working the land. As most beneficiaries and residents worked outside of the village this meant that they would not be around during the day to work on the demonstration plot. Yet the research team did not seem to

⁴⁶ I never saw even one of these constitutions for any of the numerous projects I was involved in. I am not sure they were ever finalised, though projects went ahead anyway.

recognise this ahead of time as a challenge; all it was concerned with was identifying interested parties and forming 'formal' project groups.

MacDonald (1998) observes that while there is often unity during land redistribution, there is less unity and cohesion afterwards. Aliber, Maluleke, Manenzhe, Paradza and Cousins (2013) present some of the evidence relating to in-fighting and factionalism experienced on redistributed farms. James (2007) shows the challenges with post-restitution settlement and how beneficiaries, state and service providers differ in their desires for and expectations of the land. In Waldesruhe, the differences were marked by the fact that at the outset the brokers involved in the two processes were different. Key brokers for land redistribution had been Piet and Derek, yet for the honeybush project it was Ted McGregor, who did not have as much influence and support amongst residents. Ted and Derek worked in the municipal offices in the village, so that they were available when the RI researchers called a meeting or demonstration or when other NGOs and organisations came to the village. Their mediation with outsiders enhanced their roles as brokers in the village. Ted was appointed to numerous development committees, from farming to tourism and heritage. It seemed that despite his limited influence he wanted to be involved in many development opportunities. Derek on the other hand confined himself to agricultural brokerage. Here we see shifting positions of brokerage and mediation as these become available or are desirable to actors. We further note that local actors are seemingly eager to participate in the honeybush project because of other benefits not immediately apparent and not because of its specific intentions. Like mission stations before it, the RI offers a host of tangible benefits to Waldesruhe residents, including material resources, infrastructure and cultural capital.

RI's SAP coordinator mustered a large team from various networks within and outside the science council. In Waldesruhe, as at other field sites, the researchers acted as mediators between the villagers and the coordinator. The coordinator, in turn, interacted with management, the financial office and external supporters to ensure that support for the project was retained or increased.

Participants at the trial planting on Ted's residential plot in August 1999 included Piet, Derek, Sara, Chris and Craig. They apparently agreed at the time to work with Ted in cultivating these plants. During a visit in November 1999, researchers noticed a weed problem, particularly of nut grass (*Cyperus rotundus*). Ted informed them that it was a serious problem throughout Waldesruhe. Heavy rainfall had caused waterlogging and this suggested that the soil was unsuitable for honeybush. In December 1999 Piet informed the researchers that he was no longer interested in honeybush and wanted to plant maize on his redistributed land as fodder for his single dairy cow. In the same month the subdivisions of the redistributed land were complete and each of the beneficiary households selected their land. In January 2000, two further beneficiaries withdrew from the honeybush project because it was planted in Ted's backyard and they had not been paid for the work they had done. By this time the overgrowth of weeds and waterlogging had killed all trial plants. At the time Derek argued that this was happening because Ted had no farming experience and that the others had lost interest because Ted expected them to do all the work. Indeed, Ted was to follow the same strategy when the demonstration plot was established in August 2000.

Despite evident dissatisfaction, a meeting with four beneficiaries in February 2000 resulted in a simple nursery structure being established at Chris's house. Within four months all the seedlings had died, and Chris lost interest in honeybush. In March and May 2000 soil samples were taken at Ted and Shirley's redistributed farmland to determine what nutrients needed to be added. It was proposed by the four beneficiaries still interested in honeybush that these two smallholdings become the site of the honeybush demonstration plot. None of the others was interested in making land available for this activity, while Ted's land was particularly convenient because of its close location to the storage dams. According to interviews with the research team and beneficiaries it was apparent that Ted saw himself leading the demonstration project in Waldesruhe. I consider him the original broker as he was present at every meeting and adamant that it should be on his land. This changed over the subsequent year, however, as he was gradually replaced by Derek, illustrating both how shaky and how opportunistic a broker's position can be.

In April 2000, RI compiled a brochure, distributed to about 95% of the Waldesruhe households, to inform residents of the honeybush project and inviting them to a meeting on 11 May 2000. The meeting was attended by six land reform beneficiaries, some of whom would constitute the Waldesruhe Tea Project over the next six months, and it was my first meeting in the village (see Chapter 2). The group had elected Ted as chairperson because his family's land was to be used and, as a former schoolteacher, he was the best educated of the group and thus the best person to work with us.

During 2000, RI's research team encountered problems with the other four intended demonstration sites. In August the group of farmers in Reendal split up within months of planting at the demonstration plot and on Perdevlei farm Jackson lost interest in honeybush by December. Political struggles in Smithsville prevented the research team identifying local leadership and potentially interested farmers. The challenges with the subsidiary RI and the formation of ASNAPP's South African branch complicated interactions with potential honeybush farmers in Jamesville. It is interesting to note how the proposed representatives of the farmers at all sites but Reendal were former schoolteachers or active ministers/lay preachers. This was even the case at Smithsville. They would apparently know how to 'deal with us', even if we did not know how to deal with them! In Waldesruhe the situation was similar but there were more experienced brokers, such as Derek, waiting for us and able to step in as the opportunity presented itself. By January 2001 Waldesruhe was the only site with a significant honeybush demonstration plot. While this was of concern, the RI researchers reasoned that a well-functioning project in Waldesruhe could function as demonstration plot for smallholders in the whole region. Yet with only this remaining site and RI's staunch investment in honeybush, RI needed the Waldesruhe project to be successful so as to ensure credibility. The research team, therefore, persistently pursued technology transfer in Waldesruhe despite the experience of limited collaboration by villagers.

With the land redistribution process, Derek and Jeffrey actively took on the informal broker role along with Piet, though the latter retained overall authority. In the honeybush project, in turn, a series of unanticipated events allowed Derek to take over the broker position from Ted. Derek's commitment for honeybush cultivation and his knowledge of what RI expected and what was happening at other

sites enabled him to increasingly take on this role as Ted gradually withdrew during 2002. So how did this transition happen?

During July 2000 the technical coordinator and I initiated PRA sessions with beneficiaries and residents at which the process of the demonstration plot over the next four years was explained. Several researchers joined the RI team at these evenings, which were attended by about 10 participants a night. We explained that the initial focus was on a communal or collective demonstration plot technology transfer, including nursery skills and division of income to ensure the long-term vision of individually operated small honeybush farms around the village. Honeybush was a relatively low-investment crop in terms of labour and finances, requiring virtually no inputs after planting except for irrigation for the first four to six months. It offered a good return from the second year, and there was little risk of oversupply as the market was growing rapidly by 2000. This meant that by the time RI researchers would leave, five years later, participants would be in a position to successfully continue honeybush cultivation. The period with the RI researchers would allow participants to become actively involved and experienced in this growing industry and get to know all role players (producers, local processors and marketers). The only hook was that this crop could only be grown in certain areas, but that Walderuhe was located within this region.

By the end of the month, it was clear that beneficiaries who were interested in farming were more interested in producing immediate cash crops than in taking up honeybush cultivation. Active beneficiaries were preparing their smallholdings for potatoes and vegetables. Only four people were interested in honeybush, though they indicated that some other interested people were unable to attend. I proposed to our SAP coordinator to postpone planting until the following year (August 2001) as we had insufficient information about the village and lacked commitment from farmers. Seeing the rifts that manifested in the failed potato project, I saw the need to find out more about village relations, especially seeing we had limited information about who had become land beneficiaries and why, and the poverty and social conditions in the community. By the end of July 2000, I felt that participants were more concerned with influencing rather than informing us (see Bending and Rosendo 2006; Rossi 2006; Mosse 1994). Likewise, the RI team was attempting to influence the participants to participate in the project as that was our means to obtaining support for the honeybush project from donors and others and thereby achieve the vision of honeybush and land reform in the Southern Cape. My position at the time mirrored Ferguson's (1990) argument that the World Bank translated the socioeconomic circumstances of Lesotho to represent the World Bank's needs, rather than the other way round. Deeper preliminary research is not necessarily the solution to this as Li (2007) shows that this is often not used and does not necessarily prevent problems in developmentalist encounters such as power imbalances, economic inequalities, brokerage and mediation.

As Mosse (2005a) argues, the nature of PRA's public engagement produces consensual information rather than diversity. Even though Piet stated a lack of interest, his attendance meant that his ideas about the social and farming conditions in the village shaped the conversation. In hindsight what we had were two groups mediating their encounter to establish a honeybush technology project at the same time as the researchers mediated their shared project aims and their varying personal

objectives with the SAP coordinator. Where most researchers wanted to follow the usual approach for demonstration plots and some argued for more in-depth PRA sessions, I argued that social research should shape the project and noted my impression that the communal technology transfer was unlikely to happen.

Because the plants for Waldesruhe and Reendal had already been ordered, however, the technical coordinator decided that the planting should go ahead, thus prioritising technical and financial arguments. The SAP coordinator suggested that I find out more about the social structure of the village as the project unfolded, ignoring that this information might come in too late to be useful. While I argued that technology transfer and the demonstration plot required group presence and cohesiveness, the technical coordinator chose to focus on one committed beneficiary on whose land the plot would be established, Ted. The coordinator also overruled my suggestion rather to give all the WTP members plants to experiment with and thus conduct technology transfer on different plots, arguing that this was not standard RI practice of implementing demonstration plots.

Social discord within the WTP became increasingly apparent at the time of planting in early August 2000. At the end of the second day of planting Valley Tea, after the research team had left, four WTP members and a number of residents who had helped with planting abandoned the project and left Ted to continue on his own. He had to hire labour to complete the planting the following week. In consultation with Ted, Sara planted some of the seedlings at her home while Derek covered 1 000 m² of his smallholding according to the monocropping and spacing pattern demonstrated on the first day of planting. Sara attended some of the PRA meetings until December 2000, but later left the project because her husband Paul was not convinced that honeybush was a good crop to cultivate. By December Derek was no longer prepared to work with Ted because of Ted's lack of farming experience, but wanted to continue with the plants on his own. The core group had thus disintegrated before the demonstration plot was established and despite the commitments and support expressed by its members at meetings.

In a discussion, Derek, Ted and Sara indicated that some of the other beneficiaries and residents might get involved once they saw the plants growing and activities taking place at the demonstration plot. While they identified five other land reform beneficiaries and three non-beneficiaries to be interested in honeybush, these did not attend any of the subsequent interactive sessions, possibly because they worked outside of the village. The RI team considered withdrawing from Waldesruhe, but we did not have the resources to identify and restart the process at another location, so soon after planting. We thus simply hoped for the best and continued to implement the plan as well as we could. When we were notified in July 2001 of a site about 50 km from Waldesruhe that had a lot of wild honeybush near the community and the DOA-WC indicated the possibility of financing a project, we investigated this option and met with the residents and DOA-WC. The fact that the DOA-WC wanted a businessplan and we had no accurate economic viability data to compile a plan made the suggestion unviable, however.

In later years, Waldesruhe residents remembered the honeybush demonstration plot as something strange, new and unfamiliar with little seeming to happen. Participants did not do the bi-

weekly checks and weeding, and those who did wanted Ted to pay them for their labour as they were not members of the WTP. Some thought the project was exclusively Ted's as nobody else seemed to be involved. While one might be tempted to suggest that the introduction of a new unfamiliar crop such as honeybush was the problem and the lack of participation was due to a lack of interest in this crop, other organisations in the area experienced a similar lack of participation by the land reform beneficiaries, suggesting that this is an inadequate argument. (I explore this further in Chapter 6.)

The remainder of 2000 entailed technology transfer sessions, site inspections and some PRA sessions used to collect more information about the participants, various other actors and the area as a whole to lead up to participatory project planning. Ted, Sara, Derek and Paul Quinn attended most of the PRA sessions, the latter until December when his work took him out of the village. While we were aware that Sara had planted honeybush seedlings in her backyard, we only found out by chance about Derek's planting on his smallholding when discussing Ted's weed problems. While Ted had been shown how to manage weeds and had been provided with a weed killer and backpack sprayer, he had never got around to do so until December. In a discussion, he and his brother-in-law indicated that Derek's seedlings were growing much better, since he had indeed weeded all along in line with the training he too had received. Derek showed me his plants and I reported this turn of events to the RI team. Ted's delays in spraying the weeds, largely due to family commitments, frustrated the research team and was made worse when we realised in early 2001 that he had inadvertently also sprayed and killed off some of the honeybush plants.

There was also a problem of livestock grazing in the demonstration plot and eating the young plants due to an argument between Ted and Craig, thus preventing the Valley tea from reseeding. The result was that instead of two hectares (20 000 m²) of honeybush plants, Ted had about 5 000 m² of plants scattered over about 12 000 m². The RI team thus gradually lost its trust that he was able to look after the demonstration plot on his own and did not understand why he was not receiving help from the WTP members.

Over the course of 2000 Piet gradually relinquished his 'management' and brokering role with the RI researchers to Ted and Derek. Initially he was the main contact person but by August 2000 he made it clear that honeybush and other agricultural matters of the RI could go through Derek and Ted. Both were WSFA executive committee members and could inform him and other members; and they were usually available during the day as they both worked at the municipal offices in the village. My understanding was that he was delegating his influence more to Derek, as he and Ted did not get on and seldom spoke. In 2001, he was mainly in the background, only chairing the WSFA and selectively attending some meetings, such as training and the SAHPA annual general meeting in 2001. While he remarked that he did so to keep up to date with what was happening, it seemed that he attended only meetings from which he might derive a benefit, either through obtaining knowledge or making new contacts. Piet's involvement in the land redistribution process resulted in land for him and his son but he obtained nothing tangible from the honeybush project but insured his presence reinforced his local influence. Ted's brokering of the honeybush project led to his acquisition of various material resources, cash and the preparation of his soil. (Additional resources he had asked for more from the RI team,

including an irrigation pump and pipes, had been turned down.) Derek also derived resources and benefits from his involvement with the RI, which increased from 2001 onwards when his planting remained the only viable one. This indicates that while brokers do things for the good of other people, they are also anticipating rewards or benefits for themselves (James 2011; Lindquist 2015). In fact, this might be the initial and primary driver and drawing in others is the means to achieve this. For example, Piet wanted land and Ted wanted honeybush. They both involved others to obtain this with different levels of success. Derek acknowledged that he could only retain RI support if he could get other residents to attend training courses and field excursions.

In early February 2001, the researchers, Ted and Derek agreed that Derek's plot would be used for future training and demonstrations, with Derek being paid a monthly stipend for at least a year for the 'rental'. This stipend more than covered labour costs. Derek was also provided with various agrochemical inputs. Derek agreed with the arrangements on the condition that he retained any profit from sales of the honeybush on his land. When I asked him later why he had not volunteered his land for the demonstration plot from the beginning, he said that at that point he wanted to plant potatoes and vegetables as cash crop. While he knew that there was a market for these, he had no idea whether honeybush was profitable or would even grow. He did not want the responsibility of running a demonstration plot as he knew nobody would help him but he also would not want to share any profit as per RI requirements. When he took some of Ted's plants, he did so as an experiment and only in a small area; more than a hectare needed to remain for other crops. The RI project had provided him with the opportunity to experiment with and learn about a new crop. As theorised by Certeau (1984), Derek had found a way to tactically shape the RI's strategies in line with his own agenda. Once the opportunity arose, he mediated his position. The money and inputs were a bonus.

By April 2001 the RI wanted to commence with detailed honeybush training, though it only commenced in June. At the advice of Ted and Derek, the training covered broad principles of agricultural production and did not focus solely on honeybush. Despite this, attendance was irregular as most of the interested land reform beneficiaries worked outside of the village and got home late. I often suspected in hindsight that Ted and Derek asked certain peers to attend these sessions so that the RI team would infer that interest in the project went beyond the two of them. Although Piet was openly uninterested in honeybush, the RI researchers managed to get him to open many of these training sessions and other meetings during 2001 and 2002. His presence was used to attract other beneficiaries and residents and to promote the WSFA. The first training session was attended by ten residents, which motivated the research team even though the number dropped down to five for the remaining three sessions that week. At this meeting Derek and some of the other beneficiaries raised an issue that later became important to some RI researchers in that their carrots, beetroot and other root crops were misshapen. The RI nematologist suspected an infection by root-knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne spp.*). As honeybush is a known host for root-knot nematode, RI decided to sample and analyse the soil.

The high attendance at the June training could also have been caused by SAHPA's annual general meeting that took place in Waldesruhe in June. The RI team had nominated Derek to the

SAHPA executive committee and he was duly elected. Piet agreed for the WSFA to become a member and to pay the necessary membership fee. During the meeting, the attendees visited Derek's plantings. Derek's role in SAHPA and the fact that the SAHPA meeting took place in Waldesruhe seemed to re-ignite interest in honeybush and may have encouraged more people to attend the training.

The next three training sessions were held in September 2001, each attended by seven residents. This sustained interest motivated the research team. During a site inspection of Derek's plants, the RI team noted that some plants were beginning to flower and he was advised to harvest them in October. The team also noted, however, that he had not weeded the plants for two months. Derek explained that he had been unable to get labour as he could not match what the neighbouring large-scale farmers paid in wages. The RI team decided that Derek should use a weed eater to cut back the weeds.

Five of the seven beneficiaries who attended the site visit said they were keen to plant honeybush in 2002 and envisaged a role for themselves in the honeybush industry. Some had attended or been involved in hosting the SAHPA meeting and now considered that honeybush cultivation must be something tangible and profitable if commercial white farmers were involved. They suggested that future planting take place on some of the vacant trust land. The researchers agreed to take soil samples and analyse these in order to make recommendations on the viability of this land. They also promised to see whether their budget for 2002 could cover some of the inputs for the soil preparation.

Regarding the original demonstration plot, however, the RI team proposed that Ted should not harvest in 2001 but wait for a year. A visit to his land earlier that week had indicated that the plants were not doing well and that it would be a risk to harvest those that remained. Two weeks later, however, a fire destroyed all of the remaining plants. Though I could never receive confirmation for this, rumours had it that the fire was set by Damien in retaliation for the fact that Ted had apparently not paid his wife and another female resident the promised wages for assisting in weeding the plot.

At the beginning of November 2001, two RI researchers and Derek harvested about 550 kg of honeybush from Derek's site. This equated to about 5 tons per hectare and was considered a good yield as the plants were still young. Derek's harvest again increased interest in honeybush and, at a WSFA meeting in the same month, Piet said that the committee would allocate trust land to anybody interested in farming honeybush in 2002. The local DOA-WC extension officer was also excited about the harvest and promised the RI team financial support to establish a larger site in Waldesruhe. Nothing came of this promise as by January 2002 he had been reassigned to another part of the province.

At a meeting in late December 2001, Derek noted that his plants were growing well again after the harvest and that he would use the weed-eater to remove the weeds around the base of the plants. The harvest had motivated him and also the research team who had been despondent about the lack of success, participation and commitment in the demonstration plot. While 2001 had started off badly, it had developed positively through some careful brokering and mediating by the various actors. Derek's planting was the only smallholder planting we had access to. Some researchers felt that Derek's yield could have been larger if they had been able to assist early on with soil preparation and fertilisation. At this point, they did not know how to project into the future as they had no idea of the overall soil quality

but were aware only of the presence of root-knot nematodes. They were concerned that there might be other challenges beyond their 'expert' control. At this meeting, Ted and Derek were informed that if the WSFA was serious about extending the plantings in Waldesruhe, it had to order the plants by January 2002. Despite circulation of this information amongst interested residents and the apparent increased interest, nobody responded to this call. In a situation where most experienced financial and time constraints, the fact that no solutions were being provided for these new problems with honeybush discouraged them from taking up the risk.

Over 2000 and 2001 Derek increasingly became the honeybush broker in Waldesruhe, taking over the role that Ted had created for himself. Derek's interest, availability and successful first harvest meant that the RI team committed themselves to him and his ideas. Ted's problems and his inability to maintain the demonstration plot suggested that he was not really committed to the project. Within the science council, meanwhile, RI was having broker and translation problems. In December 2001 the SAP coordinator resigned, the champion of honeybush and smallholder farming — a huge shock to the honeybush research team. It led to a number of negative repercussions. Established networks began to disintegrate in 2002 and honeybush funding declined as the new centralised SAP structure removed the interactive role of SAP coordinators in budget planning. The SAP's focus increasingly shifted away from smallholders to the National Department of Agriculture's focus on deracialising the commercial farming sector, and increasingly resonated with the fact that, generally, science, technology and innovation were seen as the solution to rural development obstacles. But rather than seeing honeybush as innovative, the focus was on gene banks, meteorology and geographical information systems. Currently there is no national SAP programme and it has been changed to become a crosscutting function put in place in the SC since mid-2003. Today, rather than offering coordinated support to smallholders, the RI approach is project-based and heavily reliant on external funding (interview with former RI colleagues, March 2017, July 2019).

The anthropologist as honeybush mediator and the fragmentation of networks

One of the reasons I was appointed by RI was to solve problems the researchers were encountering in communities. They strongly felt that a social scientist could resolve the challenges they encountered with brokers (whom they referred to as gatekeepers), a lack of participation and social cohesion. Yet this was something I could not solve but only explain, at least to some extent. Wrongly, when the SAP coordinator left and I was in this acting role for six months, the assumption was made that the departing coordinator's networks would automatically become mine and that the team members would accept my authority. Yet I did not have my predecessor's network with senior RI managers and was structurally constrained from building it. Due to my temporary position, I had to report to a line manager but could not attend RI management meetings myself; my functions were confined solely to managing and raising funds for the SAP division. The line manager, in turn, did not have time to deal with the field site challenges that I raised.

Despite having worked at RI for two years by then, my expertise as social scientist meant that I remained an outsider with fairly different views about rural development and agricultural support for smallholders. My own network included similarly minded people, but none of these was in senior management, except for my manager, but due to funding challenges he was unable to promote these ideas at senior management meetings. My attempts to step into the previous coordinator's network failed because interests did not coincide. I wanted a greater focus on smallholders generally, including a greater participatory approach to technology development and transfer, yet most managers were unwilling to move beyond current technology transfer practices and wanted more money for their personnel and projects. I was also unable to secure funds from the national SAP coordinator, as these were now managed differently.

I tried teaming up with irrigation, soil and pest management managers to develop proposals for providing support for Waldesruhe land beneficiaries who were having problems with their vegetable crops. While the managers understood my aims, they were hesitant because the expertise of their teams lay in viticulture and deciduous fruits, and not vegetables. They also felt that the Waldesruhe honeybush demonstration plot proved that it was simply too difficult to work with smallholders. Thus, despite the fact that their staff were paid from SAP funds, some managers never seemed able to allocate personnel to SAP projects. Ultimately my attempts thus floundered. The situation with the honeybush project worsened when it had to be scaled down in April 2002 due to a smaller allocation from the parliamentary grant and my inability to raise external funds. This meant there was no longer money to pay the experts and I had to rely on the goodwill of each individual researcher. At this point I was able to ensure the appointment of a consultant to conduct an economic feasibility study of smallholder honeybush production in Waldesruhe. The up-to-date financial information on the residents, honeybush production and the honeybush market would assist in negotiations with funders. Ultimately, no funder was found.

At that time, I had become less interested in honeybush per se and more interested in how the science council could support smallholders in their general practices. I saw the relationships that I had developed in Waldesruhe as an opportunity for improving the way in which RI, and possibly even the SC, developed and transferred technology. I was interested in how and why farmers were still producing vegetables and rearing livestock on the redistributed farm when the DOA-WC had said this was impossible. Drawing on experience I had gained in September 2001 in the Philippines where I had become exposed to farmers' innovations, I argued that we should understand and benefit from what smallholders were doing even if it was not done by the book. I formed a small network of three RI researchers who shared my approach and three managers who were willing to support me.

By this point I had become frustrated with the unfounded expectations of the team in the honeybush project and their evident lack of real interest in smallholders. With the failure of our NRF Innovation Fund proposal in 2001, I argued that RI needed to widen its focus from honeybush to general smallholder needs as the former was difficult to sell to potential funders in and outside the science council. The project was losing traction in the science council, despite my very strong and stable

relationship with the acting national SAP director. Unfortunately, he had too many SAP coordinators making demands on him for funds.

In February 2002 Derek showed researchers that he was trying to propagate plants at the nursery he erected near the WSFA storage facilities. He had harvested seed from his own plantings before the 2001 harvest and was attempting to propagate these in the nursery. Because the RI had no funds anymore, it rendered no support for this, even though it was part of the project. By late March, some of Derek's plants were dying. A planned site visit was delayed because of changes in the science council's smallholder programme —the appointment of a new national SAP director, the finalisation of budgets and the closure of four honeybush projects (nematology, insect survey, plant breeding and processing). At the same time, my temporary position as coordinator came more and more under threat as my expertise as social scientist made me undesirable for this position on a long-term basis. Derek later explained that the delay — together with the RI's inability to resolve the nematode problem — suggested to him that RI was not as omniscient as it had presented itself.

In May 2002, six RI team members went to Waldesruhe to investigate Derek's problems and complete some training. At the first meeting, the ten beneficiaries that attended requested the RI to remain working in the village for another three years, as originally agreed in 2000. They explained that they had not really been interested in honeybush because they had just received their smallholdings and wanted to prepare the soil for farming and enclose the land. They also did not have the spare time or money to focus on this new and risky crop. The failure of the 1999 trial planting in Ted's yard and the disagreements amongst participants around it had made them very sceptical and made them hesitant to be involved in the demonstration plot which had now closed down.

The participants indicated that they liked the combination of theoretical lessons with applied demonstrations in the field, along with the broad focused manuals that were provided for later reference. 'Involvement' in the project had enabled them to expand their networks with other smallholder and large-scale farmers engaged in similar activities and not only honeybush. They rated learning from the experiences of others as very valuable. Derek pointed out that experimentation was the best way to learn about local suitability of crops and practices. He had been interested to experiment and to innovate with new ideas and practices and had found the honeybush experience valuable. His planting and harvest of honeybush now proved that it could be grown and sold. Some participants did express some scepticism, however, based on the fact that the RI team had not yet been able to solve Derek's nematode problem.

On the Saturday, the researchers examined Derek's plants and identified the abnormally dry conditions as the reason for his plants dying; Derek was advised to irrigate. The site visit also confirmed the nematode infection and the team suggested examining all redistributed farmland to determine the extent of this infestation. The team did note some plants and trees on the fringes of the agricultural plots of Waldesruhe that were known nematode hosts and could be the source of the infestation. The WSFA was tasked with asking all its members to give permission to have their soil surveyed and to be available on the projected date of the survey in September to provide the team with background information on their soil and previous crops.

In July 2002, SAHPA's annual general meeting was held in a town about 60 km away from Waldesruhe and Derek was re-elected to its executive committee. At a subsequent meeting he drew on the information gained through his involvement with SAHPA that the European market had purchased less honeybush during 2001. Originally, this market had been provided with Mountain tea, and found the blended varieties of Coastal and Valley tea that were now being exported to have less flavour. The participants were thus concerned that the RI team had advised them to grow Valley tea, the variety Derek was growing. On the other hand, Valley tea had the highest return on investment locally as there was a good local market for it (De Robeck 2002). Mountain tea, on the other hand, was not yet being commercially cultivated at any great scale and only wild plants were being harvested. Derek also reported that despite improved climatic conditions over the previous two months, his plants had not improved. He also no longer used the dam on the *inkommergrond* to irrigate the plants, as he had done in previous years, because this land was now part of a land claim 'in the politics' of which he did not want to get involved.

In September 2002 three researchers and several beneficiaries and residents took soil samples from approximately 20 smallholdings and different parts of the trust land. Slightly more than 45 hectares of the redistributed farmland was surveyed. Analysis of the survey results indicated the areas where beneficiaries or tenants had planted Irish potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) — a favourite root-knot nematode host — season after season and sometimes biannually, without any resting period or crop rotation, were particularly infested. The nematologist presented the farmers with some options. Those who had livestock could plant oats, which would reduce the nematode problem, and let the livestock graze on the oats; several farmers took up this option. Others could do crop rotation, implemented by three farmers who planted oats, vegetables and potatoes and would rotate these the following year. The ideal was, however, to fumigate the soil, but this was an expensive solution. The DOA-WC Landcare Programme applied for funding to do this, but none was forthcoming. While the first two solutions should have been implemented over a longer time period, by 2006 all farmers had stopped planting oats.

In October 2002 Derek harvested 466 kg of honeybush. Researchers again equated this to be about five tons per hectare, a fairly good result for the second year after planting. The team regarded it very positively, given the limited rainfall and nematode problems. Derek's spirits also seemed to have improved. Yet this harvest received far less attention than the first harvest a year earlier: no RI researchers were present when Derek brought the harvest to the processor, it was not mentioned in the provincial or local press, it did not attract any interest from other beneficiaries and no suggestion was made to extend honeybush to trust land. Thus, despite the May 2002 request that RI remain in Waldesruhe, interest now seemed to be dying. This fluctuation took its toll in particular on the research team and on Derek.

During 2002 Ted was transferred to municipal offices some 30 km away. He could no longer take care of his plot or attend meetings and decided to rent out his land to Derek for vegetable cultivation as a means of making an extra income. By November 2002 he had completely withdrawn from all

honeybush activities, and expressed disappointment in the lack of support he had received from the community.

Following the nematode survey and the further die-back of the honeybush plants after the October 2002 harvest, two researchers and I conceptualised a project to promote general soil health, with nematology being but one of several focus points. Following my interest in on farm participatory research methods, I proposed pooling our skills and working with the beneficiaries to find ways to improve soil health. The underlying assumption was that an improved soil quality would encourage greater farming activity. This was an instrumentalist reaction to the challenges we had experienced, but which we did not fully reflect upon at the time. The plan never materialised, despite submitting a proposal to the DOA-WC, the science council's SAP and an outside donor. What it did instead was to exacerbate conflict within the research team. Three members were totally opposed, arguing that our obligation was exclusively confined to honeybush or other indigenous niche market crops (their areas of interest). According to them, Derek encountered problems because he did not advise us that he was planting honeybush on soil that we had not tested or prepared for him and because he did not have the means to irrigate when required. They wanted to move to other villages where conditions were better and participants were enthusiastic. While these researchers first considered recommending closing down the Waldesruhe project, they then argued to keep it as it could still provide relevant data on pests and diseases. They drew up a proposal to pursue research on sustainable harvesting of naturally growing honeybush, for which they would need to determine locations in the region where Mountain tea grew (the conflict with ASNAPP prevented them from going to Jamesville). A seventh team member concentrated on fulfilling the business skills training aspect of the original RI project, which was achieved by the end of 2004. Closure of the project would mean withdrawal from the honeybush activities in Waldesruhe, a matter for which I was still responsible as acting SAP coordinator.

In August 2000 I had begun monitoring the general farming activities amongst the redistribution beneficiaries in the village and in August 2002 began to observe some changes. Many had downsized their activities or had stopped altogether. Some produced the same crops but on a smaller scale, while others stopped producing crops and simply reared livestock. Kurt, Sara, Verna and Lucia got involved in a DOA-WC chicken layer project leading Kurt, Sara and Verna to stop farming their land. Instead they looked after about 400 layer-hens, selling the eggs to markets in neighbouring towns. New tenants, Michael Josephs and Henry King, who lived in and outside the village respectively, started to prepare and plant on parts of the redistributed farmland that had lain dormant since 1999. Henry had an arrangement with his employer that he could sell the produce he grew on redistributed farmland through his employer's marketing channels. Employment opportunities meant that some of the beneficiaries were no longer returning to the village on a daily or even weekly basis. Others returned every day, but worked so far away that they no longer had time to tend to their fields. Thus Craig now employed somebody to look after his cattle during the week. Some beneficiaries were too old to work their land and the health of a few others had deteriorated. And some beneficiaries never worked their land. David worked overtime and on weekends to pay for the college tuition of his child so that he had no time to get involved in farming and farming projects. He did not think that farming would provide the extra money he needed. He and several other beneficiaries with adjacent smallholdings had not touched their

land that was so badly overgrown with trees when they received it that they considered it too expensive to clear. Changes in agricultural activity were thus influenced by costs, employment opportunities and life-cycle changes.

These changes were woven into the rural development tapestry on which the RI was trying to transfer honeybush technology. However, the RI team did not consider these changes relevant to enrolment, participation or embracement of the honeybush project. Nor did we consider them relevant on how the project unfolded and deviated from our plans. Rather we saw the honeybush farming as unrelated to the general farming in the village. It was only some years later, when I considered the various encounters and overlapping events taking place in Waldesruhe and the RI in greater detail, that I recognised how these two practices were intertwined in many ways. At the least the general farming practices should have provided us with signals of the changes that were taking place in the village. I noted above that participants reported being too busy to engage in honeybush in 2000 because they were experimenting with their land. Yet by mid-2002 half of these had stopped farming altogether.

The year 2003 involved significant change in terms of RI team roles and the focus on honeybush activities in Waldesruhe. At a research team meeting in late January 2003, the decision was taken to terminate training in Waldesruhe by the end of March. Derek's plot was to be used for monitoring pests, diseases, nematodes and the chemical composition of the honeybush leaves (the main ingredient of the tea). The final agricultural training took place in late February 2003, the business training went on a bit longer. At the training sessions, the participants were informed that fundraising to continue the project had been unsuccessful, that we would no longer be able to provide financial support to those interested in planting — they would have to purchase the plants and prepare the soil themselves — and that we could only provide advice in future. Derek confirmed that his planting was still available for demonstration and monitoring purposes. Those present again expressed some interest in the soil health project.

RI visits to Waldesruhe declined significantly during the year. No more training was conducted, at most two researchers at a time visited the village, largely on their way to and from other research sites. Often they did not even speak to anyone in Waldesruhe, as they could monitor Derek's plants on their own, sharing their findings with Derek by telephone after the visit. Nobody else was really interested in the results, with the other beneficiaries assuming that Derek would inform them of anything important. My visits followed a similar pattern, and when I set up meetings about the soil health project, only Derek attended the first and no one the second.

In May 2003, several RI researchers worked on enrolling other villages into the honeybush project. One settlement in the Eastern Cape where residents apparently harvested Mountain tea was identified for possible collaboration. The Eastern Cape Development Corporation had established a processing plant but when the harvesters could not meet the demand, RI was requested to look into the possibility of commercial cultivation. After an initial visit, the researchers indicated that they would need to conduct a scoping exercise to determine the history around harvesting and the viability of commercial cultivation. As in Jamesville, harvesting in the wild seemed to be one of many livelihoods practised by residents. The microclimate was unfamiliar to the RI researchers and there was no

indication that a feasibility study had informed the establishment of the processing facility. Preferring to err on the side of caution, the researchers did not want to go ahead and simply start planting. The development corporation did not come back on this proposal and by end of the year the RI shelved the idea.

With the departure of the SAP coordinator and my inability to fulfil a broker role with regards to the honeybush project and give effective mediation, there was no longer any cohesive script for the various actors to follow. Before I took over, mediation of field experiences to the SAP coordinator and on to other managers was successful, framed by the professional respect the RI SAP coordinator enjoyed in the science council and subsequent influence on decision making. After their departure we seemed like a group of individuals, unable to frame and hold together a confusing reality on the ground. As a result, the research team and the beneficiaries were not only separating from one another but also within their respective groups.

The presence of some sort of script seems important in the development narrative. Even if scripts are not followed or closely adhered to and even if they are unsatisfactory, fragile or overly structured, they seem critical for the actors involved to accept a project as a concrete undertaking. Without the RI SAP coordinator the script seemed to collapse, and nobody was sure how to proceed. Scripts and projects need brokers to hold them together. One late attempt at holding the honeybush project together in Waldesruhe was a course on fruit and vegetable processing that a small team conducted in late August 2003. Several residents attended but, again, it was only those who worked in the village or were unemployed. The training was translated as being part of the honeybush project, which allowed us to tick another item off our project to-do list that we had agreed with the beneficiaries in 2000. However, such attempts to stick to the script did not hold the team together.

In October 2003 I paid a visit to Waldesruhe on my return from another project site and met up with Derek who still had the honeybush growing on his smallholding. This was my last visit to his planting. In November, he did not bother to harvest and in late December he removed all the plants from his smallholding. Years later he told me that most plants had died and he wanted to give the soil a rest before planting vegetable crops in 2005.

The rapid exit

My last visit to Waldesruhe as researcher for RI was in May 2004 when I informed Derek and several other residents that I was leaving the SC but would hopefully see them again as part of my new research activities. There was absolutely no interest in honeybush at this stage, all the plantings had been removed and the infrastructure, such as the nursery, taken down. Derek had begun potato farming and was hiring land from other beneficiaries and land-owning residents. He asked me to ensure that the promised business training was provided, and I gave him various contact numbers and promised to speak to the researcher responsible for this activity. About 18 months later I returned to Waldesruhe as part of another project and to pave the way for my doctoral research.

The original honeybush project proposal (SC 2000: 7–8) identified four potential risks to the project:

1. Local politics influences farmers' decision to participate as there might be other organisations promising payment for attendance of [their] training sessions;
2. Farmers do not attend training sessions (see above);
3. Trainers resign from the Institute and there might not be any other staff member that can take on additional training activities or has the expertise; and
4. Natural disasters such as flooding or drought which can impact on the demonstration plots.

Such categories of potential risk or challenges to implementing projects are common components of proposals (Mosse 2005a). Mosse argues that these logframe 'lists' do not cover the broad spectrum of challenges encountered during the development process, such as those he encountered. This correlates with the findings I have presented here. What happens in reality is that the project proposal and these lists, much like the redistribution farm business plans, are seldom considered again after funding has been received or project implementation starts. They are simply box-ticking exercises to get funding and show some awareness of possible risks. They simplify the challenges and are not used for monitoring purposes. If the risks were a serious consideration, the project teams would need to put much more effort into understanding the project site, its history, the actors involved and the local weather patterns before final conceptualisation, planning and implementation. Furthermore, project plans do not provide any guidelines on how to deal with any obstructions that come up. While our RI team was well aware that problems could arise, there were no plans in place for how to overcome them. All we had was a very cursory attempt at identifying normal or expected risks. We had no awareness, however, that projects are *mediations* of policy. On the ground, there are no technical activities that are separate from the daily encounters of individuals and the contexts in which they are set. Encounters are mediations of things and people, as Latour (1996, 1999) has critically pointed out.

By late 2003, the SAP unit had drastically reduced its functions and many of the part-time team members went back to focusing on commercial large-scale agriculture. Some joined the first round of projects on wine and grape farming supported by grants offered by the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development programme. These projects developed largely due to support from and the initiative of the wine industry. In 2003, RI adopted various strategies to mitigate the reduction of parliamentary grant money flowing towards the SAP. My immediate superior took over the acting role as SAP coordinator, and the secretary added work in the financial unit to her SAP work. One colleague was made the coordinator of all SAP technical research, another of technology transfer (in the form of training smallholder farmers). These activities were largely ad hoc and depended on requests from outside organisations, including the state. I returned to my role as the rural anthropologist — a position similar to what I had been doing before becoming acting coordinator — and sought more consultancy focused opportunities relating to participatory diagnostic studies and evaluations of agricultural projects and rural livelihoods investigations. Internal coordination with researchers was extremely difficult, given

the challenges with their managers, and it thus became unwise to compile proposals or contracts that depended on the input of these researchers. In March 2004 my manager resigned, and the SAP unit seemed to have lost all relevance within the RI; most emergent farming activities now became located within disciplinary research units. I left RI at the end of June 2004.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how a vision of rural development, focusing on new agricultural technology, was conceptualised and used to assemble researchers at RI and some of the other research institutes of the science council. It increasingly lost traction and cohesiveness due to differences in the team and problems that arose as the honeybush project was implemented in Waldesruhe. While neat plans were laid, the project unfolded in unexpected ways. Brokers emerged and shaped the project, and also disappeared again, their mediations and translations going with them and new ones emerging. The project and its vision of rural development became increasingly fragmented rather than strengthened. For all intents and purposes the project ended after three years and two harvests.

In Waldesruhe, the activities of those who initially enrolled in the project, the ‘users’ with their tactical behaviours of engagement, resonated with what happened during the land reform project. In the case of honeybush, this was a less cohesive activity for many of the reasons mentioned, including the lack of influence and activity on the part of the initial broker and people unwilling to support him. As local brokers changed, the RI team appeared unable to solve the challenges with production, blaming Derek for not following the project script. It is possible, however, that even if Derek had followed the script, he would not have been assisted on his private land because the script focused solely on the demonstration plot.

In comparison to the land redistribution project the honeybush project was more demanding as it required long-term active collaboration by the beneficiaries — something they did not want, and probably could not afford, to do. This shaped the process of the honeybush technology transfer and the outcomes, which are discussed in the next chapter. The way in which the land reform process took place enabled beneficiaries to pass commitments onto others; they used the same tactic in the honeybush project by appointing Ted and Derek, and later only Derek, as spokespersons and mediators. Despite the problems, the RI team remained involved in Waldesruhe not only because there was no alternative site in the region but also because of Derek’s personal interest in and commitment to the honeybush project.

At the RI the loss of the SAP coordinator resulted in the increased fragmentation of the vision and subsequent loss of conviction that it was achievable. This was compounded by the change in funding protocols and loss of financial support for the honeybush project. The researchers split up, joining other projects and teams, some related to honeybush and some not, or returning to work exclusively for their own research units. The SAP unit became virtually non-existent and was relegated to a cross-cutting activity.

Ten years later we are left with two sequential projects that were supposed to contribute to rural development. Two questions arise: (1) Was land reform a success or a failure? (2) Was honeybush technology transfer a success or a failure? I examine these in detail in Chapter 6, drawing on the theoretical concepts of mediation and translations to make sense of the outcomes.

The land reform and honeybush projects took place in a village that, as I demonstrate, had little direct involvement in farming and was embedded in a strong district economy, most of which is off-farm. As noted in Chapter 3, livelihood activities changed over time, some falling away and new ones appearing. This chapter shows how developmentalist thinking, planning and evaluation does not take into account the changes that can take place during the project lifespan, changes in lifecycles and life stages of beneficiaries and target groups, some which is unforeseen but some of which could be readily anticipated. The assumption is rather that development is the change-maker. What we encounter is continued translation, as different actors, depending on their positionality and understandings of the intention of the projects and their final outcomes, attempt to illustrate projects as a success or failure and why. Exploring how this takes place helps us to understand how development works and in what ways success and failure are made.

Chapter 6

Translations after the fact — understanding success and failure

These interventions regularly fail in terms of their stated objectives, and they do so precisely because development institutions seem able to deceive themselves as to the reality of the situations in which they are intervening.

— *Bending and Rosendo (2006: 230)*

It is all a question of aiming and positioning the local projects in the agendas and frameworks of the donors.

— *Jacobs (2014: 314)*

Introduction

The preceding chapters illustrate unevenness and unpredictability in the implementation of land redistribution and the honeybush demonstration plot in Waldesruhe, especially with regard to planned interventions and the anticipated outcomes of these. Above I argued that development interventions are projects at places (or even institutions) where mediation (involving assembling, translation and representation) by skilled and influential brokers and less influential mediators is a necessary activity to hold ideas and resources together and ensure implementation. Mediation necessarily changes some of the planned actions and events during implementation. Thus, we should expect that the final outcomes differ from those planned. Brokers and mediators often put their own needs and expectations first, while also helping others to benefit in different ways. The latter is necessary to secure and maintain support. To ensure coherence of ideas and support for them, mediation involves translation, sometimes to coincide with projects and sometimes to influence or alter projects. This broker and mediator activity occurs in both villages and development agencies — the locations of different components of the development project.

Most people in Waldesruhe were not direct beneficiaries of the two sequential interventions, sometimes by choice or circumstances but at others through purposeful exclusion by their peers or themselves. Others benefitted in different ways but not in accordance with the original farmland land-use and business plans or the honeybush technology transfer plan. Land was transferred without any post-transfer support that would have ensured adherence to and implementation of the original plans. Different support was provided by RI but was not enthusiastically embraced by most. However, to support the historical research of honeybush and the vision that it could be a ‘magic crop’, bringing about rural development in the southern Cape, it was implemented based on a number of misassumptions. These resulted from mediations and the reinforcement of misassumptions during land redistribution, and included the lack of a cohesive and organised group, an interest in using their land for farming and a desire to make farming an important long-term livelihood.

Project plans follow from policy, which is purposely vague in order to assemble support (Mosse 2005a); as Latour (1996, 1999) reminds us, policy is not a blueprint for projects. In his essay on 'Questions of Method', Foucault acknowledges that nothing transpires according to programmers' or project planners' ordered plans. These plans are not ideals 'in the heads of a few' planners or 'abortive schemas for the creation of reality'. Instead, 'they are fragments of reality ...[that] ... induce a whole series of effects in the real ... [whereby they] ... crystalize into institutions, they inform individual behaviour, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things' (Foucault 1991a: 81–82). Projects can be considered as institutions or networks (Latour 1996, 1999) that bring people and objects together at a particular place (RI or Waldesruhe). The various mediations throughout the lifespan of a project necessarily deviate it from its planned course and purpose. Thus, when looking at and attempting to understand the outcomes, further mediation and translation is required if the outcomes are going to coincide at least with the policy intentions, if not the project intentions (Mosse and Lewis 2006).

Ideas about success and failure of land reform and technology transfer in Waldesruhe provide important examples that question how we should consider success and failure in development and how it is made. Is a project successful because it follows the plan and achieves the stated objectives and final outcome, irrespective of how desirable and beneficial this might be and to whom? Is it a failure when it does not stick to the planned activities and have the intended consequences, despite obvious benefits for some? Or is it partially successful and partially unsuccessful? If either of these are the case, then in what ways has the development project succeeded and in what ways has it failed?

Mosse and Lewis (2006: 8) maintain it is important to understand 'how different frames of reference are used to analyse the "same" events, reflecting the different positions of the actors involved in the events themselves and in their documentation'. Ideally development agents want outcomes to be translated (Latour 2005) or represented (Rottenburg 2009) as successes. Other observers and even beneficiaries may be less reluctant to think of success when planned outcomes are not immediately attained or subsequent events produce challenges. Similarly, they might prefer the current outcomes over the anticipated outcomes.

This chapter analyses the nature of translating success and failure and their resultant effects, first with regard to land redistribution and then with regard to the honeybush demonstration plot project. I include my own translations, given my direct involvement in the honeybush project and my subsequent ethnographic research that enabled me to explore the outcomes over a longer period and more deeply — obtaining an understanding that is not available from limited project-bound research activities and short *post-facto* evaluations. Some of my translations changed over time and illustrate the impact of individual positionalities on translation.⁴⁷ Including my own translations about events helps to

⁴⁷ In 2003 I was interviewed by a local journalist for a magazine article in which I was quoted as saying, 'Hart hails [Waldesruhe] as one of the more successful land reform projects'. While I did think so at that

demonstrate the unevenness of the translations in general. Different positions and expected purposes lead to different translations of the same event (Mosse and Lewis 2006). What my research crucially shows is that projects are mediated, that their processes, activities and outcomes are shaped by mediation, and, by extension, that evaluation (the making or understanding of success or failure) is an outcome of mediation. However, it is a translated outcome linking more to policy ideals than to the actual projects conducted in the name of that policy.

It is important to acknowledge that when actors talk about success or failure, they may not necessarily use the same criteria or referents. Furthermore, translations continually change: where an actor adopted one perspective at a certain time, they may later change this perspective and get into conflict with earlier networks they had been part of but coincide with those they are a part of now. Brokerage and mediation are almost always 'covert' and informal actions even when they take place in formal settings. The chapter concludes with a brief explanation about why the redistribution beneficiaries and a few others still attract DOA-WC support.

The success and failure of land reform in Waldesruhe

In 1996 land reform in South Africa had three primary objectives (DLA 1996, 1997), all of which remain important. The first is restitution, the return of land to those who were unfairly divested from 1913 onwards. The second is farmland redistribution and involves the redress of the racial imbalance in landholdings, notably commercial farmland. The third is tenure reform to provide security of tenure to those residing in rural areas ruled by traditional leaders (former homelands) or on white-owned farmland as tenants or labourers. This part of the land reform programme is not relevant in this study and is not discussed here at all. The overarching goal of land reform in rural areas is the reduction of poverty through rural development interventions. Here it is assumed that the availability of modern agricultural technologies guiding commercial production will play a key part in terms of rural development that reduces inequality and poverty. This assumption persists despite the historically poor track record of state supported modern agriculture in achieving this in South Africa's CRRs and former homelands, and the national and global trend towards shedding labour in favour of increased technology uptake and the increasing consolidation of farmland — fewer farmers but with increasing farm sizes.

The unanswered question of restitution

The objective of restitution does not apply to land redistribution projects that focus on redistributing white-owned farmland to members of other races to redress racial imbalances in farmland ownership. However, this policy is not always applied strictly, and restitution has overlapped with redistribution (James 2007). In the case of Waldesruhe, and particularly given the plight of the *inkommers*, it is arguable that one might have realistically expected initial attempts at land reform to have focused on

time, I changed my mind with the deeper ethnographic fieldwork I undertook from 2007 to 2009. This was influenced in particular by me noticing that only a handful of farmers was farming and that the *inkommers* had a quite different plight.

this group and used redistribution to right the wrongs since 1986. Despite various statements in minutes, reports, applications and interviews with different parties, it is apparently still unclear what actually materialised in 1985/86 with regard to the purchase, ownership and settlement of the *inkommergrond*. What is evident is that the *inkommers* did not receive ownership or access to the land they were promised by the Eastern Cape NGSK that was purchased using state funds, in compensation for their land in the Eastern Cape. In a turn of political events, the local municipality now owns this land. The *inkommers'* need for the restitution of land (either adjacent to Waldesruhe or in the Eastern Cape) should have been identified and investigated in depth as early as 1995 when land reform became an issue in the village. While one acknowledges the complexity of such a task— given that some *inkommer* households had not relocated and others had returned to the Eastern Cape — the fact that this did not happen suggests negligence by the DLA-SC and the CRLR.

The relocation of the *inkommers* is a part of the history and memory of Waldesruhe, including the violent struggles, intimidation and accusations by various parties involved, that was conveniently omitted in 1995 by Piet and his peers and by the DLA-SC, which focused exclusively on redistribution. This history reappeared in 1996 as the *inkommers'* retaliated due to attempts by the WSFA to exclude them from the redistribution process and acquire the *inkommergrond* for the WSFA. Their plight was ignored by the various land rights NGOs at the time and the CRLR. Despite awareness of the challenges in 1997, the DLA-SC officials involved did nothing to encourage or assist with their restitution claim. Rather they encouraged the WSFA to consider Bruce Jones's land and saw the WSFA, which they had created, as their point of departure for redistributive land reform. The only correspondence in the official government documentation on the Waldesruhe land redistribution project is a warning from the CRLR to the DLA-SC that there might be problems with using and accessing the *inkommergrond*, yet a correspondence that came long after the fact — around 2002.⁴⁸ The *inkommers* initiated a claim in 1996 but only six to seven years later was an acceptable claim introduced into the CRLR's bureaucratic system, after they appointed a consultant to help them. This was despite the fact that they had already lodged appeals with the minister and the DLA for help. In the 1998 WSFA application for farmland redistribution to the minister, parts of the document are overtly critical of the *inkommers*, hinting that they are troublemakers. Such statements were made despite the fact that neither the DLA-SC nor the CRLR investigated the situation. These statements were partially used to motivate why Bruce Jones's farmland should be purchased at the proposed price, which was higher than the market value. The restitution matter remains *sub-judice*.

The situation led to scepticism and bitterness amongst the *inkommers*. In 2008, Alvin described how the process had been incredibly slow, stretching over more than 20 years without any sign of finalisation, and how it had meant a personal loss for him.

⁴⁸ Many government documents do not carry a date. The date here is taken from the date stamp when the document was faxed to the DLA-SC.

We are not fighting over land in the Eastern Cape. We simply want our land [the *inkommergrond*] returned to us. We paid for it but never got access to it. Thanks to Errol McGregor and Derek Jacobs we have never been welcome here. McGregor kicked me out of Waldesruhe in 1989 when I accused him of misappropriating funds linked to the land transaction. I lost my house here. He gave it to somebody else. I lost my job. We want this land back. Everybody uses it except us [the *inkommers*]. They graze their cattle and steal the [yellow and stink] wood. We want what is ours. The government has known this since 1995 but do[es] nothing. They worry about [the place where they came from]. I am not worried. We live here. We are worried that they are taking so long to solve a simple matter. It is our land; we want it back. Now the local municipality owns it. It is decades we wait for our land. That is sorrowful.

I argue that the DLA and the DLA-SC failed the *inkommers* by ignoring their plight when they became aware of it in 1997 and not advising the relevant department or commission about how it impacted on the Waldesruhe land redistribution project. The lack of clarity over the claims to the *inkommergrond* excluded it from the redistribution process despite its agricultural potential and its interim ownership by the TLC. Consequently, the WSFA had to seek alternative land that was considered less suitable in terms of natural resources and size but politically more appropriate. Despite the threats the uncertainty of ownership of the *inkommergrond* posed to land redistribution in the village, it was ignored by officials until around 2001 and finally a restitution claim was submitted to the CRLR in 2003. This was four years after the WSFA was successful in its application for Bruce Jones's farmland.

A local NGO that had been involved in the land redistribution process in 1995 and 1996 in hindsight critiqued its lack of focus on the *inkommers*' situation. In 2007 it even argued that land reform in the village was a failure because of this. In contrast, DLA-SC officials tended to evade the question by positing that the *inkommergrond* belonged to the local municipality and later, from 2007, they deflected responsibility for this to the CRLR by arguing that 'our role is agricultural land redistribution and the CRLR is responsible for restitution'. Similarly, whenever I enquired about the failures and successes of land reform in Waldesruhe, the *inkommergrond* was never mentioned until I mentioned it. Land thus became an integral part of the network of development in Waldesruhe, but one that was highlighted only by some and hidden by others.

According to Latour, actants (objects) and actors are equally important within networks. The plight of the *inkommergrond* is a good example of how a material object becomes entwined in development networks and activities and ultimately affects the outcomes. In this case, the Waldesruhe beneficiaries acquired less desirable land in place of the more desirable *inkommergrond* and, after the *inkommers* officially filed their restitution claim for it, even voluntarily gave up their access to water on the *inkommergrond* and stopped grazing their cattle on it. Indeed, it is possible to say that if Derek had continued to access water from the *inkommergrond* in 2002, he might still be cultivating honeybush.

The failure to resolve the ownership dispute about the *inkommergrond* continues to create social discord in Waldesruhe.

Redressing racial inequality in terms of ownership patterns in rural areas

In various interviews with different DLA-SC officials between 2002 and 2017, the overwhelming position was that the redistribution process in Waldesruhe was successful and had met the objective of racial redress. The DLA-SC had transferred 99 hectares of farmland, formerly held by a single white household, through the 'willing-seller, willing-buyer' practice to 30 coloured households. Each recipient household individually owned approximately two hectares of farmland and shared ownership of another 39 hectares through the WSFA trust. These 30 households, registered under the names of the household heads (usually a married man and his wife), initially comprised 110 indirect beneficiaries. The only person from these households who worked this land was Verna, who did so after her father died. Some, like Derek's son, were not interested in farming and Derek complained that he had to hire labour. Other beneficiaries either did not have children living in the area or worked outside the village.

Following the WSFA's proven inability to work collectively on the potato project and Piet's subsequent mediation with the DLA-SC Director, the DLA-SC pushed for subdivision. Transfer of the subdivisions was delayed until 2007 following legislative challenges with allocating water rights to each of the smallholdings. Once these were resolved, other problems emerged. At least four of the beneficiaries (male household heads) had died during the interim and these relatively new smallholdings were left intestate, as they had not yet been included in the deceased's wills. Their dependants and some other beneficiaries were trying to sell the land from 2006 onwards. Despite this, the DLA-SC officials still considered this case of land redistribution successful. How was this made possible?

In 2003, one senior official informed me that the Waldesruhe case was a very successful land redistribution project as racial redress had been achieved: those who had never owned land now did. In 2009, another official informed me that it was a successful project as there were now a number of coloured households successfully farming on their own land and they were enjoying regular support from the DOA-WC as a result. The actual number working this land was rather small and those receiving support was also small. From 2004 onwards most of those farming regularly were two non-beneficiaries and one beneficiary, who rented land from those not farming. The support by the DOA-WC is questionable in terms of the broader project and is discussed at the end of the chapter. And in 2017, when I remarked to another former senior official that some beneficiaries had sold their land and others were contemplating this, the response was: 'I hope they got a good ROI [return on investment]'.

But how did beneficiaries perceive their new ownership of land? James (2007) relates how elsewhere in South Africa beneficiaries misunderstood the policy and its implementation, thus making choices they would not have made if they had been better informed. Over the years, only one of the Waldesruhe beneficiaries I interviewed was unhappy about being part of the land redistribution process, Gert, who had expected money rather than land. Like some of James's informants he felt that he had not understood the purpose of SLAG at the time; later, when he got the land, he accepted it but became

concerned that he had not received his share of the balance of the grant. The WSFA executive decided to use the remaining surplus of about R 100 000 to purchase a tractor, a potato planter, some inputs and other implements for those farming (interview, Piet, November 2002). Gert felt that he should have been paid out a share of about R 3 000 as he had no intention of farming and using the implements or inputs. All other beneficiaries I spoke to over the years were happy to own farmland, even those who had no intention of farming, as this was the first time that they owned any land. A very different question is whether the land allocated was in fact sufficient for farming. Some Waldesruhe beneficiaries complained that their smallholdings were overgrown at the time of transfer and that they were expected to do the clearing. These plots were heavily overgrown with trees and shrubs (see Figures 1 and 2) because the farm had not been used in over a decade. Some beneficiaries uninterested in farming rented out their smallholdings on the condition that the tenant cleared the land.

So, just how many beneficiaries actually used their land for farming? Immediately after the land was subdivided in January 2000, 12 of the beneficiaries fenced their smallholdings and prepared them for farming. Farming intentions were diverse and largely circumscribed by employment commitments. Seven of the beneficiaries cropped a mixture of potatoes, sweet potatoes, maize and vegetables: three pensioners (Piet, Neil and Damien), two receiving a disability grant (Kurt and Eric) and two who worked in the Waldesruhe (Craig and Derek). Paul September and Justin Koekemoer, who both worked outside the village during the week and returned home occasionally on weekends, began with planting small areas of potatoes but within a year shifted to livestock rearing when the demands of their employment changed. Paul Jacobs and Mike, who commuted to work on a daily basis, planted potatoes in 2000 but changed to livestock rearing in 2001. Martin, who was unemployed, planted vegetables on his land. Ted and Shirley provided their two smallholdings for the honeybush demonstration plot project in July 2000. In total 14 smallholdings were being fully or partially used for agricultural purposes during the latter half of 2000. Yet, those farming soon realised that certain activities demanded more commitment, time, labour and oversight than some of them were able to provide. By December 2000 they had become very aware of the difference between owning and working land. One of the biggest challenges they faced was the nutsedge weed, with many unable to afford to spray against it.

By late 2001, the situation had altered. Martin died but his nephew Craig cropped on his smallholding. The honeybush demonstration plot was largely being neglected. Kurt, Eric and Damien planted crops on smaller parcels of land on their smallholdings. Clement Gabriels prepared his land and planted potatoes for a season. Verna started planting on her father's land in November of 2001 and continued until the end of 2002. Neil 'retired from farming' because of his age. By the end of the year six beneficiary households were cropping and five were using their land for livestock. The norm with cattle grazing was to let the livestock graze on natural 'veld'. While the DOA-WC viability and land use study indicated that seven hectares were required per single livestock unit (LSU), given the low quality of the natural vegetation in the region the norm in Waldesruhe was one or two hectares per LSU with some supplementary feed. Those engaged in livestock rearing did not consider themselves to be farmers and never referred to themselves as livestock farmers. Cattle as I discussed earlier was considered an investment.

This picture remained much the same during 2002. During 2003, Piet passed away and his land was laying fallow. Craig and Ted were employed outside the village and the eight hectares they owned or accessed also lay fallow. Thus, eight hectares of the land close to the only storage dams on the farm were unworked. Verna, Eric and Damien had stopped planting altogether. Together with Sara, Lucia and another resident, Verna and Eric got involved with the DOA-WC chicken layer project at the end of 2002. Those commuting to work on a daily, weekly or monthly basis were each raising one head of cattle on between four and six hectares. In 2004 Derek started working Ted and Shirley's smallholdings and another piece of land in the village, almost a morgen in size, that was owned by a non-beneficiary, suggesting that land for agricultural purposes was still available in the village if you had the right network. Figure 1 shows how much land was available as part of the household plots at Phase 1 where both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries lived. Henry, Verna's cousin who lived outside the village, rented land from Gerhard Albaster and Stefan Harris (and from 2007 also from Justin Koekemoer). Henry collaborated with his commercial farmer employer to get access to inputs and a market. This gave the impression that, until at least 2002, beneficiaries were using their land. By 2004 Michael Josephs was working on Eric's land. Some extended families, such as Derek's brothers and father or the September brothers, pooled their land, in order to have more land for the livestock. The number of cattle raised on the smallholdings tapered off sharply by 2003. Instead of one LSU per hectare, there was now one per four to six hectares. Statistically this meant that every three households owned one to two cows.

Ten of the beneficiary smallholdings were extremely difficult to access requiring a 40-minute hike through bushes and ravines. During my time in Waldesruhe, this land was never cleared and remained covered in trees and shrubs. Figure 2 illustrates just how overgrown this land has become (the area marked B in Figure 1). The other two areas of the farm, areas marked A and C in Figure 1, were accessible from the village and the road running through it. At first glance they indicated a hive of activity with their fenced-in smallholdings, storage sheds, different crops and a scattering of animal-drawn and mechanised implements. Most were only partially planted with vegetables, potatoes, maize and fodder, including oats. In comparison to early 1999, the area displayed signs of agricultural activity within clearly demarcated smallholdings where it had not existed before; before its purchase for redistribution in 1998, the farm had lain fallow for more than a decade. DLA-SC officials expressed in 2002 and 2007 that what one saw on these (easily visible) plots was evidence for a hive of successful small-scale farming. It was only when I explored the full extent of the land and enquired about who was doing what and where that a more accurate picture emerged, especially in light of the changes that had transpired over the past three to five years.

Of the fourteen who planted crops in 2000, eight were left in 2002, four in 2007, five in 2008 and again four in 2009. Between 2000 and 2009, they produced vegetables and potatoes, excluding those who collaboratively reared three to four livestock. Derek was the most active beneficiary, followed by Henry, a non-beneficiary who rented land from beneficiaries. The others generally planted vegetables for home consumption. Sixteen beneficiary households never used their land. From 2006 onwards, only two people were cropping most of the land that was being farmed and four households were 'investing in cattle'.

The number of farming beneficiaries and the types of agricultural activities undertaken were determined by lifecycle changes, such as illness, old age, death or changes in access to, the nature of and the demands placed upon households by off-farm livelihood opportunities. Despite the fluctuating nature of post-redistribution farming, those beneficiaries who farmed did so as a secondary activity. Off-farm employment, along with pensions and disability grants, were the primary means of income, and the size of this income determined the size of land farmed. Farming supplemented these incomes or household food supply. For 'tenants' like Michael Josephs, who rented land out of need due to unemployment, farming became a major source of income for a period, but they were dependent on their beneficiary friends for access to land.

In 2007, a DLA-SC official was of the opinion that more land was being used in Waldesruhe as additional parcels of land were being worked on. That this work reflected the engagement from as few as two to three beneficiaries and some livestock investors seemed immaterial to him. He also ignored the fact that the reason for working the additional parcels was in order to rotate fields and allow some to lie fallow for a season or two. The official also considered that the DOA-WC chicken layer project meant that more people benefitted from the land redistribution process. He did not seem to know that three of the initial five members of this project (Kurt, Sara and Verna) were redistribution beneficiaries who had stopped farming, nor that by the time we spoke Kurt and Sara had actually left the project. It also seems ironic that the DOA-WC would use beneficiaries in the chicken project, thus neglecting the farmland they had received. A DOA-WC official, in turn, maintained that the chicken project was possibly a better option for beneficiaries than farming the land, but as the project was situated on WSFA trust land, it was linked to land redistribution and not a problem: the DOA-WC had needed project participants and the fact that those who came forward were beneficiaries who had not been supported in the use of their smallholdings was overlooked. Indeed, from 2002 onwards, none of the DOA-WC interventions focused on the smallholdings or encouraged greater use of these parcels of land.

DOA-WC intervention was even limited in the early years after land redistribution, and focused on training interested beneficiaries. Several training courses were held at regional DOA-WC offices, including on vegetable production (June 2000); mechanised agrochemical application (August 2000); tractor maintenance (October 2000); and large livestock (cattle) and poultry rearing (November 2001). During 2001 and 2002 the WSFA received implements from the DOA-WC as part of a programme to establish mechanisation centres in villages. In 2001 temporary storage sheds were erected on the WSFA trust land. In June of the same year the DOA-WC established a development committee in Waldesruhe to ensure that development actors coming to the village went through a single elected structure. However, because so many committees existed, this one was rather ineffective; rather Piet, and later Derek, by default acted as the main agricultural contact person given his availability during the day.

In 2002, the DOA-WC allocated funds to build a structure for a chicken layer project on one part of the trust land. Beneficiary labour was used. This building was completed by early 2003. The DOA-WC still maintains and upgrades this chicken layer facility rather than encouraging its owner-managers, Verna and Lucia, to invest their profits back into the project to make it sustainable. The DOA-

WC officials, however, were of the opinion that funds released in 2004 through the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme should rather be used for infrastructure, such as on the chicken project and one for rainwater harvesting.

In 2005 the DOA-WC established an office and employed an agricultural development worker in Waldesruhe to spend one day a week in the village to provide farmers with information about the DOA-WC project and to assist them with applications. Jessica Andrews, the first incumbent to the position, explained that if somebody had farming problems, she would arrange for a subject matter specialist to visit that person, though this rarely happened. In 2005, the DOA-WC provided funds from the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP) to build permanent storage sheds for the mechanisation centre and refurbish a cottage for use as WSFA office. The office was seldom used but stored various books and ledgers relating to WSFA meetings, finances and other activities, including the loan of equipment. In 2008 the DOA-WC and some residents and beneficiaries considered starting a piggery project but due to delays in the process, Derek and others got frustrated and lost interest (interview, Paul Quinn, October 2009).

The existence of the WSFA meant that the DOA-WC could transfer development resources to a legal entity; and infrastructure was something tangible by which to demonstrate that development had taken place. To the best of my knowledge it never used CASP funding to provide training. Although never mentioned, it is very likely that the DOA-WC officials were well aware of the waxing and waning nature of cultivation amongst smallholders. But, by focusing on a legal entity set up by the DLA-SC and projects that had tangible outcomes, such as pigs and poultry and infrastructure, became the way in which they could ensure some concrete evidence of how the funding was spent successfully. As Rottenburg (2009) points out, this is not an easy achievement in development where outcomes are often intangible and infrequent. The officials also failed to acknowledge the longer-term implications that the rushed redistribution process and the subdivision had for the medium-term goals regarding agricultural growth and poverty alleviation. Agricultural policy since 1994 has always been to work with groups (Hall and Aliber 2010), in line with the conviction by the state and experts that rural residents lived communally and acted cohesively. The reality is very different, as the WSFA illustrates with its continued in-fighting. One tangible infrastructural development that would have been much more necessary with much more far-reaching advantages would have been the extension of the water piping from the storage dams in location C to the smallholdings in location A (see Figure 1). The lack of access to water was a big obstacle for those who farmed in location A. Unfortunately, and despite a series of investigations into the matter, the DOA-WC and the Department of Water Affairs were unable to come up with a plan and the funds for this purpose.

Agriculture and poverty alleviation

The third objective of land reform was poverty alleviation in rural areas. Since 2006 onwards DLA-SC officials claimed that this was achieved in Waldesruhe: even if beneficiaries did not farm, they had an asset with which they could earn an income, now or in the future. Such an interpretation of poverty alleviation is a marked shift away from the policy ideas in 1995 of land redistribution combined with

modern agricultural technology driving rural development (DLA 1997). One official was not perturbed about the subsequent sales of several smallholdings in 2007 to non-residents. He argued instead that the sale to outsiders was always a possibility that flowed from land redistribution, and that the households that sold at least got some money. Another official argued that the burst of agricultural activities and the hiring of part-time labourers in 2001 and early 2002 was a strong indication of the potential of smallholders. The fact that this labour was drawn primarily from farmworkers who lived on a nearby commercial farm and thus did not create any new jobs for unemployed people, was not considered contradictory to the purposes of land reform or the submitted business plan. The vision that the proposal and subsequent plan painted was of historically poor land reform beneficiaries actively farming and employing others less fortunate than themselves, so that these too could reap the benefits of redistribution. Inability to pay the same wages or to create new jobs for the unemployed was ignored, as was the acknowledgement that most beneficiaries were members of the local elite who were part of extensive networks in and outside of the village and had other sources of income. They were certainly not marginalised peasants that history had overlooked.

The initial land redistribution proposal to the DLA-SC argued that land reform would benefit all Waldesruhe residents. This was also claimed in the submission to the minister in 1998 in which Waldesruhe was represented as an extremely neglected and poor village. According to the proposal, few people had decent employment or incomes, and most were poor; yet, despite the poverty, the village displayed its humanity by providing a haven for displaced farmworkers. The proposal emphasised the need for poverty reduction strategies and that the acquisition and commercial use of farmland would improve the wellbeing of all the residents. How poverty alleviation was going to materialise in practice in these conditions was never clarified but made the plan all the more appealing.

The plan submitted to the minister was never followed. When land-reform was actually implemented, at least one group (the *inkommers*) was actively excluded from this process, while most beneficiaries came from key families in the village and comprised a historically elite group. Most of the beneficiaries were employed, many with good jobs outside of the village, and agriculture was a safety-net for very few rather than a sustained means of livelihood for the majority — even as a part-time activity. In a few instances it was a very small part of a basket of regularly changing livelihoods. The allocation of the land was done with some skilled brokering. This involved excising from the final submission (or hiding in addendums) information on the mountainous topography of the land and its limited natural resource base and the inability of the WSFA to work collectively. In order to persuade the DLA director general and the minister whose intentions were to maximize rapid land redistribution, the consultants and the DOA-WC in its contributions to the submission simply underplayed the weaknesses of the Waldesruhe farmland as a resource base, overlooked the social discord, and rather emphasised the land's purported potentials.

There is a strong argument to be made that the land was captured by the WSFA (composed largely of elite or influential residents), undermining the ability of poorer households and non-beneficiaries to benefit from the reform. While this elite certainly did most of the work around assembling support from the DLA-SC and local NGOs, they did so claiming to represent the community and

enjoying the support of the village residents whose plight they were going to change. This situation was never challenged by the authorities or the NGOs, neither when the plans were set up nor when it became clear that they acted largely for their own benefit. These 'representative leaders' and brokers foregrounded social development needs and poverty alleviation of all residents when arguing for support, but such needs were never addressed. In fact, one could say these aims were never again consciously considered as part of the development equation after the proposal was submitted in 1996. These needs also disappeared from the agenda of the DLA-SC and the consultants in the period leading up to the identification and acquisition of farmland. The focus remained exclusively on the land and what could be done with it in terms of conventional agricultural practices regarding crop and livestock production.

While poverty alleviation was on the national land reform agenda, the subsequent rural development policy of the mid-1990s assumed that the combination of contemporary commercial agriculture and land redistribution would resolve all problems. Poverty appeared in the initial discussions between the WSFA and the DLA-SC and then largely disappeared, reappearing only selectively to justify the success of the land redistribution project. In light of this, and the DLA-SC's wider activities, it is fair to say that poverty problems in Waldesruhe, if noted, were at best interpreted as needing technical solutions: that the productive and commercial use of the land, with the use of conventional agricultural technologies, would resolve economic and by extension social problems. There is a sense that these organisations assumed that ignoring the complex social problems would make them disappear, or become the responsibility of some other government department; it is unlikely that a better financial situation would automatically decrease the alcohol, drug and spousal abuse that had been identified in 1995. In all fairness, at the time the DLA-SC had no guaranteed or planned support for agricultural activities, a general criticism of the early land redistribution process (Jacobs, Hall and Lahiff 2003). It is thus unrealistic to expect it to address 'social policy matters', such as social development and poverty alleviation, following the land redistribution, by using more direct approaches other than agricultural technologies. And yet the DLA-SC was quick to provide uninformed statements about how the farmland was achieving exactly this social development and that such evidence was clearly visible.

In an interesting turn of events, even some of the initially active members of the WSFA were unable to engage in commercial agricultural activities using all of their two hectares. The redistributed land meant that farming was now attempted on a much larger scale than ever before. When I asked several WSFA members in February 2001 about why they were not interested in the honeybush demonstration plot project, they argued that they would never be able to plant honeybush on such a large scale, as the RI intended, because they did not have the money to do so. Eric, Damien and Kurt had no working capital and the Land Bank refused to give them interest free loans. Consequently, when they planted vegetables on the new land, they only planted on a scale they could afford, ranging from half to slightly more than one hectare. All three purchased hybrid seeds but spent little on other inputs. Fertiliser was used sparingly and irregularly, as was herbicide and pesticide. After ploughing with a tractor in 2000, they did all subsequent soil preparation, planting and harvesting activities with animal traction. Both Eric and Kurt received disability pensions from the state, supplemented by disability

insurance they had taken out while working. Damien received a state pension. These sources of income were insufficient to allow them to expand farming.

The size of land cropped seasonally varied, depending on how much money they could afford to put into their farming activities. All felt that those beneficiaries with larger incomes, such as Derek and Piet, might be able to plant on a greater scale, but they themselves could not do more than a hectare at the best of times. As a result, it seemed pointless for them to consider honeybush: seedlings would cost between R 1 000 and R 3 000 per hectare,⁴⁹ while their household income was about R 1 000 per month. Kurt adapted the size of land he would plant according to his household finances and the crops he planted. Damien only planted small areas with vegetables and by 2003 stopped altogether because of his age. After two years of farming, Eric's back injury started playing up and eventually he ceased farming. In 2004, he let Michael Josephs, a friend who was unemployed and had no land of his own, to use his farmland. Michael grew a range of vegetables, paid no rent and sold most of his harvest, thereby generating an income for his household. He was a rare individual in the village in this regard.

In 2002, and again in 2008, I asked Paul and Mike Jacobs why they had only planted potatoes on part of their land in 2000 and then stopped altogether at the end of the year. Both brothers worked outside the village and realised after a year that crop farming was too demanding for the little time they had available. Instead, they decided to engage in livestock rearing as this was simple and planting oats would not only feed the livestock but also tackle the nematode problem, thus improving the soil for future use. In 2008, Mike had not decided whether he wanted to switch to crops again; he said that he and Paul were quite happy with raising two head of cattle at a time, selling them every two to three years.

Paul Jacobs seemed aware of the challenges of modern farming. He said, in 2009, he had come to realise that agriculture had become far too technical and if you really wanted to farm productively and make a decent living from farming, you needed to have the capital to adopt modern technologies. He mentioned the increased number of greenhouse tunnels used on neighbouring large-scale vegetable farms as an example. Paul had discussed possible technological advances with some beneficiaries but had decided that agriculture was too expensive. Cattle farming, too, was becoming expensive as farmers had to meet government-decreed standards before abattoirs would purchase their livestock. For Paul, the face of agriculture was changing rapidly, and he believed neither he nor many of the other beneficiaries would be able to participate. That is why he banked on the construction industry for his income.

While one might thus be tempted to argue that a combination of land reform and modern agriculture needed to be very selective in its choice of beneficiaries, this would miss the point that this Waldesruhe study makes: due to the way in which mediation takes place, notably through translation

⁴⁹ De Robeck (2002) calculated that in 2002 seedlings alone would cost about R 8 500 per hectare, completely unaffordable for the Waldesruhe farmers without investment and working capital.

and representation, the identification of suitable candidates may not be that easy. Beneficiaries are able to self-select and assemble support by portraying themselves in ways that coincide with policy expectations. Plans are submitted and passed that appear to conform to policy expectations. And it is only later, after redistribution has taken place, that the problems of small-scale commercial production become evident. In development situations, where mediation and translation are normal activities, how can developers truly identify those who will be able to make the best of these opportunities for an acceptable amount of time? Similarly, even if the most suitable beneficiaries are selected, how would the current policy models ensure broad rural development beyond the trickle down of rather minor economic benefits? None of the farming beneficiaries (Kurt, Damien, Eric, Paul Jacobs and Mike), with the exception of Derek and Verna, was able to employ other people, with Michael Josephs benefitting through his friendship with Eric. In 2006 Michael accepted a job as farm supervisor and stopped farming, since then Eric's land next to the storage dams lies fallow. Derek and Henry King occasionally continued to employ outsiders, but these were farmworkers who worked fulltime for Henry's employer.

Some beneficiaries and state officials saw land as an asset in at least three ways. First, land could be used for farming and producing cash crops which could be sold. Secondly, land could increase household assets through livestock rearing and growing vegetables for home consumption. Thirdly, land could be sold or rented out, rendering social and economic benefits, or used as collateral for taking up loans. From 2007, four households sold their land to outside purchasers, obtaining triple their original grant contribution as the sales price. Only one of the four households had farmed their land. During my time in Waldesruhe, none of the new owners used the land. By the time I left, my impression was that they were land speculators. Despite the intentions of the DLA-SC and some WSFA members, who wanted the land to be used for agricultural purposes, this control was lost once subdivision was permitted and the 5-year limitation of sales clause in the constitution expired.

The sales irked some beneficiaries. For Derek, the purpose of redistribution was to farm the land. Now that he had expanded his farming activities and was seeking more land as he got closer to retirement, people were selling the land to outsiders, many of whom had no intention of farming. One of the smallholdings on the market in 2008 belonged to his sister and brother-in-law. He felt that he should be allowed to use this land rather than them selling it to a stranger. They had been given it for free so why should they now sell it and make a profit? Unbeknownst to him, the land had been offered to me for R 45 000, but I had turned this down, as the politics would have been unbearable and many of my friendships would have crumbled. Where Derek had initially supported land redistribution, he now argued that the policy and practice set one up for failure: one either farmed collectively, which did not work,⁵⁰ or one was given a small piece of land with no possibility of expanding if one proved oneself successful. Ultimately, one was dependent on the willingness of others to rent out their land on

50 Derek cited his own experience and several examples in the surrounding districts and in Breede River Valley. This information points to the scale of his networks and ability to access information about the redistribution environment.

reasonable terms and even then, they could still sell it. Despite his expanded farming activities, he felt he did not have the money to purchase his sister's land. In his estimation, land reform had by 2008 resulted in such speculation that local producers like himself could not afford the going market price of R 55 000 for two hectares. Why should he pay more than the R 16 000 beneficiaries had received as a grant, he asked?

Derek did not want to use the trust land for his activities as it was of poor quality, required expensive fencing and had problems with access to irrigation, reasons why no-one else rented this land from the WSFA. On the other hand, many non-beneficiaries were not willing to pay rent to use the land.⁵¹ Two villagers also pointed out that the terrain was so uneven that it was unsafe for livestock to roam freely. The problems thus raised demonstrate that the farm plans compiled by consultants and in the viability study were rather cursory and ignored factors beyond irrigated vegetables and camped livestock production. The various investigators seemed to have had little understanding of smallholder farming as practised in reserves and the problem of access to the necessary resources.

Once he stopped honeybush cultivation in 2003, Derek seemed to be the most consistently active of the land redistribution beneficiaries. Despite being employed, most seasons he rented land and farmed between four to six hectares; he was still doing so in 2009. Of course, Derek had the advantage of a stable and adequate income. He worked in the village where he owned a small shop. Proximity to the land was a critical aspect of his entering and remaining in agriculture, as he was often able to visit his lands and do some of the work during 'office hours', and immediately before and after work. His network with neighbouring commercial farmers assisted him with accessing input suppliers and markets. He showed a real love for the land and seemed confident that it would deliver profits if he worked it efficiently. As he got closer to retirement, he increased the scale of his potato production and rested his land in between seasons (one of the reasons why he required more land). He seemed to follow contemporary rotation practices that he had learned from the RI training along with advice from neighbouring farmers. By 2004 he used significantly more agrochemical fertiliser on the advice of a local farmer (Henry King's employer) through whom he also accessed the fertiliser at a discounted rate. Networks were clearly not only important for mediation of projects but also for accessing inputs and advice.

This discussion of the three policy intentions illustrates that the Waldesruhe land reform project unfolded and was shaped in ways different from what was originally intended. Outcomes were different due to mediations, in which information was understood and translated in different ways, by different actors, at different times. Land restitution was not on the agenda but probably should have been. The avoidance of this had several repercussions over the years. Inadvertently old social wounds were reopened, opposition was levelled at the 1996 redistribution plans and the submission of the restitution claim for the *inkommergrond* in 2003 made some beneficiaries reluctant to use this land as a resource.

⁵¹ I was never able to find out whether rent was expected as nobody used the land and beneficiaries were adamant that they would not pay rent as they were joint owners.

Land redistribution gave 30 households property rights to farmland for the first time in their lives. Yet the land was generally of a poor quality (but was acquired for redistribution because it was the only land available on the market). If someone wanted to expand and acquire more land, the redistribution model was inadequate; and some households who wanted to farm did not have the finances to do this beyond the household level. The general poverty in the area and the promise that redistribution would improve employment rates were important factors in motivating redistribution, but these arguments fell away after the allocation of land. Most smallholders did not receive help from family members — refuting the principles of the World Bank smallholder family farm model. More importantly, household heads who did most of the farming were not prepared to pay the same wages as neighbouring commercial farmers and thus seldom managed to employ local villagers.

While racial redress in land ownership was achieved, not many of the new owners were active farmers or even wanted to be. Lifecycle changes influenced the ability and capability of those who wanted to farm. But the redistribution project process does not consider the different circumstances and needs, nor the heterogeneity of beneficiaries in terms of income, ability and capability, and livelihoods and lifecycle demands. The process was rather considered as technical in nature, so that no heed was paid to the history of the village or the future abilities of the beneficiaries to farm. After land was redistributed officials simply saw what they wanted to see as evidence of success, without further exploring their observations. The outcome of the honeybush demonstration plot project was also subject to different translations by different actors in different positions, though it was hardly seen as a success by officials and researchers. I turn to this now.

The success and failure of the honeybush demonstration plot

In April 2000 the goal for the honeybush project was to ‘prepare resource-poor farmers in five Western Cape (rural) communities to enter and function in the (developing) Honeybush tea industry’. The project was to run for four years with an additional one-year period for withdrawal from the communities. The objectives are summarised as follows: (1) to transfer technology using a communal-based demonstration plot in each community; (2) to develop training material and conduct training in honeybush cultivation principles; (2a) to make available a processing course for interested people; (2b) to establish a nursery and provide training; (3) to introduce farmers to the industry so they can actively participate in it; (4) to conduct an economic viability study; and (5) to get each community to establish approximately four hectares of commercial honeybush within four years.

Unlike land reform, the honeybush project never intended to address social problems. Its aim was rather to introduce smallholders to a new crop that was deemed to be less expensive than deciduous fruit and financially more rewarding than vegetable production. The assumption was that this crop would increase smallholders’ income, create farm labour jobs, and possibly create new processors and nurseries in the communities, thus contributing to the rural economy. Benefits would trickle down once farming was established and people started to enter the honeybush value chain.

By January 2001 significant challenges had arisen within the honeybush research team, the broader project and in Walderuhe. Despite these, no changes or adjustments were made to the project

objectives. Thus, we need to consider these in light of only one site, Waldesruhe, rather than the five proposed. Given that Waldesruhe was the only site where RI established a demonstration plot, that no actual demonstrations were ever held there, that only one person planted honeybush and that only two harvests were ever accomplished, an immediate conclusion could be that the honeybush demonstration plot failed. However, for the project actors (beneficiaries and researchers), the situation was significantly more complex.

Meeting planned objectives

In the original RI honeybush demonstration plot proposal (SC 2000: 2, 3), the problem statement is as follows:

Resource poor farmers in rural communities can benefit from the research results of the honeybush tea research programme. In addition ... farmers are looking for alternative crops, which is [*sic*] less expensive to establish than deciduous fruit. Honeybush tea offers this alternative, but a mechanism to transfer technology based on research results and prior experience is needed to make it a viable option. ... The establishment cost of honeybush tea is considerably lower than for deciduous fruit and offers an alternative to resource-limited producers in rural areas.

This paragraph suggests that RI was trying to market the idea of the honeybush project as a well-researched development intervention that would benefit smallholder farmers. RI approached various villages in the southern Cape to collaborate with honeybush demonstration projects, but deciduous fruit was never mentioned as a possibility. In fact, the DOA-WC study indicated that land in Waldesruhe was unsuitable for such fruits. The Waldesruhe land beneficiaries wanted to maximise their returns as quickly as possible and never considered planting anything but vegetables, potatoes and some fodder. But this did not stop some from showing a limited and irregular interest in honeybush.

Thus, it is probably more accurate to suggest that honeybush offered RI an opportunity to support smallholders that overcame the challenges the RI SAP was experiencing with transferring viticulture and deciduous fruit technology it had to offer, which were costly to establish and slow in respect of returns. Honeybush had the potential to reach more farmers in a specific geographic location, especially in the way the SAP coordinator packaged and sold the idea to RI and the science council. RI thus offered an alternative crop that could only be grown in certain areas of the southern Cape, giving those interested access to a new industry and niche market. It also gave RI a chance of establishing a foothold amongst smallholders in this region. However, Waldesruhe beneficiaries had different ideas. Less than half wanted to farm, and those who did considered vegetables as cheaper to plant and more lucrative as they could be harvested after a few months rather than several years. Some struggled to plant even a hectare of vegetables or potatoes in a season because of financial constraints, problems with accessing irrigation and time limits.

RI's involvement in Waldesruhe was largely a combination of chance circumstances (the fusion of DLA-SC, DOA-WC, RI and SC needs) rather than a carefully planned activity based on thorough research of the village, its history, its inhabitants, their livelihoods and the social relations and clearly

defined needs with regard to the nature of agricultural support required. Waldesruhe was one of the last villages to be approached in 1999, following a general request put to the DOA-WC. The land reform beneficiaries and other villagers in Waldesruhe were expected to conform to the initial conceptualisation of a honeybush demonstration plot project that the RI had deliberated on since 1997. The honeybush project was very scientific and technical in nature, involving several on station and on farm projects and, to fulfil the political needs of the day, was shaped into a demonstration plot project activity, which by 1998 was a component of RI's smallholder farmer technology transfer activities. Despite the fact that the planning sessions in early 2000 brought up information that posed challenges for the honeybush project, this was ignored and not considered a threat to the purpose of the proposal or the communal approach to technology transfer. There was the misassumption that farmers would eventually 'come around' and recognise the benefits of modern agricultural production in the form of honeybush. This suggests that researchers considered development discourse and its trappings of modernism to be all powerful and farmers just had to see the results. Furthermore, the evidence discussed previously in Chapter 5 illustrates that scientists or experts in development continue to push their ideas of what they think can make development successful even when practice and field evidence indicates otherwise. As Bending and Rosendo (2006) note, they continue to deceive themselves about the reality of the situation in which they operate. Subsequently, they need to mediate the course of events through translation. The planning sessions simply resulted in more objectives and detailed activities. If we consider the five objectives, we see that only some of them were met, and even these not without mediation and translation on the part of the researchers and the beneficiaries, both at the time and later.

(1) To transfer technology using a communal-based demonstration plot in each community

Although a demonstration plot was established in Waldesruhe, it was never in fact used for demonstration and training purposes; rather, from 2001 onwards, Derek's trial planting was used. The idea that those interested in honeybush would maintain a communal plot proved incorrect. By January 2001 it was clear that Ted alone was responsible for the demonstration plot. In 2001 Derek explained why he did not join the demonstration plot in the following way:

This [planting on Ted and Shirley's land] was unwise. They [RI researchers] had worked with him [Ted] in 1999 and that the project had failed hopelessly. If it failed at his home, did [they] really think anything different would happen on the land that was far away [approximately 800m] from his home? It was a failure from the beginning. Farming is not in his blood. He is an educated man, a bookman, a teacher. He is not a farmer and is not interested in the physical labour of being a farmer. The soil is not in his soul. He did not grow up with the soil. His parents were teachers, not farmers.

When asked why he and Sara planted honeybush, he answered:

We really wanted to see how they would grow but we did not want to be part of this big demonstration plot on [Ted's] land. This community cannot work together and we all know this.

While this lack of collaboration amongst Waldesruhe beneficiaries was already evident in the potato project of 1996 and despite the fact that he did not want to be part of the honeybush demonstration farm, Derek became the main person who led the team to believe that participation in the honeybush project would take place and that it just required time and a good harvest. The research team was compelled to focus on Derek's small planting as they had no other site in the region. He ensured they stayed committed to supporting him by assembling occasional supporters, selectively complying with their suggestions and challenging them to help him with production problems.

Initially Ted's problems were social in origin. His wife was away most of the time and he had to look after his children, thus not having time to work on the demonstration plot. He fell out with his neighbouring farmers and was seemingly unpopular with many local residents. He also failed to make promised payments to labourers. Despite this, he saw the solutions as largely technical in nature and related to resources. He needed time to spray, he needed the original WTP 'participants' to help him maintain the plot, he needed a fence, and at one time even requested a portable irrigation pump, pipes and sprinklers from RI. At no time did he try to address any of the social relationships that appeared to compound his inability to manage the demonstration plot.

In our naivety, we at RI were slow to react to these dynamics. We hoped for a long time that people would rally around Ted and that Ted would be more active on the plot, thereby encouraging the others to participate. This hope was partly influenced by the fact that we needed him to be successful so that the demonstration plot would gain traction and support from other farmers. We assumed that this would lead to expansion in other households. However, Ted was not influential or skilled as broker, largely because he was unable to generate support. We eventually realised in 2001 that we had to go with Derek's smaller and strictly individual operation.

During 2001, Ted constantly came up with new ideas about how to 'save' the demonstration plot. One involved uprooting the plants and then replanting them at home. This was considered impractical because the original trial plantings in 1999 had died at his home and uprooting the plants after a year was considered too risky, as the roots could be irreparably damaged. Despite the problems Ted experienced in 2000 and 2001, in February 2002 he was still adamant that he was going to continue with honeybush, using the remaining plants. At this point, however, RI was no longer focusing on his plot but instead used Derek's for demonstrations. When I asked him in 2007 why he had been so adamant to hold on to the project he replied:

This was a long-term project. It requires a lot of work in the beginning. In the first four months or so and also quite high input costs to establish the plants. I had drunk honeybush, so for me it was a challenge to see if it could be grown here. If the honeybush demonstration had been successful, then this was something that I could do with my land and I could make money. After the first 4–6 months the crop does not need a lot of attention, or so we were told, and this would suit me as I worked all day. My land could grow the honeybush and I would not have to spend too much time with it. Once the plants have established themselves, then there is not a lot of labour required and the costs are minimal, or so they [the RI researchers]

said. The plants need irrigation in the beginning, and this is why my land was suitable [as it was near the storage dam]. ... If I had a harvest, then I would have sold it and used the money to pay the children who helped with the weeding [at the beginning of December 2000]. Then I would have used the remaining money to purchase more plants and would thus have replaced those that had died and increased the size of the planting. About half of the plants died before the end of the first year. [He failed to mention in this interview that he had accidentally sprayed a lot of the plants with weed killer].

However, despite Ted's ideas we should look more closely at RI's experiences with demonstration plots and the notion of communal engagement more generally. There are some constraints to beliefs about rural homogeneity and communality that underpin the notion that rural people are communal and that communal approaches are indeed the best way of addressing their needs. Besides, the ultimate subdivision in the land redistribution project illustrates that homogeneity and communality are probably misassumptions. Furthermore, in many areas RI had limited success, in terms of local participation and sustained interest, with the communal demonstration plot strategy before entering Waldesruhe.

Demonstration plots were common in most of the villages in which RI worked with smallholders. Vine and deciduous fruit demonstration plots stretched from Riemvasmaak southwards through Namaqualand and eastwards towards Herschel, Queenstown and Somerset East. There were some around the border between the Northern Cape and the Free State, in Douglas and Jacobsdal respectively (personal observations, between 2000 and 2010). My observations of and interviews with the researchers involved indicated that the only ones that worked relatively well were those demonstration plots located on an individual farmer's land; the others failed to get any regular or consistent interest from the community or other farmers. Even those conducted at schools and clinics tended to be neglected unless a single person took responsibility. This identifies the weakness of focusing on groups and assuming their inherent cohesiveness, shared history and common interests. People come together initially because they are looking for opportunities and not necessarily for everything the development project anticipates. The individuals that comprise these groups are selective and behave tactically to obtain what they deem useful.

A communal demonstration plot, coupled with at least four annual training sessions that included demonstrations and lectures (SC 2000: 5), remained the mechanism of choice for transferring honeybush technology. Other smaller-scale approaches that invoked different methodologies, such as farmer field schools or participatory technology development with individual farmers, were ignored despite a growing international trend in these approaches at the time and long-standing criticism of the top-down transfer of technology model — also referred to as the training and visit model. The point is not that these models may have been better but rather that they were entirely excluded as options. In hindsight Ted, for example, suggested that a farmer field school approach might have made more sense.

The RI decision to adopt the communal demonstration plot and to focus on group collaboration reinforces the erroneous but continued assumption made by policymakers, planners and experts that rural people are communal in their relationships to one another, either by virtue of ethnicity, location in rural areas, or a shared and homogeneous history or past. This assumption of the communal nature of rural residents, as implied for example in the RDP (ANC 1994), is a fallacy (James 2000b; Murray 1996), demonstrated by Waldesruhe where Ted became the sole person responsible for all activities on the demonstration plot on the second day of its establishment. Both Murray (1996) and James (2000b, 2007) argue against the communal assumptions made about rural dwellers and land reform beneficiaries in the 1990s, refuting ideas of homogeneous groups with a common or shared history of suffering and vision of liberation. Rural development, including land reform and agricultural development, has had a long history of a communal focus in South Africa (MacDonald 1998; Singini and van Rooyen 1995) that still continues (Cousins and Walker 2015; Hebinck and Cousins 2013). The state and technocratic experts seem to assume a type of rural socialism despite how rural areas and the notion of communalism were shaped by colonialism and then apartheid. The state also desires to simplify project management and administration, something that it aims to achieve by working with groups rather than individuals (Hall and Aliber 2010) — even if the actors involved do not want this and it does not achieve the desired outcomes.

(2) To develop training material and conduct training in honeybush cultivation principles; (2a) to make available a processing course for interested people; and (2b) to establish a nursery and provide training

Several training courses on honeybush cultivation were conducted in 2001, 2002 and 2003 but their content and timing were heavily influenced (mediated) by Derek and Ted who requested that more general agricultural practices be included in the training. The purpose of this was supposedly to attract more people to the training and thereby develop an interest in RI's capability and in honeybush in particular. We went along with the idea, reasoning that we should give people what they want and that this might work in our favour. Derek was informed about what training took place when; he would advise the other beneficiaries who would attend only the sessions that interested them. As a result, the turnout could fluctuate between ten beneficiaries on one day and four at the next.

Some beneficiaries explained their lack of participation by arguing that they had insufficient funds to plant vegetables on a hectare of land, let alone honeybush. However, a few of them still attended the training. Four or five of the regulars attended because the training also dealt with other agricultural practices. Others liked the RI manuals which they could continue to consult even when RI had left. And some found the training interesting and entertaining. Piet attended some sessions in order 'to keep an eye on progress ... possibly I could learn something if I had the time to attend your workshops' and 'Derek asked me to attend to show the RI that the WSFA supported the project and his [Derek's] plantings' (interview, September 2002). At the other end, by the end of 2001 two beneficiaries (Mike and Paul Jacobs) were too busy with their jobs to attend, and asked Derek to pass on all information and share his own experiences with them. Others did not trust that Ted or Derek would share the information but were either too busy to attend or not interested in honeybush.

When a local processor was built about 30 km from Walderuhe in 2002, RI decided not to provide any training in it. It did, however, undertake fruit and vegetable processing with some of the female residents in 2003. During 2004 RI held a basic business course in Walderuhe attended by various residents, including Derek and some of the beneficiaries. While these courses were not about honeybush because the networks and enthusiasm had crumbled by this stage, they did give the impression that we were trying to address the project objectives in ways that the residents wanted, as we moved to closing the project. While by this stage we were mostly unable to follow the honeybush storyline and project, we focused on delivering some objectives in ways that the villagers felt appropriate. Here again we took our lead from Derek.

Derek eventually took over the nursery equipment and erected it at the WSFA storage area where he started experimenting and propagating seedlings in 2002. However, by this stage there was nobody available to provide training, which frustrated him almost as much as his plants perishing and our apparent inability to solve what he thought was a scientific problem (and RI researchers considered an irrigation problem and a bad choice of land). He struggled for some months to propagate seedlings, but these died.

(3) To introduce farmers to the industry so they can actively participate in it

Derek was elected to the SAHPA in 2001 and again in 2002. This enabled him to establish networks with actors in the industry and keep up to date with changes taking place. Initially this seemed to create a stronger awareness and desire by some to participate in honeybush, but this did not last. In 2002 Derek learnt about challenges in the international market at one of the meetings but Walderuhe beneficiaries took this information as discouraging rather than encouraging. Some of the other residents, such as Piet, met with industry representatives and got some idea as to the size and opportunities of the industry. While Piet still had no interest in honeybush, he did encourage others to plant and to use the trust land. Some interest was shown at meetings and field visits and there was an intention to plant collectively on the trust land, but nothing materialised. It is possible that the interest expressed was a way of attracting RI to sustain its engagement with the village. One might argue that they were attempting to maintain their relationship with RI and the honeybush project for Derek's sake and possibly for the future as most were not actually interested on growing honeybush at this stage if at all. Possibly they saw the potential of a long-term relationship that we did not envisage at that stage.

(4) To conduct an economic viability study

The economic viability assessment was conducted in 2002 (de Robeck 2002) and, while it was late in coming, it was a milestone in the process. For the first time an indication was provided as to the establishment costs, duration, lifespan and return on investment for different honeybush species planted under different crop management systems. It also indicated the expectations and challenges with the local and international markets. Derek found it insightful, but it was never used in training with other residents or anybody else. It was also not used for proposals, as none were written for planting honeybush with smallholders over the subsequent years.

(5) To get each community to establish approximately four hectares of commercial honeybush within four years

Most of the original honeybush burned in the fire of 2002. Derek reaped two harvests on his own land but removed his planting by the end of 2003. By 2004 there was no more honeybush being cultivated in Waldesruhe and the 15 000 m² original demonstration plot was overrun with weeds. Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that some impact was achieved, and technology transferred. Derek planted, cultivated and harvested under the auspices of the researchers. He marginally increased his income as he sold two harvests. He also received a stipend to pay for labour and other inputs. Ted, on the other hand, felt adamantly that he had lost money by hosting the demonstration plot but not being supported by the community.

The study has shown that brokers and mediators influence the unfolding and the shape of projects in Waldesruhe. A summary of the planned objectives of the honeybush project illustrates the success of the various objectives. Even those that were successful were not always achieved on time or as anticipated because of failures of mediation and translation and the subsequent inability to keep the idea going. Similarly, the content of training was mediated by Derek and Ted so as to be more relevant to active farming beneficiaries, thereby becoming more general in focus and content. Feedback by field staff to RI managers about progress necessitated more translation, yet when researchers persuaded managers that they were achieving the project objectives, they ignored the fact that those attending the training were not really interested in honeybush. In this type of quandary, it is thus necessary to look at how success and failure are made and understood. To say nobody benefitted from the project would be incorrect.

The making of success and failure out of honeybush

Some benefits were accrued in terms of honeybush technology transfer even if project plans and objectives were not adhered to. A new research team member observed the following on joining the project:

The project was successful. Honeybush was planted in [Waldesruhe] by previously disadvantaged small farmers. It grew there. This means it was a success. There were a few production problems, but the project was still a success. If you really want to, as a scientist you can identify a lot of problems and you can emphasise them. This will get you attention and maybe resources to find solutions. This is egotistical. These problems are not as serious as people think they are.

He reasoned that if the team had been part of Derek's planting, they could have prevented some of the problems Derek experienced. Yet, as he chose not to inform them, he had only himself to blame for any failures. With this he overlooked the fact that when Derek went ahead with his honeybush planting we were busy establishing the communal demonstration project and it would have been quite unlikely that we would have supported his project at that point. What we did not realise was that Derek was mediating RI's communal strategy with his own tactics. This evaluation of the project was thus based strictly on research considerations and not on development criteria. I would further argue that if the cause of the

problems weren't identified clearly (different team members had different ideas) and resolved, then the research was incomplete. Watching plants grow and die is hardly a success!

Another researcher was less positive about the success of the Waldesruhe project. She had worked on honeybush since 1997, played a huge role in the conceptualisation of the demonstration plot and coordinated most of the implementation in Waldesruhe. She explained the inability to meet the project goals in the following way:

They [the beneficiaries] all had different agendas. There was a lot of interpersonal conflict and friction between members of the [WSFA]. They did not trust one another, and they were expected to trust us! This [developing trust with outside organisations] takes time. One minute they all agreed to the plan and then a day later very few would arrive for the next meeting. There were project members I did not see for two or three visits [about 4–6 months]. All of a sudden, they are there. They were not the cohesive group we thought they were. ... None were really dependent on agriculture, as they had other sources of employment and income. We knew they were part-time farmers. They were not really interested in making a success of honeybush. They had some experience with potatoes and made some money. Honeybush takes time but most were impatient. ... The membership of the group kept changing. We had to repeat ourselves at every workshop and interaction. How does one transfer technology in such circumstances? (Interview with former project team member, March 2008)

One of the greatest challenges this researcher identified was the lack of consistent involvement and interest of Ted and other beneficiaries; she rather wanted to collaborate with Derek. Yet it was difficult for her to recognise that the fluctuating interest was rather a part of local tactics of selective and situational engagement with development projects. Despite disjuncture between intentions of development and beneficiaries the RI persisted with the project, thereby illustrating the single-mindedness of development agents to follow development discourse more generally, while occasionally encouraged by beneficiaries. This demanded the sustained need for mediation of events to make sense of the inconsistencies.

In these two researcher perspectives we see the different sociologies present amongst the research team and the participants. Most residents did not need or want to farm, and those who did wanted to plant quicker growing crops. The research team, in contrast, was tasked with the honeybush production technology transfer, focusing on a crop that was costly to establish and took longer to generate returns. The local participants typically farmed as individuals, but the researchers wanted them to work collectively. Local farmers wanted to make money quickly while the research team wanted them to grow honeybush to a noticeable scale along a preordained path before focusing on the return. None of the intentions materialised, the expectations of the research team and the local participants were too distinct. The local residents tried to mediate the RI processes to reach what they needed, but none of us researchers properly grasped this. Some of us felt that the honeybush technology might be

inappropriate for the context (I supported this position), others thought the location was wrong. In hindsight I believe both opinions were incorrect.

While Ted, Derek and other land redistribution beneficiaries identified certain technical problems with the honeybush project that the RI team failed to address as a significant factor in the failure of the project, they also identified the negative group dynamics and even certain individuals as contributing factors. In an interview Ted related the negativity within the community and the influence some people have over promoting new ideas:

There is a negative current in the village that destroys everything that people attempt here. It destroys relationships. Also, the negative statements from people here have more weight than positive external messages from outsiders. At meetings, the negative statements are never forthcoming. But after the meetings they are mentioned and travel through the village. They have time to spread and grow and become more influential between the one meeting and the next. This ruins everything new.

What Ted pointed to was that the opinions of certain individuals in the village carried more weight amongst residents than information brought by outsiders such as RI researchers. This is because these individuals had acted as brokers in the village for decades, serving as leaders and representatives in the church, the WMB and the TLC. Ted also identified RI's focus on community as part of the problem, suggesting it should rather have worked with individuals:

The purpose of the project was to uplift the community so that they could go on with the production and the nursery on their own — become self-sufficient. It was a good idea. The RI introduced us to a new crop ... They gave us theoretical and practical knowledge. They gave us the plants and other inputs ... We had to do the labour and we were to keep the harvest. I do not think that the others saw it like this. They were aware that here was help and something new but I don't think they could see far into the future. [Piet's] negative influence affected the group and their involvement. He was very influential here. ... Maybe it would have been better if the project had been smaller. Maybe each person who was interested should have been given some of the plants. Then [the demonstration plot coordinator] could show them how to plant and care for them. Regular visits to these people to assist them would be good. Possibly the project was so big and the returns so long in coming that people did not really feel part of it ... People only showed interest when Derek had a harvest or a problem. People's activities in the village and on their land should have been observed. This indicated that people were busy with other things and other than Derek and I, they were not interested in honeybush.

When asked why residents did not support him on the demonstration plot, he thought this was because people considered him an outsider because his parents had been born elsewhere; as a result, people tolerated him if he supported them and their ideas but not otherwise. He was upset when RI decided to switch to Derek's planting, but he supported Derek to remain part of the project and learn.

At the time he felt that local actors would see the benefit of the honeybush project and work with him, despite of their dislike of him. This position in 2008 was thus quite different from the full support he gave the communal approach and the large demonstration plot in 2000. It highlights that RI did not really understand local people's needs and how to adjust the project accordingly. If we had been more observant, we would have acknowledged that only he and Derek were interested. The reason why he and Derek behaved as if the other villagers were interested was, as he explained, because they were worried that RI might stop the project and they would lose access to it. He felt he had performed a vital role in ensuring that honeybush came and stayed in Waldesruhe. Here we can clearly see his conscious mediation in the project, something the RI team never recognised.

By 2008 Derek, in turn, felt that RI's inability to address the technical challenges of the project had been of greater significance in the project's failure. For him these included the irrigation and nematode problem and the large scale of the project:

Nematodes and drought [the seasonal water shortage in 2002] were the problems I experienced. The ultimate consequence was crop failure, as none of the researchers were able to help me with saving my honeybush. I had problems but there were no solutions. ... While the idea was a good idea, the conceptualisation of the project was not done well. The researchers needed more knowledge about growing this plant. It is a wild plant and it needs to be tamed. They were not aware of all the problems and seemed to have very few solutions. They did not understand the problems that small-scale farmers encounter. We do not have irrigation in a real sense and we do not have sufficient land to carry out large experiments. I was willing to risk a small part of my land as it was a small risk and an opportunity. Also, many of us need our money quickly and cannot invest in long-term crops. This is risky. We need to plant and harvest in 3–4 months. We cannot farm without water but despite this we have bought a farm where more than half of us have no access to water!

For Derek the problem was insufficient scientific knowledge, as well as RI's lack of understanding of how small-scale farmers rationalise their activities and do things to mitigate risk. When asked why he had still grown honeybush despite these problems, Derek explained:

This was an opportunity. A man gets an opportunity for nothing. He must see what he can do with it. Honeybush worked but then it did not, and I had lost too many plants. I couldn't continue. You mustn't waste opportunities. Then I had to struggle to get payment for the second harvest. It was no longer an opportunity, but I showed it could be done.

Although Derek never openly admitted it, it seemed that he felt that small-scale honeybush cultivation had demanded too much from him and that he was unwilling to try it at a larger scale. And yet the experience had been useful as it showed him that honeybush production was probably not his cup of tea.

As with Derek, Paul Jacobs highlighted concern about financial risk and the assumption of communalism as reasons why the honeybush project ultimately did not gain more adherents:

People were originally interested in the honeybush project because they were inquisitive. It [the RI team] was [attractive to have] new people in the area with new ideas. Your workshops were interesting. We never had those here before. ... Very few people here have land and those that were recent beneficiaries of the land reform process were busy preparing their land to plant potatoes. Those who did not have land would not have been able to practice anything they had learned if they had got involved in the project. You cannot farm without land. While some of the [trust] land is available now, nobody knew it at that time. We were interested in our plots. With honeybush you need to plant a large piece of land to make money and it takes a number of years before you get a return on the investment. This was a new crop, committing your land for such a long period is a risk. If you plant something you know then this is only for a few months so the risk is less. You know the risk. People in this village have financial constraints. Most do not have sufficient money to work the land. They cannot keep a crop going for 3–4 years without getting some money to pay for the inputs required every year. ... It is better if one person works his own land. You know you are responsible for your own success. You cannot depend on others here. We do not work well together, maybe one or two of us but not this big group. The WSFA has problems.

Two facts came up repeatedly in interviews: that the villagers could not work together, making a collective enterprise not an option; and their lack of income and savings to invest in honeybush. Yet, seeing the general decrease of interest in farming generally over the first two years after land redistribution, it is likely that all but a handful of beneficiaries would have lost interest even if other crops had been chosen. What is evident from the Waldesruhe case is that land redistribution planners did not factor into their plans the changing lifecycle patterns amongst beneficiaries that clearly played a significant role here for the medium-term sustainability of the land reform and honeybush projects.

Perhaps the most interesting point that emerged in 2008 was that several Waldesruhe residents and WSFA members, who were on record for having actively supported commercial honeybush cultivation in 1999, refuted this and portrayed themselves as having been mere bystanders. Only one, Ted, acknowledged his initial interest and Sara and Paul admitted to an early curiosity. Most surprising was Derek who claimed that he was never involved but simply accessed plants to try it on his own — despite the fact that that he had always been our main point of contact and had attended all meetings.

It is thus clear that there was no agreement about the success or failure of the project. While it did not meet its primary goal or many of its objectives, it did achieve some: it raised awareness of honeybush and provided various smallholders access to the industry; it transferred knowledge about honeybush cultivation; it provided an income from honeybush (Derek); RI carried out a decent viability study that could be used for future calculations; researchers learned about the problems with assuming communalism amongst rural residents and that smallholders do not necessarily have farming

aspirations. The Waldesruhe project also points to the need to be more attuned to how social processes of mediation take place and shape the outcomes of a project, more than the planned technical inputs and outputs do.

Waldesruhe participants generally appreciated the honeybush project for sharing new knowledge and enabling some of them to experiment. The RI researchers were generally less positive about the project's successes as these did not correspond with the planned objectives and outcomes; they did see, however, that the project established a small planting that was kept going for three years and that agricultural knowledge was shared with a small group of beneficiaries. The villagers, in turn, were more concerned with what they could obtain on their own terms, thus without being overcommitted or overactive. They employed tactics to shape and redirect the RI strategies, not because they opposed the project but because it was of limited benefit to most. The fact that RI had to see the project through because of its in-house and financial commitments meant that it was not open to deal with these problems. And, despite the general feelings that the Waldesruhe project had been somewhat of a failure, RI continued with honeybush trial plantings in other settlements in the southern Cape from 2005 onwards. In 2010, funding from the Department of Science and Technology enabled RI to return to a village it had considered in 1998 for a demonstration site but subsequently rejected in 2000. In 2019 RI was considering returning to several other original sites.

Official translations of long-term agricultural support

Most DLA-SC and DOA-WC officials made it clear during interviews and through their actions that they considered the land reform project to have been a success. They were more sceptical about the honeybush project, however, and generally ignored the subsequent requests for their support for this project or any of the other proposed activities in Waldesruhe. After Derek's 2001 harvest, the regional extension officer was very keen to support the honeybush project in 2002. However, by January 2002 he had relocated and none of his colleagues were interested in supporting the project. Neither were they interested in the soil health project and the sustainable honeybush harvesting proposal that had been submitted to, and discussed with, the provincial office of the DOA-WC. While the DOA-WC had financed the establishment of the Jamesville site, they appeared to have no interest in RI's honeybush research and its technology transfer project with smallholders. First I wondered whether this was because only few people were interested in the project and they felt that Waldesruhe was not worth their time, energy and funds. However, it stepped up its activities as soon as CASP funding came through, which they invested largely in infrastructure. The DLA-SC was only interested in land reform and had stopped visiting the village after 2003 once the transfers had taken place.

The contact of the DOA-WC agricultural development worker Jessica with Waldesruhe residents in 2005 was limited to Derek, her main WSFA contact, and Verna for the poultry project and, two years later, three females for rainwater harvesting systems. By consulting Derek, she, like the RI researchers, made contact with only a specific group of individuals in the village. The applicants for the piggery project in 2008 substantiated this as all except two worked in the village and were family or agetmates of Derek. Only two others applied; both had direct access to Jessica. Thus, while an

agricultural development worker should make it easier for a wider group of people to access assistance, mediation and translation practices in Waldesruhe show that this is often not the case.

Despite increasing its support over the years, the DOA-WC interest did not seem to align with a broad-based rural development and poverty alleviation policy: better-off groups still get most of the benefits, the projects are very low-key and they focus on limited infrastructure. Remarkable though not uncommon in South Africa is the continual focus on the same community and same beneficiaries for multiple projects. The pressure to spend all allocated money within the same financial year seems to rob departments of the time required to identify and set up relations with new communities.

The continual funding of agricultural projects, in Waldesruhe and elsewhere, appears to be a manifestation of state patronage and redistributive welfarism stemming from the practices of the apartheid state that has continued to dog ANC policy since 1994, in the light of attempts to temper the increasing inequality and poverty brought about by the entrenchment of neo-liberal capitalism (James 2011: 318). This poses three challenges: it places pressure on the tax revenue base; it seems to benefit the same people time after time, often the local elite and those skilled in mediating; and it tends to provide assistance (labour, infrastructure or resources) that is not appropriate to the situation on the ground (in Waldesruhe, for example, an office and storage space instead of money for inputs).

For policy to work (to bring people together around a specific discourse or ideas and make resources available for this), it is necessary that project plans are adjusted during practice. They must 'be translated into the different logic of the intentions, goals and ambitions of the many people and institutions they bring together' (Mosse 2005a: 232). If they are not, then the policy will not work. At different times, officials and researchers in Waldesruhe translated the mismatched logics, interests and desires of the financiers, managers, institutions and beneficiaries in order to bring them together. The Waldesruhe events thus suggest that for policy to be considered successful requires not that it is properly implemented but rather that sufficient actors, especially those with power and influence, believe it to be successful and get others to believe this. The focus of officials lies 'upstream' on policy and on ensuring that practice on the ground fits with this policy. This provides little space for reflection and learning from what has happened. In this manner institutions preserve themselves as 'systems of representation', hanging onto deductive knowledge and avoiding inductive reasoning and appreciation of necessities and means (Mosse 2005a: 233). 'To ensure further funding and support, projects have to continue to reflect external agendas, to bear the stamp of the plan, rather than reflect their own organisational and social reality' (Mosse 2005a: 233). Since 2004 the focus on CASP funding requirements, mainly infrastructure support, is prevalent in the interactions between the DOA-WC and Waldesruhe residents, probably because infrastructure is tangible and easily observed. Organisations and recipients of their resources achieve enablement or simply survival not through their own knowledge or capabilities alone 'but through [re]orientation to the knowledge and narratives of more powerful [actors]' (Mosse 2005a: 233). They make this the dominant discourse simply through the act of consumption, even if consumption is as Certeau (1984) indicates selective and partial.

Conclusion

Finally, was the land reform project a success or a failure? As Foucault (1991a) points out, nothing goes according to the planners' schemas, and these are not simply confined to their idealistic notions but are fragments of reality that inform behaviours and influence the perception and ultimately the translation of events. Policymakers, planners and implementers have limited control over the way a development project ultimately unfolds and what it will achieve due to the length of the development chain and the resultant opportunities for mediation along its length. The implementation of any development initiative is, by its nature, shrouded in social complexity in which actors and influential brokers engage with development using mediation, translation and representation, thus employing their own tactics to achieve what they want. This section has illustrated that it is not so much whether there is success or failure but how these and other outcomes are made. An actor-oriented examination uncovers that the SLAG beneficiaries in Waldesruhe, the government officials and the RI researchers have agency in this process. Through their actions, mediation of encounters and translation of events they provide a good example of the selective user tactics common to development, and how these impact first on the land redistribution project and then on the honeybush demonstration plot, ultimately impacting on the outcomes of both to some extent. The project objectives become more or less meaningless when we try to determine if there was success or failure. Rather, the significance is on the multiple ways in which the outcomes are translated as total or partial successes or even largely as failures, in terms of policy or broader ideals.

Development interventions are a package or network of resources, which various actors use in different ways in order to access what they can. While doing so, they mediate their actions as contributions to the bigger purpose of the project and ultimately to policy, whichever is closer. When the outcome is less than desirable, some deny involvement and even their former fairly deep participation. Others overlook the problems they encountered or fail to mention these. Power asymmetries divide the translation process in that translation is done according to needs of a particular position in the development hierarchy. In these positions the translations focus on what is considered important — acquiring land or redistributing land as quickly as possible. Positionalities and asymmetries also impact on the translation of outcomes, as the next chapter illustrates.

The farmland recipients have translated farmland redistribution policy to ensure that they secured some regular state support and they do so in ways that satisfy their livelihood requirements. They changed their undertakings on the redistributed farmland, as household circumstances and their primary livelihood changed and give the appearance of sustained activity. Beneficiaries have not done this to satisfy the needs of policy, policymakers, development agents or researchers, nor have they obeyed existing models and expectations of land redistribution policy. In fact, the lack of any detailed plans following acquisition and enforced adherence to such plans has enabled them to do what they want and to react to changes in lifecycles in ways that helped them to adjust to these. At the same time, their activities enabled officials not only to align the outcomes with policy expectations but also to portray the impression of active farming and productive land use, unless one explores the situation more deeply and realises that only a few individuals were engaged with project activities.

Implementing agents translated official policy to accommodate the beneficiaries' needs, although on occasion their activities imitate policy models and intents. While the land redistribution recipients have behaved in ways unanticipated by officials, some have gotten, and continue to get, tangible benefits. Reinterpretation of such activities and their outcomes by officials sanction beneficiary 'success stories' which give credibility to the farmland redistribution policy and the agricultural support policy since 2004. State officials respond by providing more support to a handful of beneficiaries and a few local residents.

All the different actors in the development events at Waldesruhe, from 1996 to 2009, were attempting to form order out of a succession of unanticipated, contingent development processes and outcomes, often a consequence of previous mediations. Both the beneficiaries and the development actors and agencies are generally satisfied with the outcomes of land redistribution, with the exception of a few qualifications about sufficient land and community dynamics. Some were less positive about the honeybush project, blaming the lack of success on a lack of adequate honeybush research information amongst the RI team at the time. I too would have liked the RI team to have solved all the problems, but this is probably expecting too much given that this was their first experience of implementing honeybush with smallholders and the storyline started collapsing almost as soon as implementation began. There were some occasions when the intended outcomes were met and, while these were limited, there were other occasions when outcomes were partially achieved and when unplanned outcomes became evident. The context in which this happened illustrates the significance of mediation. The land redistribution process seemed to allow for more flexibility than the agricultural honeybush project: this seemed to be more restrictive and place greater demands on researchers and beneficiaries and, in a sense, attempted to regulate their activities and what was expected of them. Outside of the honeybush project, the freedom to choose, and being subject to fewer restrictions, seemed to enable beneficiaries to do what they wanted with the land, even if such activities were not part of rural development policy ideals and were considered inappropriate by other beneficiaries, such as selling their smallholdings after five years but retaining a share in the trust land.

In Waldesruhe land was probably not given to those who needed it most, and radical agricultural economic changes did not appear on the landscape. Rather in most instances we have elite capture through influential families, coupled with the interventions of strong brokers and less influential mediators. The appealing and progressive feeder-project vision of honeybush driving rural development in specific areas of the southern Cape did not materialise in practice and by 2005 community-based honeybush projects were a thing of the past. Trial plantings were then gradually initiated again in other villages but at much smaller scales, until 2010 when RI received support from the Department of Science and Technology, and it returned to Smithville.

Against such a backdrop, the core question is not whether development works, but how it works; not whether a development programme or project is successful, but in what ways it has succeeded and in what ways it has failed. Depending on who the actors are and what their position is, the current policy of rural development brought about by land reform and subsequent agricultural technology transfer can be translated into both successes and failures in Waldesruhe and on different

scales as to what was originally anticipated by planners. The ability to do this is determined by the actors' position in the development chain and what they wished to emphasise and what to ignore. What is clear is that brokers exist above and below in the hierarchy of the development chain and mediation as translation takes place from above as well as from below. In these positions, which illustrate obvious asymmetrical power relations, we see that mediation and translations of outcomes from below represent individual expectations. Higher up in the hierarchy translations from above are used to represent their close connections to policy, either of the government, the department or the science council. In some cases, this takes the form of blaming others for not meeting the outcomes, as where beneficiaries blame researchers' lack of technical ability. At significantly higher levels, closer to policy, success is openly stated and blame is not an issue. At this level the project was considered nothing less than a success with the WSFA deserving more funding to ensure continuation of this success. This illustrates that for policy matters success is not finite, no matter how it is achieved or represented.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and some final thoughts about brokering, mediating and translating ‘development’

A complex dialectic of dependence and independence, of community and individuality, has been played out — and continues to be played out — in the case of such farms. Insecure footholds and gaping potholes are as apparent in the road ahead as in the roads which led back ...

— James (2000b: 647)

Introduction

This dissertation set out to examine the role of brokers and mediators, and how their agency, including acts of assemblage of support and resources, translation and representation shape the development process and its outcomes, resulting in different experiences of success and failure. These outcomes are largely dependent on actors’ positionality in the projects. The setting is the village of Waldesruhe, in the southern Cape, where two rural development projects, the first on land redistribution and the second on agricultural development in the form of honeybush technology diffusion, occurred sequentially from 1995 to 2005. Each project lasted approximately five years. My presence started as a member of RI’s research team introducing new technology primarily to land reform beneficiaries in 2000 and evolved into a PhD candidate researcher intermittently living in the village from 2006 to 2010. To understand the social complexity that is development, locally, nationally and globally, I had to recreate the history of the mission station, the CRR and the land reform project. This history flowed into the honeybush technology diffusion project, along with the actors who mediated the intervention.

The use of the concept of broker and my focus on people I considered to be historical brokers and mediators helped me to understand their roles in the two projects and how these projects became shaped, eventually manifesting in particular outcomes or realities that some actors, from the village as well as the development agencies, construed as successful and others as failures. Waldesruhe, and probably other former mission stations and CRRs, are historically fertile places for brokers and mediators. They were part and parcel of the mission station and its subsequent transition to a CRR, and different generations of elites from particular families developed mediation skills, and some performed as brokers. Some of these actors continued to use and improve their mediating expertise when engaging with external development actors and officials during the two projects. The actors from the various development agencies also had their share of brokers and those skilled in mediating, assembling, translating and representing.

South Africa’s rural development policy and subsequent projects (policy practice) such as the LRPP were a consequence of foreign and local mediation of prevailing development discourses in the 1990s (James 2000a), where key actors attempted to influence others with their ideas about property

rights, rural land and agriculture. Others present at the negotiations appeared to agree in order to obtain local and international development resources. Since then there has been little success in terms of land reform and agrarian development and much frustration about the outcomes thereof (Cousins and Walker 2015; Fay and James 2009; Hebinck and Cousins 2013; Lahiff and Li 2014). The land reform question or need was mediated by South Africa's history and combined with an agrarian model of rural development. Despite almost three decades of implementation and awareness of more pressing desires for land use, the agricultural model remains firm in the minds of many experts, bureaucrats and policymakers.

Drawing on anthropological scholarship, I argue that the key problem with development seems to be understanding its resilience in the 21st century in light of its historically limited successful outcomes; planned, contingent and otherwise. Yet, post- or anti-development, largely populist, sentiments and arguments have yet to gain the traction that development has gained globally and continues to gain. In fact, they have seemingly disappeared. We see growth in global development interventions and a greater embrace of development rather than rejection by potential beneficiaries. We see less reflection and revision by national and international development agencies. Development has shifted from small-scale projects in the 1950s to large, sweeping national, regional and global projects and programmes of governance, agricultural subsidisation, infrastructure, social protection, food security, rural development, education and, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are massive global development aspirations. As Olivier de Sardan (2005) argues development is crucial to the social life of Africa and its resources, even when not the most desirable, have become fundamental to daily life. Development thus dominates not because of its altruism, intended or supposed benefits but rather because it has tangible material artefacts to offer and bestows some prestige on the actors. Actors are able to mediate development to ensure some form of benefit. Some scholars, such as Piot (2016) and Ferguson (2013), suggest a shift away from these macro projects to more easily manageable and sustainable micro projects focusing on democracy and human rights education, and microloans. These are not chosen because of their manageability but rather because of their closer focus on the realities and needs of people. Simultaneously, they occur in an era where the developmental state and development aid is withdrawing in Africa and there is a shift towards 'Pentacostalism' and 'NGO-isation' as a result (Ferguson 1999, 2010; Piot 2010). Thus, smaller, almost private activities become the order of the day but are openly embraced and mediated, rather than rejected.

Initially, I used participatory and some qualitative research methods as a means to generate knowledge relevant to the honeybush project, but I soon came to realise that an ethnographic approach was required. This involved continuing with PRA and PPP workshops but adding participant observation, informal and formal interviews and eventually residing in the village. Ethnographic residence was sparked by the intention to do this analysis in the form of a PhD dissertation and to gain improved comprehension of the social complexity of this thing we know as development. My definition of development is simply planned social change. Irrespective of whether it has to do with education, agriculture, health and so on, the intention by many development agents and experts is to change people's social behaviour in an attempt to improve their circumstances. This necessarily means that

existing norms are replaced by external norms. Often this means that the solution of social problems are made technical by experts who attempt to introduce standards and norms of the global North as the solution without clearly understanding the problems, experiences and context of the people to whom these solutions are applied.

As my ethnographic research revealed, mission stations and CRRs are good places for the emergence and development of brokers and mediators. They are similar to contemporary development organisations in that both need brokers and mediators to create and acknowledge ideas that they can disseminate and gain support and resources. I argue this is a key and necessary activity in development, no matter where one is situated on the overextended chain of development localities, organisations, institutions, villages, field sites and projects. Actors in development thus spend a fair amount of their time trying to ensure that they can attract scarce resources, as these can result in access to other resources. They do this through mediation and brokerage, with more influential actors becoming brokers leading networks for a period, often until such time as they feel they can get nothing more for themselves or for others or when new opportunities become available. Translation of project realities into policy representations is crucial to ensure support. However, as I show, other factors, such as social relationships, history, structure and the political economy, and factors such as changing life circumstances, cannot be ignored. These also influence the shape of the development project and its subsequent outcomes. They form components of the mediation process.

Summary conclusions

In *Chapter 1*, I identify the development problematic by asking why planned social change either does not occur or manifests in outcomes different from those initially intended by planners and agents; why it can do more harm than good; why it is often resisted outright or reappropriated by intended beneficiaries; and why it can have unplanned outcomes and consequences for most actors involved. I draw on theories of development in anthropology (Ferguson 1990; Long 2001; Mosse 2005a; Mosse and Lewis 2006) and the sociology of science, in particular on Latour's (1996, 1999, 2000, 2005) actor network theory (ANT). I link Latour's ideas of mediators and translation to the work of Rottenburg (2009) and combine these with anthropological ideas of brokers and mediation in development (Behrends, Park and Rottenburg 2014; Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; James 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015; Olivier de Sardan 2005).

The chapter emphasises that a focus on influential and less influential brokers and mediators and their relevance for the development problematic is important in South Africa because its rural development policy is derived from the mediation of two quite different discourses, that of redistributive land reform and that of viable agricultural production based on modern agricultural technologies. The result is a bifurcated (split and divided) policy and practice which I feel is best understood using the concepts of brokers and mediators (at least in the contexts of development that feature in this study), as it reveals how development is shaped, and ultimately made successful or unsuccessful, by acts of mediation, including translation, representation and assembling support and resources to use for their own purposes. Clearly other elements are also at play in the process of development, but even these

are mediated or cause further mediation. In the South African context, scholars illustrate that rural development policy and state bureaucracy generally — a composition of interlocking state and market forces that fashioned a hybrid ‘redistributive neoliberalism’ — creates a fertile ground for the appearance of brokers and acts of mediation (James 2007, 2011, 2018; van Leynseele 2018).

The concept of the broker has long had a strong relevance in political anthropology and from the 1970s begins appearing in development anthropology. It helps us understand the increasing attraction that development has on the African continent in the 21st century: it stems from how people use and adapt development culture (repertoires and resources) to their own ends and how they are perceived doing so. Often this reappropriation is seen as self-serving and untrustworthy, at other times it is noted for the contribution it makes to others. In this regard, the theories of Certeau (1984) on the strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the less powerful become valuable. So too do Bourdieu’s (1984, 1990) theories of habitus, cultural capital and field. Cultural capital is embodied, objectified and institutionalised and the ways in which this is done increases the ability to play the development game (a particular field with numerous sub-fields) and being accepted as being able to do so. Beneficiaries are not passive, and some are able to draw on cultural capital, habitus and knowledge of the field to ensure that they get what they and others want. The same applies to actors situated elsewhere along the extended development chain, which typically has its centre at the global level where it is based on a particular global discourse of development. This is open to reappropriation and translation across the development chain.

In *Chapter 2*, I explain the data collection methods and techniques. I describe my experiences in the two field sites — RI and Waldesruhe village — and how my understanding of them changed over time, especially as I shifted from working for RI to being an ethnographer seeking deeper understanding of what had transpired and why. I draw on Delamont (2004), Davies (2008) and Gupta and Ferguson (1997b) to defend my use of ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and residence in the village. I also note the problems with doing ethnography in such a globalised and interconnected world as development work by drawing on Marcus (1995, 1998). In response to Jones and Watt (2010) who warn that by the time ethnography is written up the social world it wants to explain has changed, I argue for ethnographic snapshots that, arranged over time, reveal change within a particular site. Yet, because they are snapshots, they can be written up fairly quickly. It is writing up the thesis that takes much longer, especially for researchers who are employed. I also argue for the value of long-term ethnography in that it enables trust and regular observation of change over time. At RI my position as a ‘participant insider’ was crucial: while it helped with gathering data when I worked there between 2000 and 2004, it greatly assisted with reconnecting with colleagues and staying abreast of what was happening there and at the science council more broadly once I had left.

This chapter describes how I selected participants and the ethical clearance processes the project underwent, and examines me as a mediator studying other mediators and the practice of mediation in two research sites (Hastrup 1992). I describe the effects of my habitus on the process of data collection, first following scripted PRA and PPP workshops and then resorting to more ethnographic approaches and residence in the village. I examine the limitations and challenges

experienced, particularly during the progression of the residential fieldwork. The chapter concludes with a reflection on my changing roles and positionalities through my shift from an instrumental practitioner to an ethnographic participant observer. I argue I too am one of the mediators, rather than an intermediary in Latour's (2005) sense, making translations and representations to acquire resources and to influence the shape of a project that after two years I was no longer fully committed to.

In *Chapter 3*, I argue that brokers and mediators were present in the mission station environment for generations. These individuals arose and gained experience by serving in positions of authority on church boards and mediating between the residents, the church and then the state. Positions transformed over time from serving on the church board to dealing directly with the state as members of CRR management boards and TLCs. The individuals often remained the same or were from the same families.

Considering the origins of Walderuhe and the local circumstances, the chapter notes the importance of cultural capital, habitus and ability to play the game. It argues that far from being an isolated/marginal and agrarian settlement, Walderuhe has been integrated into the national, regional and local economy for decades. This exposure to the workings of the world increased the cultural capital of individuals and their individual and collective ability to react to government strategies by adopting alternative and opportunistic tactics as and when needed. The result was the emergence of an elite that was able to broker or mediate as the opportunities arise. They used their cultural capital, habitus and knowledge of social fields to broker and mediate in order to acquire, reappropriate or represent state strategies and resources. Land reform becomes the first example of this, followed by the honeybush demonstration project.

Chapter 4 considers how Piet introduced and shaped land redistribution in the village in his interaction with his cohorts and with DLA-SC officials and consultants. As Foucault (1991a) argues, project plans are not ideals in the heads of a few planners but pieces of reality that stimulate a succession of effects. What occurs is not simply the non-alignment of project plans and the attempt to meet policy objectives but mediations that have unanticipated outcomes into the future. The core focus of the chapter is on brokers (and mediators), formal and informal networks and the mediation involved in acquiring farmland. I draw on social theories of development, mediation and networks from Ferguson (1990), Latour (1996), Mosse (2005a), Mosse and Lewis (2006) and Rossi (2006). Following Latour (1999, 2005), I understand mediation as a combination of mediators in different positions influencing project processes, shapes and outcomes. I also follow Olivier de Sardan's (2005) separation of the broker and the function of brokerage according to the circumstances so that I am able to differentiate between influential brokers and less influential mediators across formal and informal networks (a distinction continued in *Chapter 5*).

An examination of the formal DLA-SC network illustrates how it is tied up within the DLA's broader goals and intentions as pursued by the director general and ultimately the minister. The DLA's high-level purpose was to conduct rapid land redistribution, for which the DLA-SC had implemented numerous land redistribution projects in the region. Yet little was in place, institutionally or otherwise, to ensure that farmland redistribution was supported by agricultural technological support to ensure post-

settlement agricultural development. The informal network of the Waldesruhe beneficiaries grew under the leadership of a skilled broker and was linked to key institutions in the village, the church and the local council.

Following on theories of Certeau (1984) and Bourdieu (1984), I describe the redistribution process as having entailed the interaction of state strategies with local tactics and having drawn upon the mediators' habitus, cultural capital and knowledge of the development field. Brokers from different networks are able to mediate across networks; and as it unfolds, land reform has various outcomes, arising from intended and unintended actions by different brokers and mediators. The mediation process and the requirements of policy enable the revocation of the historical past and allow for a new history to be written, one that enables the representation of beneficiaries as potential farmers and the representative leadership that takes the village and transient farmworkers out of poverty. The chapter, however, sketches the social rifts that exist in the village, endangering the land reform process. As a result, the quality of the land that is finally redistributed is of low quality for commercial agricultural purposes. No plans for farming enterprises and land use are implemented. These different mediations not only have immediate outcomes but also influence the outcomes in the years to follow. It is these Waldesruhe brokers and mediators, who honed their skills in the land redistribution project, who then encountered RI's honeybush project in late 1999 with its development technicians and researchers.

Chapter 5 examines brokers and mediation within the context of the honeybush project. As James (2007) notes, officials, project officers and consultants play a crucial mediating role in selling policy ideas. Researchers become mediators rather than intermediaries presenting neutral messages of technology transfer. The vision developed by RI aligned the technologies it could provide with smallholders' assumed needs, intending to place RI at the forefront of smallholder and land reform support in the region, engaging smallholders in a new crop with a niche market and rapidly developing industry, and enabling a feeder project system largely drawing on dedicated funding to strengthen all research on honeybush. The aim was to implement a technology transfer by using the communal development project approach. Certeau's (1984) ideas of strategies and tactics are crucial here. RI's scientists assumed communalism amongst the beneficiaries as basis for enrolling them in projects. Beneficiaries first allowed this, but then used tactics to engage with the project on their own terms. This misalignment ultimately led to fractures in the honeybush research network during the course of implementation. The chapter follows the details of the shifts and realignments, and ultimately the fractures that happened.

Chapter 6 considers how the various actors, including brokers and mediators, 'make' the successes and failures of the land redistribution and honeybush projects. Neither of the projects flowed smoothly and in accordance with the planned outcomes; rather, they were shaped by continual processes of mediation. All of the different actors involved, located in different positionalities, provided different understandings of the project successes and failures. We thus end up with multiple translations of success or failure with an unevenness between them. Subordinates, such as villagers and field staff, can create their own levels of autonomy by enrolling in projects and exercising tactical consumer-like behaviour (Certeau 1984). They make something different of these projects, thereby escaping the

influence of the developmentalist configuration without actually abandoning it. Officials and researchers, in turn, try to counter the tactics and project distortions with their own ideas of what needs to be done. As Mosse (2005a: 239) describes it, 'policy is co-opted from below'. But it is also reinforced from above. Mediation, particularly translation, occurs simultaneously from the top-down and from the bottom-up, illustrating power asymmetries across the range of development actors. Actors located at different levels consider the outcomes in terms of meeting individual requirements (the beneficiaries), project requirements (the researchers) and policy requirements (officials). It is clear that 'evaluation' can thus be a very selective and narrow process, often with the attribution of blame on different actors. Different actors use different criteria and referents for the same events.

Research findings

To consider how projects are influenced by brokerage or mediation in the course of their design, unfolding, shaping and becoming successful or unsuccessful, the thesis opened with several questions. It is now time to return to these questions.

Are former mission stations such as Waldesruhe fertile places of brokerage and mediation?

The study attempts to show that mediation — assemblage, translation and representation — by brokers (influential actors) and mediators (less influential actors) effects the unfolding (including the design), the shape and the outcomes of development projects. Mosse and Lewis (2006) pushed the mediation argument using Latour's ideas of mediators and translation developed in the course of ANT. As I investigate mediation of two projects that unfold consecutively in Waldesruhe, a former mission station, I provide evidence that the interventions of mission stations were similar to those of contemporary development agencies in that they relied on acts of mediation to ensure their success. They needed to acquire or assemble support and supporters. They had to represent themselves as the most suitable organisation (or denomination or mission society) to bring about the christianisation and modernisation of the local population during the epoch of colonisation. Like modern development organisations, they were situated far from their headquarters and providers of the main resources. They were also situated far from the colonial government. This distance provided them with the opportunity to mediate. Currently, the distance between development agencies at international, national and local or regional level also enables mediation.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1991), draw on Certeau's (1984) ideas to show how indigenous people selectively reappropriated the offerings of colonial modernisation and Christianity, but were in turn consumed by the system as their dependence on its offerings increased, much like current participants of development interventions (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Olivier de Sardan 2005). However, as Comaroff and Comaroff (1997: 366–368) argue, the relationship between mission societies, missionaries and the colonial government, despite appearances of common goals of civilising and educating the indigenous inhabitants, were often at odds about how they achieved this and what civilising the inhabitants meant and involved, notably when it came to ideas of spiritual authority and

secular legality. Missionaries competed for support from both the local population and the colonial government. This situation supports the contention that both colonialism and christianisation (as metaphors for development), like contemporary development, were not ‘a monolith, a machine of pure domination; or that “*the colonizer*” [like the developer] may plausibly be portrayed as a coherent, unitary historical agent’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 367, italics in original). The process of colonisation and christianisation in South Africa, as with post-colonial development interventions, was a multifarious, fragmented and uneven process with different, diffuse organisations, ideals, norms and theologies vying for acceptance, depending on brokers and mediation for support. In the process local people assimilated the tenets of others, selectively adopted and reappropriated practices, artefacts and rules, along with how and when they applied them (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997). This selective embracement confirms their tactical consumer- or user-like behaviour (Certeau 1984), suggesting subtle and selective reappropriation of desirable practices and artefacts along with resistance to what they considered undesirable.

Bourdieu’s (1984, 1986, 1988) ideas of habitus, cultural capital and field (and knowledge of the rules of the field) are relevant. Over decades residents are able to develop their cultural capital, habitus and rules of the game. In mission stations such as Waldesruhe, where ministers were usually absent, members of the church board were encouraged to mediate between the church, the missionary/minister and the local population. This often put them in positions of secular and spiritual leadership on the mission station. With the change to CRRs these church elders became members of management boards because of their habitus, cultural capital and knowledge of the field and its rules. Here they developed further experience and skills in mediating between state representatives, the church and the residents. Mediation again involved assembling support, translating ideas and needs as well as representing these in various ways, much as modern development agents do. What we note is the fluidity of these positions in the way in which skilled and influential actors in Waldesruhe conform to notions developed in contemporary scholarship of the characteristics (activities and criteria) of brokers (see Bierschenck, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002; Bierschenk 2014; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Latour 2005; Lindquist 2015; Mosse and Lewis 2006). Brokers become distinguished from patrons in this study not only because the former deals with second order resources but because they cut across multiple physical and social environments while patrons do not.

These brokers and mediators (less influential actors) represent influential families in the village and serve simultaneously on local religious and secular structures. They possess a significant cumulative as well as individual experience and ability in mediation honed through decades of living on and managing the mission station and CRRR. They are capable of looking after themselves in development situations. But developers have incorrect assumptions about communities and have no background to comprehend the field of community.

How do mediation, translation and representation shape land redistribution?

It is the skilled mediators and the main broker, Piet, that the DLA-SC field staff encountered in 1995 when they entered the village with their farmland redistribution project. Despite some initial setbacks

with regards to the size of the group needed to acquire land, Piet and his peers were able to identify individuals that they were more or less happy to have on board. They put together a proposal for support that strongly aligned with government ideas of land redistribution and its intended benefits. This was done by ignoring the fact that there had been very little agricultural engagement by most villagers, many of whom were engaged in non-agrarian or off-farm livelihoods in local seaside towns and across the region. This avoidance of the history resulted not only in the avoidance of how social marginalisation and discord in Walderuhe was brought about by political-economic structures in previous decades, but also the failure to note the trend in changing livelihoods, and the increasing disappearance of agriculture beyond cattle investment activities and irregular home vegetable gardening. Rather than agrarian livelihoods, most households were locked into the urban and industrial economy in surrounding towns and further afield. Others were drawn into the system of state patronage through social grants as they had aged or had disabilities (PWD). Such situations are common to many of the land redistribution projects (Aliber, Maluleke, Manenzhe, Paradza and Cousins 2013). Similar to Ferguson's (1990) experience in Lesotho, history is overlooked or in fact hidden. Some of the proposed beneficiaries had land available on their residential properties in the region of half an acre to a morgen but this was ignored. Rather we see a group of people who drafted an attractive proposal for support in which they appealed to the need to address poverty and uplift local residents by developing farming units. The proposal ignored newcomers to the village, *inkommers*, even though the redistribution process later attempted to acquire the land promised to them, leading to increased social rifts. At the same time development interventions illustrated that the WSFA was far from the cohesive and communally oriented group it initially portrayed itself to be.

The mediation and translation of local affairs resulted in the project unfolding in a way that appeared less than suitable to the original intentions of the core group. The *inkommers* applied for restitution of the land promised to them which took years as there was virtually no support from the organs responsible for this process. The land allocated to the land redistribution beneficiaries turned out to be nearly unusable as there was no access to sustainable water for irrigation. The way it was eventually subdivided between the beneficiaries bore no resemblance to the plans proposed by the beneficiaries, consultants and the DOA-WC.

Mediation effectively changed the initial intentions of the DLA-SC and the WSFA and the result was a farm with less than desirable resources. Fewer than half the beneficiaries used the land for agriculture after receiving it in 1999, with only six remaining by 2006. While the DLA-SC succeeded in fairly rapidly transferring the land, thus raising the state's redistribution statistics, mediation has brought serious changes to the beneficiaries' initial ideas of what they wanted to do with it. The policy ideas of partnership and participation failed to secure land for the poor and completely excluded a specific group, while most beneficiaries belonged to the local elite.

What do brokers and mediators achieve in development agencies?

Brokers exist in both villages and in development agencies. RI had an extremely capable broker as the SAP coordinator who managed to influence the approaches used in transferring technology and created

a vision of honeybush technology transfer as the solution to RI's engagement with smallholder villages in the southern Cape. The honeybush project stepped up its scale and was transformed into several scientific projects that fed into the demonstration plot activity using SAP ring-fenced funding. While this multidisciplinary and multi-institute umbrella project achieved strong support and recognition from the science council, culminating in the award for the best conceived project in 1999, it soon started to fracture in 2000. By 2001 the team was split as the subsidiary RI honeybush coordinator, also a skilled broker, and his team withdrew and formed their own non-profit research institute. One field site was removed from the project and during the course of 2000 others had fallen by the wayside as a result of decreased interest in honeybush at other sites. By January 2001 the only site available to the RI research team was a small experimental planting by a farmer in Waldesruhe, as interest in the demonstration plot and its maintenance declined radically. The initial village honeybush broker was unable to keep the idea alive amongst those who had originally expressed an interest. Despite his ideas of the project coinciding with those of the RI team, he gradually lost the latter's support which shifted to the experimental planting. A community-based approach using the demonstration plot was not ideal to this village as people did not want to work together and there were many social undercurrents that determined relationships. As Murray (1996) and James (2001, 2007) argue, members of rural communities seldom share an identical or common history even if it appears that they do. Furthermore, their reactions to their history are different. These communities are not homogeneous but are clearly divided in terms of class, wealth and influence. The communal rhetoric of the time led to a focus on communally oriented projects with communal delivery systems. One could argue that both the homelands and the CRRs had communalism imposed upon them historically by the church and the colonial and apartheid states and that this was not a natural or desired way of life. In Waldesruhe we see how people selectively invoked communalism for attracting some development opportunities, but they generally rejected it on a daily basis and seldom collaborated in livelihood activities. At the end of 2001, RI's SAP coordinator resigned and the honeybush project unravelled further.

I was made acting SAP coordinator but, because of my lack of influence with fellow managers and changes in the science council's funding protocols and focus, some managers withdrew their support. The project became unstable as many part-time researchers were called back to their units. My attempts to sell other ideas for support were unsuccessful as were those of fellow researchers who looked to promote honeybush in other areas. The loss of its broker and the inability to fill this gap left the RI network weakened. Development agency brokers conceptualised and ensured that for a limited time other actors and even their subaltern mediators bought into their conceptualisations and kept these together. Ultimately the research team split with half looking for other sites to conduct honeybush research and half desiring to improve agriculture for the active Waldesruhe beneficiaries.

How did the mediation and translation of honeybush technology unfold in Waldesruhe?

Despite the withdrawal of the subsidiary RI team and the resignation of the SAP coordinator, the RI researchers attempted to introduce honeybush technology through means of the experimental planting. However, much of what transpired was mediated by the new honeybush broker, Derek, in the village.

Training courses were mediated to include generic agricultural principles so that they would presumably attract more people to the work of RI and see its benefits. However, this did not encourage more participation or even increased desires to crop honeybush. What raised beneficiaries' potential interest in honeybush was the involvement of industry members and SAHPA having their annual general meeting in the village and the first harvest. Clearly these activities demonstrated something tangible to them. They were discouraged, however, by the problems experienced with the experimental planting and RI's lack of interest in what they thought were feasible solutions.

Keeping the project alive in Waldesruhe required funds for which the SAP coordinator had to mediate with RI and science council managers. While feedback from the field to the SAP coordinator was open about the problems encountered, the feedback up the hierarchy to managers and science council directors was largely positive. After the resignation of the SAP coordinator, none of the team members wanted to acknowledge possible failure in the field and thus of the project. Those who were interested in honeybush wanted to solve the problem by expanding into sustainable harvesting in the wild or growing trial plantings in other communities. The implication was that Waldesruhe was not the ideal place for the project. Other researchers wanted to remain in Waldesruhe to achieve increased farming by expanding their assistance to other crops and employing participatory approaches. Yet neither path received any support from funders.

The objectives of the Waldesruhe honeybush project could not be met because the support network had crumbled and all systems were put in place for the team to close the project. Team members were withdrawn and those that remained became disenchanting. As Latour (2000) suggests, heterogeneous actors in development continually attempt to make order out of disorder by exercising political acts of alignment. Such alignment is clear from the activities of influential brokers such as Piet, Derek, the SAP coordinator and the subsidiary RI coordinator. Mosse (2005a: 9) argues that the 'coherence attributed to a successful development project is never *a priori*; never a matter of *design* or of policy' (italics in the original). Rather it is mediation, through assemblage and translation, that brings different actors and actants together to give the appearance of coherency.

Brokers seem to continue to mediate for as long as they feel this is worth their while. When they become aware of an increasing lack of support or the project no longer addresses their own interests, they reduce (Piet, Ted) or even terminate their activities (SAP coordinator, Derek), though some will renew these later if new opportunities arise (Derek).

How does translation determine project failure and success?

There was no clear outcome in terms of whether the land redistribution or the honeybush projects were a success or failure; different individuals had different views. But this is not the question. The question is rather in what ways (how) development worked (succeeded) or did not (failed) (Mosse and Lewis 2006). Mediation during each of the projects influenced the shape and outcomes of both and mediations during the first affected the outcomes of the subsequent honeybush one. The outcomes were determined as successes or failures in different ways by different actors involved in different positions. All of them used different referents in their evaluations. As Mosse and Lewis (2006) argue, when we

attempt to understand outcomes, mediation and translation are required if the outcomes are going to coincide at least with policy, if not project, intentions. What does stand out is that the DLA-SC and the DOA-WC saw the land reform project as having had positive outcomes from a policy position. The researchers, in turn, were largely divided in their conclusions about the honeybush project outcomes: some argued that the outcomes did not represent the project objectives; others posited that the outcomes were varied with some objectives having been met (proof that growing honeybush was possible) and others not, even if those that were met did not necessarily happen according to schedule; and some noted that unintended outcomes emerged that benefitted some beneficiaries but negatively affected others. The land reform beneficiaries tended to consider the outcomes in terms of how these affected them directly.

In these evaluations, the fact that mediation had had a decisive influence on the outcomes was overlooked, as was the fact that different life cycle and life-stage events defined outcomes. People get ill, pass away, move away, become committed to other livelihoods, sell their land and so on. These events have longer-term effects, but when they occur during the course of the project or soon after they are readily apparent. Focus on mediation moves the project or intervention from the technical to the more complex social dimension. We see that while the research project was crucial to the researchers for various reasons it was less crucial for the beneficiaries and other villagers. Multiple mediations by skilled brokers and other actors influenced outcomes. These required further translation to assemble support and make sense of what happened and how it happened. Mediation takes place from above and from below and respective positionalities, needs and different frames of referents guide these translations. Some actors selectively observed and identified outcomes so that these could be neatly tied to policy or project intentions. Others placed blame for what they perceived as failure or undesirable outcomes on the activities of others. We thus come to understand how the WSFA is continually supported and how this is taken to illustrate the success of policy, even though the support is part of policy itself! Mediation effectively hides the challenges of practice and ignores the lessons evident from practice.

Policy, projects, and mediation

To tease out the challenges and contradictions evident in the practice of implementing policy, I focused on actors who, in my consideration, conducted themselves as brokers and mediators. The brokers and mediators — from the village, state departments and the research team (including myself) — started by performing acts of mediation, including assemblage, translation and representation, to attract resources. Subsequently this required that they made sense of encounters brought about by mediation, the awkwardness of practice, the unexpectedness of its outcomes and, in so doing, had to make outcomes comprehensible to themselves and others. In making sense, officials and researchers seemed to focus on projects and policy representations, whereas villagers tended to be guided by their needs. All represented a different type of reality, but reality nevertheless. Yet, by linking outcomes to policy, officials and researchers tended to ignore the challenges of practice and the lessons evident from this, and mediation was not considered a determinant of the outcomes. I too was late in identifying

this. Stemming from this finding, two points stand out about policy, projects and mediation in this ethnographic study.

First, projects are about policy implementation or putting policy into practice, but policy is not a blueprint for practice, as both Latour and Foucault noted in the late twentieth century. Project ideas are fragments of reality that seem to persist beyond implementation. Policy serves the purpose of establishing a set of apparently coherent but simultaneously vague ideas (motivating metaphors) around which people can rally and acquire resources for projects to initiate change. Policy is thus open to translation. If it provides a coherent rallying point, then it is good policy. In Waldesruhe it brought various development agents to the village for longer than a decade to offer support, even if this was not always the most appropriate or inclusive input for the situation. What policy was successful in doing was to publicly attract a relatively large number of actors and resources to Waldesruhe. This effectively increased the resources available to people and improved their access to various development-oriented networks, which might provide them with further resources in the future. This is a crucial and often overlooked function of both projects and policy and should not be underestimated.

Policy enabled resources for institutions such as the science council, RI, its employees (including me), partners and consultants, but did so by shifting 'attention away from [us] and so reproduce[d] relationships of power and privilege' (Mosse 2005a: 232). The benefits of development policy are highly tangible and often desperately desired by others elsewhere in the chain: development is thus entrenched into the daily social fabric of Africa (Olivier de Sardan 2005), not peripheral to it. It is in this space that the traditional development broker appears as marginal middleman for hire, trying to tap into development resources purely for his or her own needs (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002), power and privilege. In this competitive world of development funding, it is virtually impossible for an organisation to survive without portraying themselves and their results as the best, or as Mosse (2005a: 235) explains they express 'their actions as achievements in terms of currently favoured models'. Beneficiaries, such as the Waldesruhe residents, have to project images of themselves as modern, pro-development actors in order to survive or at least acquire resources. As they do this, so they appear as brokers, or at least mediators.

Secondly, continual mediation by different actors across the different levels of the development chain influences the unfolding and shape of projects and does so continually, so that the mediated course and outcomes of one project are likely to affect those of a consecutive project, as was evident in Waldesruhe. Policy cannot be held responsible for the outcomes of projects, although actors attempt to link the two. Rather, it is the actors who become responsible, through mediation of project design, implementation, shaping and the making of success and failure. As I pointed out, different actors do not hold the same ideas about the successes and failures of projects. Furthermore, these can be attributed to more factors than just mediation, such as life stage and life cycle changes, the effects of which are often purposefully ignored. The requirement is thus to understand how successes and failures are made. I suggest that this is strongly influenced by mediation, and as a result most projects are seldom considered successful in terms of their planned purposes and objectives. Mediation affects the process and thus the outcomes, detracting these from the original project intentions and objectives.

Recommendations for further research

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to examine the development problematic and illustrate how mediation affects the way in which development unfolds, is shaped and made successful or unsuccessful by different actors. Certain actors are mediators, some influential and others not as much. I used the concepts of brokers and acts of mediation as my lenses, making necessary some concluding general comments about brokers. Latour's (2005) distinction between mediators and intermediaries seems to apply in the Waldesruhe case, but intermediaries as passive messengers did not seem to play a role while most actors were engaged in some degree of translation. It is possible to ask, however, whether intermediaries *per se* do exist and whether it is not rather the case that everybody mediates at some point as it is within their interest to do so. It is thus necessary to investigate the concepts of brokers and mediation beyond their surface definitions. This is crucial to understanding and providing insight into the nuanced and complex realities of brokerage within development settings. I use the ideas of influential brokers and not so influential mediators, to note that there are others who also mediate when it comes to acts of translating and representing project outcomes. It is not only influential brokers who mediate, assemble, translate and represent realities but also less influential mediators who mediate at different levels, different times and possibly for different purposes. Scholars question whether we should focus on the individual broker (James 2007, 2011; Koster and van Leynseele 2018; Lindquist 2015) or rather on the act of brokerage itself (Olivier de Sardan 2005). I proposed in the beginning of this study that brokers are influential mediators. However, because most actors are engaged in mediation at some point in a project, even if this is short-lived, we must also consider the less influential actors and the extent of their mediations. Sometimes they follow the brokers and at other times they do their own thing. For example, I illustrate how some beneficiaries with very irregular involvement in honeybush are able to translate why the project did not gain traction and why they could not engage in commercial honeybush farming at scale. In some instances, they translate their views to represent those of the brokers; at other times they have different views. All mediators ultimately affect the shape and outcomes of development projects, or at least they translate the outcomes. Actors throughout the chain create the multiple realities we encounter and thus further illustrate how success and failure are made. But, does my claim that everybody seems to mediate and does so in different ways stand up to closer scrutiny elsewhere? This should be examined.

When I started focusing on brokers, I highlighted those whom I considered to be influential brokers and those who seemed to be less influential mediators, without the intention of privileging either of them (Latour 1999, 2005). Yet, until about halfway through my ethnographic fieldwork I focused almost exclusively on those individuals who stood out as the ideal of brokers (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2002). Only then did I begin to notice that even the inactive beneficiaries and villagers had their own ways of acting, understanding and thus translating what occurred. While they were perhaps not assembling resources and support, they were translating some facts and representing others in terms of how they felt these should be understood. Thus, they were mediating. Ultimately, they, by virtue of their presence and absence had an impact on the outcomes of the projects and the researchers' understanding of these. Therefore, I would argue that to gain a deeper understanding it is

crucial to pay attention to both the actors and the acts of mediation. Both influence the understanding of outcomes and how successes and failures are made (and understood). This was the experience of my ethnographic encounter in Waldesruhe with land reform beneficiaries and RI.

Mediation and mediators at all levels need to be comprehended within the context of the setting in which they occur (villages, projects, organisations) and the history that has paved the way for this social and structural environment. Policy and projects should be comprehended in consideration of the institutions implementing them and their contexts, as should the mediation of various outcomes by different actors. Thus, our focus needs to be both on the downstream and the upstream practices of policy development and the power asymmetries within and between these. The former illustrates the effects and uncertainties of development while the latter obscures these and even tries to make them correspond to policy. Even in the two relatively small, sequential projects within a single village analysed here, the relationship between the policy and the outcomes of implementation is convoluted and unclear. It is a messy situation with actors acting in ways that diverge from plans and policy, although plans are believed to be the guiding framework of interventions. What emerges through mediation and particularly through translation is the link of policy to project outcomes, in that some outcomes and even projects are translated to resemble and reinforce policy — not through their careful and accurate implementation of plans, but despite the lack thereof. At the project and village level the focus is less on policy and more on meeting the project goals or identifying individual benefits that have or have not materialised, especially at the beneficiary level.

As I was an anthropological actor in the honeybush project and self-admitted mediator, and then later an ethnographer of land redistribution and technology transfer, some observations about my position should be considered. Working within developmentalist organisations, including science councils, it is easy to fail to acknowledge the significance of critical understanding due to the needs and pressures placed on researchers to acquire funds and resources. As researchers, we can end up losing ourselves in ideals of ‘participation’, ‘partnership’, ‘evidence-based policy’ and ‘research-driven policy’ that are the order of the day. When we do realise the importance of critical understanding, we often fail to consider its heterogeneity. For decades, anthropological focus on its ‘evil twin’, development, fell victim to this oversight, causing rifts between generalised categories of those concerned with anthropology ‘in’ or ‘of’ development (Grillo 1985; Grillo 1997; see also the debates in Grillo and Rew 1985). Such distinctions have sorely misrepresented

the varied spectrum of positions from which anthropologists work, and their individual capacity to combine engagement with policy and critical work (determined by things such as institutional affiliation—tenured academic or freelance consultant—market position, age/seniority, reputation with development agencies amongst others (cf. Wood 1998) (Mosse 2005a: 241).

But, as anthropologists get closer to the policy space and insert themselves into the process, the potential for independent critical reflection can dissipate, as my own experience has shown here. There are examples of this happening to anthropologists in the World Bank (Cernea 1982, 1991) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) (Mosse 2005a: 24, 25, 242). Often this is not due

to the anthropologist's own failing but rather because other disciplines hold greater sway in these organisations. My own experience suggests that anthropologists employed in these spaces find themselves gradually falling into the same quagmire as those they so eloquently criticise — they may find themselves working at sustaining policy rather than exposing its workings, and thereby adding to scholarship of how and what policy does. At best, they may critique the projects and report that they do not 'quite' match policy goals and require better conceptualisation or more resources, but this supports policy rather than refutes it.

This said, there are ways of using ethnographic methods selectively to overcome some of these obstacles. It is possible to use shorter but regular episodes of participant observation, open-ended and informal interviews, as well as drawing on historical and other contexts. In 2005 and 2006, I managed a largely ethnographic project in Gazankulu whereby the fieldworkers and I lived in the village for a while at different periods for short periods, and we adopted a host of ethnographic techniques. More recently I found that ethnographic research approaches have a good chance to gain acceptance within a development agency. There must be a small cadre of committed anthropologists with different skills if the methods are to gain traction. There also needs to be resources to employ recent graduates who are very motivated to do ethnographic research using short visits and know how to develop case studies. The way the findings of ethnography are presented is also crucial. Reports must be succinct and, although complexity must be noted, case studies and ethnographic findings must result in focused, but tentative, recommendations. Otherwise reports will be thrown aside. My most recent experience is that these reports receive greater attention in some government departments than the usual flood of statistical reports. However, while they are seen as refreshing, their recommendations are often translated and deployed to meet the desires and interests of various senior officials.

Anthropology, as a reflective discipline, is only too aware of its shortcomings, and regular reflection has helped with understanding and dealing with inherent contradictions within anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986). As Mosse (2005a: 243) points out so eloquently, there is still hope and opportunity:

Anthropological practice has changed fundamentally in the past two decades. The fact that anthropologists are no longer justified as value-free and objective observers, the source of politically neutral and authoritative scientific knowledge, places anthropology back within historical relations of power. In relation to international development this provides opportunities, if not obligations, for engagement and self-critical reflection, for hope and critical understanding — neither of which is possible without close encounters with the administrative politics of development practice.

An enhanced understanding of the relationship between policies and projects enables anthropologists and others to focus more directly on these different realms within development, and the unexpected and informal practices that take place in these realms through continual mediation for resources. Recently, Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (2019) emphasised that the study and understanding of informal norms and practices can only be achieved using ethnography, as this is the

best method to tackle the unexpected and the informal, and to understand it. Current understandings and subsequent policy interventions around rural development, such as land reform and technology or expertise transfer, with all their grandiose plans and anticipations that avoid the complexities of social reality, the unexpected and the informal, seem very far removed from the historical and contemporary everyday social life that is the theatre for acting out what we call development.

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